

HOME ON THE RIDGE

By MAURI ELBEL | Photography by TRE DUNHAM



Stretched across a ridge in Austin's Spanish Oaks neighborhood, this contemporary Hill Country home was designed to overlook the valley spilling below. Spanning an impressive 165 feet across the site, the 5,600-square-foot home appears larger than it is. But inside, there's a warm and airy vibe resulting from the home's single room depth that bathes the spaces in natural sunlight flooding in from both sides of the house.



Making the house fit on the site was paramount from the very beginning," says Jason Crabtree of Premier Partners who credits the successful design to a seamless collaboration among himself, architect John Hathaway of Vanguard Studio, Inc. and Amanda Stephenson of Design Studio 2010. "By having an architect, builder and a designer engaged early on and working toward a common theme from the beginning, the house turned out really amazing."





Initially designed as a spec home, the architectural process wasn't restricted by specific client requests, allowing the design to organically take shape.

"Our main goal was to design a home that felt like it fit today's look and lifestyle," says Hathaway. "There is and has been a trend toward more contemporary looking architecture, which we certainly tried to address. We also tried to keep a more transitional interior, bringing in some warm materials such as interior stone, as well as wood floors throughout. It's a delicate balance to create the right look of yesterday and today."

Collaboration with Premier Partners throughout the construction phase on finishes and fixtures set the stage for this chic and urban 5-bedroom, 4.5-bathroom home rife with multiple entertaining spaces. Just a week or two before the project was complete, the house went under contract by homeowners looking to make a major design shift toward a more modern, urbanized and functional style house.

Starting fresh with all new furnishings, the homeowners' vibrant Peter Lik photographic artwork was the only inspiration integrated into the design, allowing Stephenson and her team to have free reign when it came to molding the look and feel of the interiors.

"The homeowners specific requests were to incorporate their Peter Lik artwork and to create a luxurious, high tech, hotel-like feeling for their master suite," says Stephenson. "Pulling in brilliant natural pops of color from the photo art in soft goods, accessories and art spoke to these oversized masterpieces. The next goals were to maintain the integrity of the open feeling throughout, and



provide multiple layers of seating and conversation niches, while creating that luxury resort ambience."

Open concept living defines the home from the entry to the outdoors and all common spaces in between. Blurring the lines between inside and out, 12-foot-tall by 20-foot-wide sliding glass doors open up to double the living space and allow entertaining to flow freely.

Continuity throughout the home's communal spaces was achieved by incorporating lower height, proportionately scaled furnishings. Bright, organic colors infuse the space and neutral tones mix with intriguing textures and patterns that delight



the eye, explains Stephenson. Silk linen sheers mimic the metal tones of the raw steel, view-through fireplace and draw the eye up to appreciate the room's height and its bold 9-foot contemporary fan.

The master suite hones the look of a luxurious hotel room with its custom built-in bed surround that serves as the room's focal point — a 16-foot-wide by 12-foot-high, hand-crafted walnut bed unit that comprises the entire wall. Matching the suite's rift-cut walnut cabinetry, the bed's recessed base platform and floating nightstands appear to hover before the book-match wooden headboard. Touch release hardware is functional without interrupting the natural beauty of the wood grain and grooved reveals, and the home's smart system controls recessed LED mini-reading lights in the header and glittering chrome LED pendants adorning each nightstand.

Stephenson selected sumptuous champagne charmeuse silk bedding which flawlessly blends with the upholstered silver metallic headboard while she incorporated custom pillows, automated draperies, a custom blue velvet two-person chaise and champagne silk rug to complement the rich blues, taupes and metallics featured in the commissioned art.

"This fusion of subtle whimsy, diverse textures like rift-cut walnut, the shagreen console, a custom Mongolian fur and lucite-legged bench opposite silk bedding and pillows, all combine to deliver an impeccable cosmopolitan penthouse suite," says Stephenson whose design won first place for Contemporary Master Bedroom at the 2015 ASID Texas Chapter's Legacy of Design Awards.

In the kitchen, clean lines begin with simple shaker cabinetry accentuated with polished stainless frames on the upper glass-front doors for displaying art and accessories. Open liquor



storage and a large wine cooler make for easy entertaining, and the furniture grade frameless rift-cut walnut island cabinetry with Calcutta Gold honed marble accommodates buffets or casual family breakfasts. The perimeter countertops' Karma concrete composite material provides a modern, durable work-surface and contrasts brilliantly with the sparkling, opal-white mini-herringbone glass tiled backsplash.

Although not designed specifically to be a "green" home, myriad sustainable features ranging from spray foam insulation to high efficiency appliances and systems were incorporated as part of responsible design practices that are increasingly taking



the climate and environment into consideration and becoming the norm in new construction homes built by Premier Partners.

“High efficiency construction methods have become the standard,” says Crabtree. “Every functional decision lies along the lines of efficient energy construction. It is really about planning a smarter home from the very beginning.”

Smart design is also evident in the home’s layout, boasting some of the main features Hathaway is currently integrating into his homes such as the “great hall” — a connecting kitchen, dining and family room space that flows together and opens to the exterior.

“They all flow well with one another and possess different elements that define each space while still being part of the whole,” says Hathaway.

One of Crabtree and Hathaway’s favorite parts of the home is the exterior entry.

“It’s the initial thing visitors see,” says Hathaway. “It’s a great combination of unique forms in rustic stone and smooth glass where you can see right into the house and out the back — a seamless transition from exterior, interior and back to exterior.”

The careful attention to detail one notices upon approaching the home and the key features seen inside like the 18-foot raw steel fireplace Crabtree self-installed and fabricated and the highly-detailed grain matched walnut wood panels in the master bedroom and vanities in the master bath are just a few of the design elements that stand out.

“There are a lot of fun details in this home,” says Crabtree. “The things that look the simplest are usually the most difficult in construction. You can’t hide anything in a home like this. There is not a lot of room for error.”

In the kitchen, small details make a big impact. The mitered edge along the countertops yields a more dramatic appearance. The polished stainless steel on the upper cabinets provide visual interest. The custom chrome band added to a standard vent hood give a subtle bling.

“It’s just those little touches and cool features that make a house your home,” says Crabtree. “With good design, a few little tweaks can make a huge impact.” ❖

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