



# A REGAL RENOVATION

By MAURI ELBEL | Photography by BRIAN MIHEALSICK

After their youngest child left for college, the homeowners of one of Central Austin's most treasured estates decided it was time to revamp their beautiful 1930s home to better suit the new chapter in their life.







What initially began as a renovation of the couple's master suite evolved into a full scale remodel of their 5,300-square-foot and the 700-square-foot guest house tucked in Tarrytown.

"The husband intended to contain the scope of work but the wife knew better," says architect Tim Cuppett, AIA, of the project completed a little over a year ago. "After design studies, the husband jumped on board with the scope of the project."

While the focus rested solely on the master suite throughout the initial planning stages, a broader discussion developed concerning how the couple could achieve their overall goals most efficiently and cost-effectively. The decision was made to renovate the entire residence in one large pass, updating the architecture, interior design and key systems of the 3-bedroom, 5-bathroom home and guest house which sits behind it adjacent to the pool.

"These clients were particularly savvy to not be penny wise and pound foolish," says builder Royce Flournoy. "However, I think the remarkable approach of these clients not always seen is their desire to engage honestly on all matters and build a relationship where all the team members were trusted, heard and respected as they worked through their design decisions. It made for a strong partnership and ultimately achieved a remarkable project."

Successfully achieving the project's two opposing goals — making the house more accommodating for the new empty nesters while ensuring it would still function well as a gathering place for their grown children — required a clever collaboration among the design team.

Beginning with the master suite expansion, additional space was achieved by utilizing the square footage from two former bedrooms and bathrooms on the second floor which resulted in a sprawling space featuring walk-in closets and dressing rooms.

"When I first reviewed the plans of the master suite, the pragmatic part of me wondered if by giving up that third bedroom and bath would be the best approach," Flournoy says. "Now, it's clear to me that was the best decision and made the entire house function in a new way for them."

Inside the luxurious, light-filled bathroom, the design flawlessly marries the classic with the current by incorporating pared down, sleek moldings with mirrored panels, quartzite and Calcutta marble and mosaic inlaid into the floor. Unique bathroom features include a transparent glass panel that separates the shower from the rest of the bathroom while maintaining a connection throughout the space and a television hidden behind the mirrors across from the steam shower. Inside the restful bedroom, built-in shelves flanking the window house books and collectibles and an antique chandelier creates an elegant focal point.

"The design of the master bedroom and bath is very modern and sophisticated yet remains true to the Georgian style of the home," says interior designer Nancy Bulhon. "This inspired the clients to follow through with this vocabulary throughout the rest of the home."

Throughout the scope of the project, whether updating interior finishes, fixtures or furnishings, Bulhon says the biggest challenge was determining how to seamlessly blend the newness of the renovations with the home's original character.







“They wanted to remain appropriate to the style of the house, but with an updated look, incorporating their many antiques and accessory collections,” she says. “They have collected traditional art over the years but recently have acquired more modern pieces. They wanted to mesh these elements together in a way that felt cohesive. The desire was for a clean, serene backdrop for their beautiful furnishings.”

To create a light and airy feel throughout the home, Bulhon chose a neutral palette with Benjamin Moore’s® Muslin in a glossy finish used on the home’s untextured walls, ceilings and trim. But to avoid an interior completely void of color, the interior designer added punches of drama in certain rooms like the dining room, which now glows in a deep coral with ceilings painted a pale blue to both soften and enhance the space.

“Even though the house is mostly one creamy background color, it leaves you with a feeling of rich color and texture,” she says.

Throughout the home, Bulhon selected fabrics made from natural cotton and linen fibers for rich texture and softness, which gives traditional furniture styles a fresh look. Some of Bulhon’s favorite pieces are the Murano chandelier in the dining room and the Venetian mirror in the entry foyer, both custom made for this project. Unapologetically decorative, Bulhon says the home is a reflection of the clients and their personalities.

Inside the updated kitchen, now undeniably the stylish and

high-functioning heart of the house, small changes made a big impact. Flournoy says lightening the palette, simplifying the cabinet details and perfecting the layout with the space available transformed a previously dark and unwelcoming kitchen into a light, bright and inviting space.

Now the main living spaces seem to flow as they were always intended to, creating a pleasing juxtaposition between old and new.

“The client’s had a true desire to preserve and enhance the original design elements of the home,” says Flournoy. “For example, keeping the original moldings but being careful to provide the project with enough budget to restore them to their original state. Or removing dated details of remodels past and keeping new improvements in a closer context to the original construction. All these choices created a very pleasant and refined feel to this old Austin estate.” ❖

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