



# TRANQUIL BEAUTY

By **JACKIE BENTON** | Photography by **PAUL FINKEL**

Tranquility and serenity are two essential elements of living that are in increasingly short supply these days, and there is much to be said for returning at the end of a busy day to a home that is an oasis of calm. Developer Todd Fletcher of Peak Design-Build LLC knew architects April Clark and Ed Richardson of Clark | Richardson Architects would be the perfect team to design a house that would be as much a sanctuary from the pressure of the outside world as it would be a home. Fletcher wanted a contemporary design possessing modern and universal appeal that departed from the typical Tuscan-style designs found in Lakeway. With Clark and Richardson, he knew he had a team uniquely suited to creating his vision.





Creating a home environment in which a family could find peace from the outside world was a goal with which Clark and Richardson could positively identify.

“We brought our design perspective to the project both as architects with over 15 years of collaboration together dating back to our time as graduate teaching fellows at the School of Architecture at Yale, and as a husband and wife team actively engaged with the concerns of modern living with three kids of our own,” says Clark.

The result is a home that is a masterwork of idyllic simplicity. Cool and contemporary, the Lakeway residence features four bedrooms, four baths and a three car garage, accentuated with outdoor living courtyard areas, a pool and decking. The stucco home is made all the more elegant with stained cedar accents and bronze finished windows, giving the home a peaceful sensibility. The home’s orientation on a gently sloping hillside features views of the surrounding area while taking advantage of breezes and working with passive solar design to help keep its energy usage green and efficient.

The most striking element of this modern contemporary home is the marvelous sense of flow. Whether enjoying the sun by the pool in the private courtyard or just curled up to read a book in

the living area, there is a quiet feeling of connectivity throughout this Lakeway residence that gives the feeling of being one with the natural beauty of the Hill Country in which it is nestled.

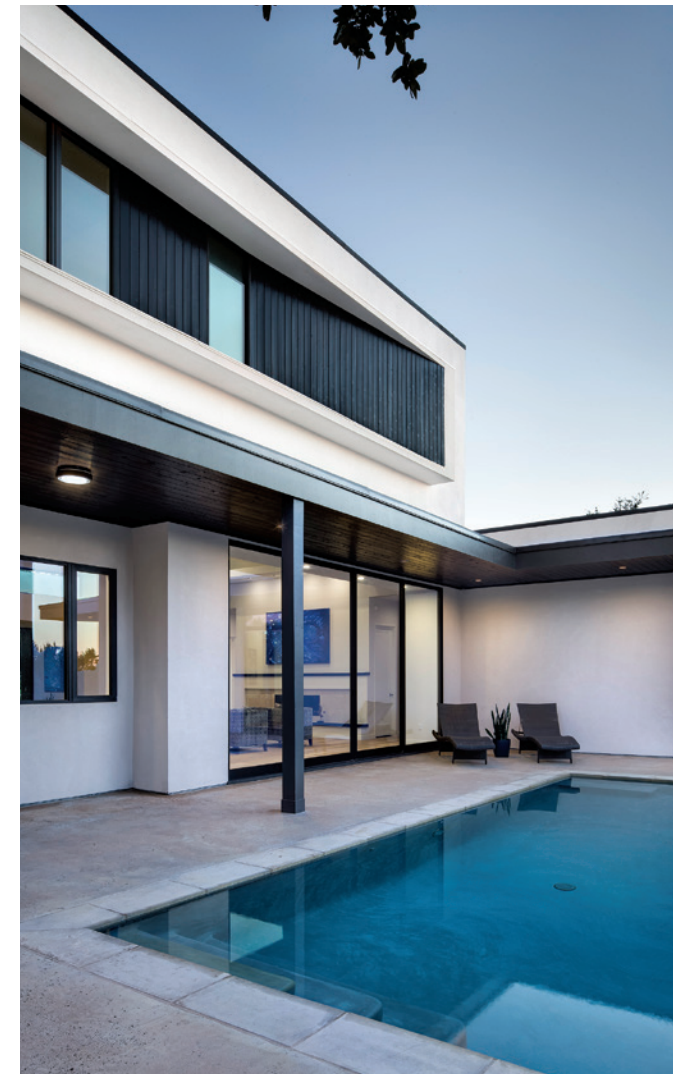
“We started with an abstraction of the Texas vernacular notion of the courtyard house, and then mirrored that concept on the site to produce a building as an interstitial space between two courtyards, one oriented to the south and defining the entry and one oriented to the north defining the more private spaces for the dwelling,” explains Richardson. “Two native oaks were carefully framed at both courtyards giving natural punctuation to each space. The heart of the house, the living and dining space, then became the bridge between the two outdoor spaces.”

With its natural wood, stone and neutral colors, as well as incredible landscaping featuring Texas native plants, the house is cool and inviting to all who enter.

“One of the great joys of this house is the use of humble, natural materials throughout the project,” says Richardson, “from the stucco finish to the vertical cedar siding at the exterior and the oil finish oak floors at the interior to the system of scuppers and rain chains which brings water down from the roof in a poetic way directly to the ground plane.”







“We really see our houses as a frame for the inhabitants of the home and think that architectural design doesn’t have to be showy or loud,” Clark adds, “but can and often should instead be quiet and in many ways open to allow space for the personality of the owner to become part of the place making of the house, most often through the use of art as the figural presence in the home.”

Part of that architectural artistry is simply expressed through the use of water as an element and an inherent feature throughout the home. Water is cleverly used audibly as well as visually to engage and inspire mind, body and spirit.

“Water plays an important role in the experience of both the north and south courts of the house and received special attention during the design process,” says Richardson. “At the main entry, we carved into the interior space of the house to create a minimal water feature directly adjacent to the entry. That feature provides both a visual and audible break from the outside world as one enters the residence and also echoes the expansive pool located at the north edge of the living/dining space.”

Richardson notes that both features, in addition to providing

a sense of calm, also have important haptic relationships to the interior experience, ranging from the refraction of dappled light into the house throughout the day to its presence as a glowing element during the evenings. The resulting elemental effects have universal appeal, an essential and important quality for a home designed for the market.

Another important element of the home’s design is literally an unseen hero — the placement of glass windows that work to allow in light, while keeping out the sun’s glare and heat gain during a hot, Texas summer. Clark explains that understanding how the home is situated on the site and how it relates to the sun’s trajectory overhead is essential for comfort and good energy conservation.

“This is really a function of working in a pragmatic way with solar orientation on the site. As the lot was oriented with its long axis running north and south, we were able to orient the majority of the living space in the house in those two cardinal directions, and then suppress transparency on orientations that are harder to control with roof overhangs like the east and west.

The roof overhangs along the home’s northern and southern

points proved invaluable in keeping the home cool and its energy bills low and manageable.

“At both the north and south exposures, we incorporated deep flat roof overhangs at the lower levels to shade the large expanses of glass that line the main living space,” says Richardson. “These overhangs allow complete blockage of the sun during the peak hours of sunlight from noon to the early afternoon. Our office designed the scale of the overhangs in conjunction with site specific shading studies to ensure that they would be both functional and, equally important, spatially successful.”

The home’s many features, as fabulous as they are, would not be appreciated without the perfect natural and native backdrop provided by the thoughtful landscaping. The subtle and careful placement of drought tolerant species, such as Bamboo Muhly grasses, provide an excellent frame to feature the architectural beauty of the home, are suited to hot, Texas summers and consume much less water.

“The landscape was really a collaboration between our office, Yarrow Landscaping and Todd Fletcher,” says Richardson, “and is absolutely a critical element in the overall spatial experience of

the house. The landscaping works most importantly at the two courtyard spaces by both defining edges and thresholds that lead to the entry areas, and softening the line between the house and the terrain while providing a sense of movement when they pick up the frequent breezes through the site.”

The end result with the Lakeway residence was a home that is more than a sum of its various parts of light, wood, water and natural beauty. “We really strived to create a house that was quiet and simple but with a refined and modern sense of proportions and spatial experiences — one that allowed the user to interact directly with the native landscaping on the site,” says Clark. ❖

**ARCHITECT** Clark | Richardson Architects  
512.636.7653 | [clarkrichardson.com](http://clarkrichardson.com)

**BUILDER** Peak Design + Build LLC  
512.660.7452 | [peak-development.com](http://peak-development.com)

**LANDSCAPE DESIGNER** Yarrow Landscaping  
512.694.7392 | [yarrowlandscaping.com](http://yarrowlandscaping.com)