



# WHY THIS SPACE Works

## Designer Spotlight: JEI Design, Inc.

By MAURI ELBEL | Photography by CASEY DUNN

Shortly after completing the building process of their home located in Austin's Rob Roy neighborhood a decade ago, the homeowners realized their tastes were leaning toward a more modern, clean-lined look. But when the family with teenage twin daughters couldn't find another lot they loved as much as their own, they decided to remodel their existing 5,500-square-foot house in stages.

"The family built the home at the tail end of the Tuscan trend. The house worked for a while, but as the kids grew older, the parents decided they were ready to revamp the house into what they really wanted," Evans says. "Luckily, the house had good bones and a great layout which helped ease the transition from Tuscan to a bit more transitional."

FUNCTIONAL. RELAXING. BEAUTIFUL. THOSE ARE THE WORDS JULIE EVANS, PRINCIPAL OF JEI DESIGN, INC., USES TO DESCRIBE THE SOFT YET CONTEMPORARY SITTING ROOM SHE REVAMPED FOR CLIENTS WANTING TO BRING THE SPACE UP TO SPEED WITH THEIR EVOLVING STYLE.

JEI Design helped the homeowners navigate through the design process, recommending a contractor — Timeless Construction — and collaborating on every detail from the stone selection to the layout. Once the remodel construction was complete, Evans completed the look by bringing in fresh and modern furniture and fabrics that made the space feel both luxurious and cozy.

Previously, the dim and dreary game room had a pool table that was never used. The space also had a large television and entertainment center that dominated the entire room and was impractical for viewing, and a seating arrangement that didn't accommodate the family's lifestyle. Evans set out to create an elegant, refined and useful space that was comfortable



for everyone. Her primary goal was to create a furniture layout that functioned better for the family. A sectional by Pearson® and a recliner by Hancock and Moore provided the perfect blend of cozy and spacious seating. Additional storage was gained by adding two large armoires and a media console, all by Old Biscayne, to store their games, albums and music collection.

"The clients wanted a lot of storage, but we did not want the space to look like a storage room," she says. "We created several elevation options for the space, especially for the tall wall with the cathedral ceiling, and then decided that a pair of decorative armoires framed with art was the best solution. This way the scale was appropriate against the size of the wall and the pieces functioned well."

Before, the fireplace was dull and heavy looking so Evans gave it a facelift with a fresh, contemporary stone. Arched windows flanking the fireplace were once an eyesore, covered with solid, unattractive shades that kept the room dark and lifeless.

"The windows face due west, so if left uncovered, they let in an enormous amount of heat," says Evans. "Our objective was to allow light in and keep the room bright while also keeping the heat out. We designed a custom made arched metal rod with sheers in a stunning Dedar fabric and side panels made from a practical and luxurious Clarke and Clarke fabric that complemented the space in the most perfect way. The sheers allow light to seep in while keeping that Texas heat out, and our clients absolutely love them. What once was an eyesore is now an asset to the space."

The window treatments help to frame the fireplace and balance the wall beautifully, transforming a space that was once lackluster and uninspiring into an elegant and refreshing room. She brought the room's style up to speed with an enhanced color palette that is easy and livable but far from boring. Plums and grays fill the room and fun chartreuse accents add life to the space without overwhelming it.

"When I am working on a space, it is all about balance," says Evans. "We had discussed the color palette and started



with the rug and stone. Working from there, and being careful to keep the fabrics practical but light, we looked at several finishes for the furniture and ended up with mid-tones to keep things from being heavy. The drapery fabric selection was a big leap of faith on the clients' part, but they really make the room."

Most of the furniture pieces were purchased directly from the manufacturers, giving Evans access to a wide array of selections. The round coffee table and side table were purchased from Arteriors — shapes Evans chose because of the way they play off of the large arched windows. They also add some interesting texture and color variation to complete the space.

"We wanted every piece to be interesting but practical at the same time," Evans says.

The once uninviting space is now a functional and modern room the family enjoys relaxing in together.

"I love the scale of the space," says the Austin-based designer. "Not only does the room look elegant and feel refreshed, but it now functions in the way the clients desired and they could not be more pleased, which is the goal of our whole process." ❖

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