

COZY AND COMFORTABLE

By MAURI ELBEL | Photography by BRIAN MIHEALSICK



Sometimes the subtle moments in a home can make the greatest impact. Such is the case with a retired couple's home in West Austin where a minimal palette and cleverly-planned, sunlight-filled spaces combine to create a home that's cozy when it's just the two of them and comfortably accommodating when their entire family is gathered together.

The couple's son, New York-based architect David Fox of Stonefox, worked with Texas Construction Company to design a home that would suit their needs as they relocated from St. Louis to Austin to be nearer to their grandchildren. Other than being closer to help out with their grandchildren and having enough space to accommodate multiple generations of a large family, Royce Flournoy, president of Texas Construction Company, says the couple wanted a home where they would be able to comfortably age in place.

With those objectives in mind, the three-bedroom, three-and-a-half-bathroom house takes a U-shaped form, wrapping three sides of an intimate internal courtyard. The heart of their nearly 4,000-square-foot, single story home — a sprawling space flanked by generous white-trimmed windows that allow natural light to pour in from both sides — is divided into three separate functions: den, formal living and formal dining. Two paneled partitions effectively establish spatial separation without using any doors or walls, allowing for three different functions inside the room while maintaining connection and flow throughout the space.



“It’s a clever use of space that lets the room be very expansive and creates compartmentalized areas for everyday use so it doesn’t seem overly big,” says Flournoy of the partitioned space. “It flows really well when they are entertaining or having family gatherings.”

A bedroom wing extends from one side of the home, encompassing the couple’s master suite and two guest bedrooms, while another wing runs parallel to it, comprising the kitchen, informal dining and living areas, and the garage. From a living perspective, Flournoy says the layout shields the bedrooms

from the rest of the activity going on in the home, which is especially useful when multiple generations are gathered together. But the original concept for the home’s unique layout was born out of the site’s existing qualities.

“The design came out of the way the lot was laid out,” says Flournoy of the flat property with a steep drop in the back. “They wanted a decent back yard, and by using the left and right wings of the home to flank this courtyard, it gave us the imprint to create a retaining wall and provided an economical approach to resolving the steep slope of the backyard.”

Throughout the interior and exterior of the transitional home, understated materials, minimalist finishes and clean lines evoke an inviting sense of warmth. On the inside, soothing seafoam and pale gray paint selections create a neutral backdrop to well-edited pops of color like the mustard sofas in the formal living area.

“In general, there is a really clean palette to the house — it is well done and easy to digest,” says Flournoy. “It makes for a very welcoming space to be in.”

The kitchen’s expansive, open floor plan is centered





around a large island featuring shiny quartz countertops and a prep sink, leaving plenty of room for a dining table that provides additional seating during big family meals. Wrapped by custom wood cabinetry, clear birch dove tail drawers and wood-paneled appliances all painted in bright white, the room is graced by ample sunlight and serves as an inviting space to gather and converse. Prefinished oak floors flow throughout the house, with the gray undertones in the wood complementing the wall colors. Single oak planks are sparingly used as ceiling beams, adding a subtle texture that plays well against light, creamy walls and wood floors.

“There are just these little moments in each room,” says Flournoy. “Nothing has a grand statement.”

Similarly, on the exterior, a dark standing seam metal roof provides an appealing contrast to the home’s Lueders limestone façade, a nod to the home’s Hill Country roots. The covered porch, with its flagstone floor and pine ceiling, creates a

contemplative spot to relax and soak in the surrounding scenery. During periods when mosquitos are active — a frequent occurrence in Central Texas — automated screens are utilized for added protection.

The home’s simple design is perfectly suited for all functions of the couple’s life, from babysitting their grandchildren to hosting their grown children and gathering multiple generations of their large family during the holidays.

“They are very active in their children’s and grandchildren’s lives so this home allows them to provide that support,” says Flournoy. “And with provisions for aging in place, they will be comfortable for years to come.” ❖

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