

# Timeless in Tarrytown

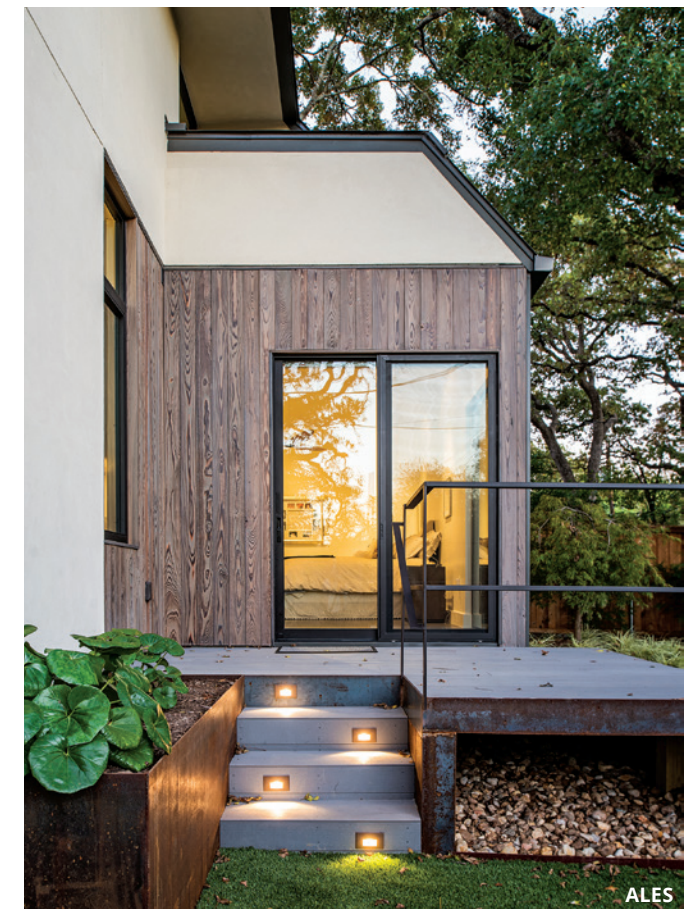
By Mauri Elbel

Photography by Merrick Ales and Molly Culver

Modern.  
*Sophisticated.*  
*Timeless.*

*Those were the design goals set before full-service design agency Design Hound by homeowners who inherited a family property in Tarrytown and wanted a home that would suit their empty nester lifestyle.*

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“They wanted to open up the house as much as possible but still maintain privacy,” says Kevin Stewart, Design Hound principal, of his clients who were looking to downsize to a space built for the two of them but also accommodate their grown children and grandchildren when they came to visit.

The homeowners, concerned with the appearance of the house from the street and its relationship to their neighbors, didn’t want an ultra-contemporary glass and steel box nor were they wanting to live in a modern interpretation of the previous architectural style. As a result, Design Hound reduced their analysis of this house down to its base elements: the façade with its associated entry, the roof and the interior experience of their clients. Focusing on these as elements to be stripped down, examined and then reformulated, an interesting roof form began to take shape, which conceals the second-floor bedrooms, bathrooms and living area. From street view, the unique roof makes the two-story home appear one-story and allows it to fit in with the existing homes in the charming old-Austin neighborhood.

“They didn’t want it to look like it had a second story,” says Stewart. “They wanted it to be more subtle. Timeless. They wanted a home that would blend into the neighborhood.”

The out-of-the-box design also makes the spacious 3,700-square-foot home appear much smaller than it is.

“From the outside, it is unimposing,” says Stewart of the home set back from the street due to the site limitations caused by existing trees. “It is deceptive in a good way. Then when you step inside, it’s super serene. There’s a great connection to the outdoors. It’s in the middle of the city but you can’t see the neighbors.”

The home’s form and primary materials — white stucco, steel framed windows and Japanese charred wood Shou-Sugi-Ban siding — are carried throughout the house. Though the front facade is an elegant compo-

sition, it restricts views to the interior of the house by providing a greater level of privacy for the couple. Front yard views are limited by a large heritage tree outside the kitchen window box, creating a framed piece of living art from the interior.

“We all kind of fell in love with the Shou-Sugi-Ban,” says Stewart. “It’s a really nice warm balance between the metal roof and white stucco. We tried to keep a really minimal material palette, and this brought in a real quality and elegance.”

Scale and well-edited window placement remain key to the success of this project, keeping the home from being oversized and providing ample glass without sacrificing privacy.

“Window placement was very important to us,” says Liz Rau, Design Hound principal. “We looked to see where the windows were on the adjacent houses and placed our windows accordingly so that they still have something interesting to look out on.”

Purposefully placed large expanses of glass, hidden clerestories and windows running along the lower portions of the room flood the home with indirect sunlight, allowing privacy and light to co-exist by shielding views from the neighbors.

“They are getting light in at a tall height without using skylights,” says Rau. “All of the windows give you views of the trees so you don’t notice the neighbor next door quite as much.”

For example, higher windows provide views to the tree canopies, mid-level windows look out at mature oaks in the distance and windows that run along the ground are directed to specimen plants around the perimeter of the house — a design move that permeates the space with light and creates the sense that you are surrounded by nature rather than houses.

In the kitchen, cabinetry is centered around the window box that frames the tree outside, says Rau, who prefers not to go overboard with cabinetry to allow space for art. Downstairs warm walnut, marble and white oak flow throughout the house, play-







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ing off the dark stained hickory flooring and artwork personally curated by the homeowners. A large 10-foot by 12-foot, three-panel sliding glass door opens up to a covered deck off of the living room into a secluded courtyard. The master wing, featuring a study and private media lounge, can be completely separated from the rest of the house during large family gatherings with a hidden pocket door in order to further the idea of home as sanctuary.

The only time the homeowners use the second floor is when their children and grandchildren come to visit, says Stewart. Upstairs, consisting of bedrooms, a game room, a clever bench space, which doubles as a sleeping nook for grandkids, and a sneaky window by the beverage bar that looks out into the tree-tops, can be completely closed off from the downstairs zone.

At a time when trendy architecture seems to be popping up in older neighborhoods, this Tarrytown home offers something a little more subtle and timeless.

“This home was actually Liz and my first collaboration as partners here at the Design Hound office,” says Stewart. “It was a combination of both of our design sensibilities and it came out a little better than both of us have hoped for.” ♦

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