



CONCEPTUALLY ECLECTIC



HOUSE BEAUTIFUL
HAS OUTDONE ITSELF
WITH THEIR
FOURTH ANNUAL
WHOLE HOME
CONCEPT HOUSE,
THIS TIME IN
THE IDYLIC
TEXAS HILL COUNTRY.

By **Kimberly A. Suta** | Photography by **Stephen Karlisch**



JUST FOUR YEARS AGO, *HOUSE BEAUTIFUL*, LED BY market director Carisha Swanson, launched their Whole Home Concept House project, which at first, may have seemed outlandish, but has evolved into a visionary representation of what a dream home could and maybe should be.

The renowned publication tasks several elite designers from around the country and one builder to create a home that showcases the latest innovations while at the same time being functional and obtainable.

For 2021, they chose a seasoned Central Texas builder, Tyler O'Brien of Agave Custom Homes. Founded in 2009, O'Brien focuses on building forever homes in the Texas Hill Country, and designs and builds homes "as if I was going to live in them myself."

This project gave him the unique opportunity to work with eight different all-star designers to create the most eclectic yet comfortably luxurious home you may have ever seen.

To top it off, they have captured the team and each designer's inspirations during the project on a brand-new renovation series on YouTube called "Blank Slate," which premiered on September 28, 2021. The home was featured in the October/November 125th Anniversary Issue of *House Beautiful*.





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“The Whole Home is *House Beautiful's* American home, which has become a sanctuary, especially after COVID. People live, work and play at home now, so everything was designed for the consumer, even the couch fabric is durable. You can put your feet up on it with the dog and it still looks nice,” explains O'Brien.

The fully furnished and uber decked out one-story home comes with a master suite, master bath and walk-in closet, along with an open living room, kitchen and dining floor plan, den, office nook, mudroom and a covered

breezeway that leads to a guest wing with two bedrooms. Additionally, the covered terrace includes a decadent outdoor shower and complete outdoor kitchen, as well as a pool, just to name the highlights.

THE DESIGN TEAM INCLUDED:

LAURA HODGES of Laura Hodges Studio in Baltimore designed an office-workout room combo with soothing greenery, wood-veneered wallpaper, hemp rug and velvet cushions.

EMILIE MUNROE of Studio Munroe in San Francisco designed an entry way and living room that sported 20-foot-high vaulted ceilings and floor-to-ceiling glass doors to the patio, incorporating a dramatic wallcovering of a sunrise with colors of sunny yellow, lavender and fuchsia replicated in the rest of the room's furnishings.

STEPHANIE SABBE of Sabbe Interior in Nashville tossed out the traditional kitchen island in her kitchen design in lieu

of a wooden dining room table surrounded by enticing leaf-motif wallpaper with blue-green cabinetry.

JEAN LIU of Jean Liu Design in Dallas created an entertaining space inspired by heart-shaped origami that showcases a banquette and wine rack made from brass dowels and burgundy leathery, intended to display an impressive wine collection.

HEATHER AND MATT FRENCH of Santa Fe's French & French Interiors designed a media room with intense greens, patterns and textures with a curtained trundle bed, perfect for family gatherings and game nights.

VIRGINIA TOLEDO AND JESSICA GELLER of Toledo Geller in Franklin Lakes, NJ, designed the master suite and connected bath to showcase the view of rolling hills and wildlife. It's a showstopper with whitewashed vaulted ceilings and contrasting beams, balanced with shades of mustard yellow, tobacco brown and pale pink.

MIKEL WELCH of Mikel Welch Designs in New York created a cozy cave-like den with soft neutrals, oversized sofa and swivel chairs.

Finally, **LINDA HAYSLETT** of L.H. Designs in Los Angeles knocked it out of the park with her design for the outdoor space that included a fireplace, grilling area, pool, conversation area and quartz island with a built-in ice bucket and beer tap, not to mention a massive wood-burning firepit and the aforementioned outdoor shower.

Although the project, including designing and completing a new build in just five months while shooting a TV series, was a nearly impossible feat, O'Brien was happy for the experience.

“The main reason I took on this task was to gain knowledge in the industry and learn from other designers to become a better builder. Ultimately, it was a learning experience to make myself and my company better,” he says.

According to O'Brien, the biggest challenge was that each designer, for the most part, was working independently, without knowing what the other designers were planning. “I was, in a way, the client. All the designers had to give me their designs. I wanted to give them individuality, but I still had to make sure it was cohesive. I wanted to make sure I could sell the home and, in the end, it all worked out. It's funny because a lot of the designers chose to work with greens and blues.”

One of the most thrilling aspects for O'Brien was a window into the latest trends from each designer's unique perspective. “They all wanted to do quartz backsplashes, no tile, with quartz countertops. One design team used slabs of quartz in the shower that were scalloped at the top like an arch. It



was an amazing look. I'd never thought to do that,” shares O'Brien. “There's also a stunning brick floor in the kitchen, and \$35,000 worth of wallpaper in the house and it wasn't just on the walls. For example, there was a hidden storage cabinet with a cool vibe that was wallpapered on the inside. Why have a boring cabinet, right?”

O'Brien, who also has a degree in architecture, likes to build homes that work synergistically with its natural surroundings, which means paying attention to the orientation of the home, for starters. “This Whole Home Concept House faces north, so it brings in a breeze front and back. You can also sit outside and catch a breeze on a 105-degree day. I like bringing the outdoors in. People want to spend more time outdoors these days,” he says.

If you're left wondering like I was if this unusual yet intriguing new house found a homeowner, in fact, it sold to one of O'Brien's neighbors before it was even completed. To see for yourself, make sure to check out Blank Slate and get inspired! ♦

HOUSE BEAUTIFUL

www.HouseBeautiful.com/whole-home-2021

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