



ORGANIC CHEMISTRY

A MONOCHROMATIC PALETTE IS ENLIVENED WITH ORGANIC NATURAL MATERIALS IN GLOSS AND HONED FINISHES, AND REPEATED THROUGHOUT MULTIPLE SPACES OF A NEARLY WHOLE-HOME RENOVATION.

BY CLAUDIA ALARCÓN | PHOTOGRAPHY BY JENNIFER SIU-RIVERA



BUILT IN THE '90S, THIS HOME, LOCATED IN THE Inwood neighborhood of San Antonio, was long overdue for an update. The homeowners looked to interior designer Shea Pumarejo with Younique Designs to complete the dramatic transformation. “The homeowners wanted a more modern, masculine feeling without being cold and stark. I used organic natural materials in matte and honed finishes in order to keep a warm, homey feeling, and I repeated materials throughout the home. You’ll notice the same materials used in different sizes and applications, which provides consistency but also keeps things interesting,” says Pumarejo.

The entire renovation project included the combined kitchen and living areas, a primary bath and guest bath. The house was divided in two, with the kitchen closed off to the rest of the living spaces. And as was the style in the ‘90s, there were tray ceilings, furr-downs, florescent lighting and floral wallpaper everywhere.

Beginning in the kitchen, Pumarejo removed the tray

Aries Woodworks designed the custom wood cabinets with pull-outs and automated door lifts, as well as the built-in shelving in the living and breakfast rooms. The floating metal shelves were made by Forged Oaks and the light fixtures are from Troy Lighting. The kitchen’s centerpiece island is a striking quartzite fabricated by Universal Marble. Called Tropical Storm, the quartzite features a black background highlighted with fine white and gold veins. But within beauty lies functionality, with cabinets built under the island: “The front side of the island by the cooktop is the same material as the cabinets on the cooktop run and the back side of the island matches the high-gloss doors on the oven wall of cabinets,” says Pumarejo.

A Dacor® refrigerator is concealed in the bank of cabinets along the cooktop wall. The cooktop is also by Dacor, with the steam and double wall ovens by Bosch®.

Adjacent to the kitchen, a new fireplace was fronted with stone in two different textures to create a striped effect. The built-ins coordinate with the matte cabinet wall by Aries Woodworks.

The homeowners are also wine enthusiasts, and wanted their wine collection to be a showpiece in the newly designed space. Pumarejo sourced racks from Wineracks America with plans to add custom glass and black iron doors that repeat the shape and material of the iron floating shelves.





A glass block window was replaced with a picture window, and a motorized shade provides privacy while still allowing natural light to filter in for the makeup vanity. Lighting is supplemented with pendants from Restoration Hardware.

His and hers vessel sinks with wall mounted faucets rest atop a floating vanity with countertops in Absolute Black leathered granite—a nod to the kitchen’s perimeter counters.

The homeowners wanted a shower big enough for two, so an existing closet was removed to make room. During demo, an air duct was discovered that spanned the shower space. Fortunately, the duct was low enough to accommodate a shower bench overtop. The free-standing tub was placed in the center of the room and an entablature was designed to create a visual focal point.

A large linen cabinet was added to make up for storage space lost in the removal of the former closet.

ceilings and furr-downs, allowing her to lift the ceiling on one side of the house to match the other, and removed the walls so the home would flow together seamlessly. The kitchen was placed at an angle, improving foot traffic and transforming it into the hub of the home and a great space to entertain.

“We used a monochromatic color scheme and played with various textures of natural, organic elements to create contrasts in the spaces,” says Pumarejo. “We chose the wood floors for their color and simple grain pattern that created a nice neutral canvas from which to build.”





A large format porcelain tile with a bold agate vein from Design Finishes provides a striking focal point for both the shower surround and the vanity's backsplash. Over the vanity, a wood border contrasts with the matte-finished cabinets. The double stone sinks and vanity are actually part of a complete unit from Stone Forest that includes the rich polished wood panel that surrounds the vanity wall.

Four wall sconces from Restoration Hardware provide ample lighting in the compact space. The gold finish adds a touch of subdued elegance and is carried through the open plumbing, fixtures and door hardware. All bath accessories are by Brizo®.

Pumarejo used different cabinet materials within the kitchen to add interest. “The cabinets that hold the wall ovens and pantries are a high-gloss material that reflects light and contrasts nicely with the floors, which are a matte finish and absorb the light,” explains Pumarejo, “while the opposite cabinets are in two-tone matte black and wood to complement them.” Floating black iron and wood shelves flank the matte black venthood from Zephyr.

Pumarejo designed custom storage such as pull-out pantry cabinets and deep drawers so the homeowner can access items in the back and lower cabinets more easily. She says, “The upper cabinet doors are motorized and open when you touch them, because the homeowner is short and would have had to use a step stool otherwise.”

A high-gloss surface is repeated on the striking island, with honed counters and a satin-finish tile backsplash on the perimeter counters. The kitchen's waterfall island is Tropical Storm quartzite, the perimeter counters are Absolute Black leathered granite and the subway tile backsplash is by Soho.

The new kitchen includes a steam oven plus two full-sized wall ovens. A microwave is concealed in the small appliance cabinet, which has a latch switch to turn off power to the appliances when the doors are closed. Housing small appliances inside a cabinet leaves the countertops free of clutter, which is ideal in a contemporary kitchen space. “We chose appliances according to the homeowners' preferred cooking methods,” adds Pumarejo.

The primary bath was transformed into a luxury spa retreat, and won the National Kitchen and Bath Design Competition in 2021. The striking centerpiece of the new bath is a free-standing tub and entablature created by mitering a large format agate-patterned porcelain tile to form a slab effect. “We left a reveal around it and added LED lighting to create ambient lighting for the perfect spa experience while soaking in the tub,” notes Pumarejo.

Lighting was also added in the shower niches. The shower-built-for-two includes two rain showerheads and a wall of body jets. Two different textures of the same natural stone line the shower and vanity walls—an application also used on the living room's fireplace surround. The floors are a Breccia Marrone honed marble, which is slip resistant and contrasts nicely with the high-gloss finish of the linen cabinets—a material repeated from the kitchen cabinets.

The guest bath is one of the homeowners' favorite rooms since the renovation. Situated opposite the kitchen and fireplace, a black matte and wood linen cabinet was recreated in the guest bath to bring cohesion to the connecting spaces. Taking a cue from the primary bath, the same large format porcelain tile with a bold agate vein lines the shower walls and serves as a backsplash for double stone sinks from Stone Forest. Floor tile is the same Breccia Marrone honed marble, this time in a hexagon pattern. Brushed brass accessories, lighting and hardware add stunning accents in this clean, modern space that evokes a luxury hotel.

This impressive remodel proves that a few structural changes, complemented by the perfect composition of high-quality materials and a designer's discriminating eye, can transform an outdated home into a showstopping space that embodies both functionality and elegance. ♦

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