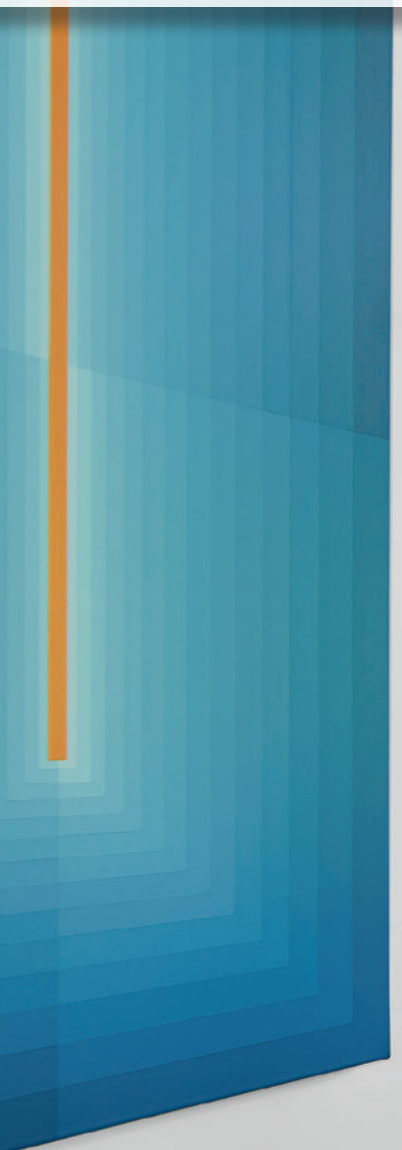


# MOTHER NATURE MEETS MODERN LIVING

BY KIMBERLY A. SUTA | PHOTOGRAPHY BY DROR BALDINGER AND AMANDA TERRY

A SERENE, WINDING ROAD LEADS YOU TO ELIZABETH HAYNES ARCHITECT'S RECENT PROJECT, WHICH IS TUCKED AWAY IN THE ALAMO HEIGHTS AREA ON A SURPRISINGLY LARGE TWO-ACRE SITE.



The cedar ceiling flows from the inside out to create a seamless interior to exterior space. The steel-wrapped fireplace by Cozy Outdoor Escapes, which opens to the dining room as well, is a suave addition, as is the stunning lighting fixture.

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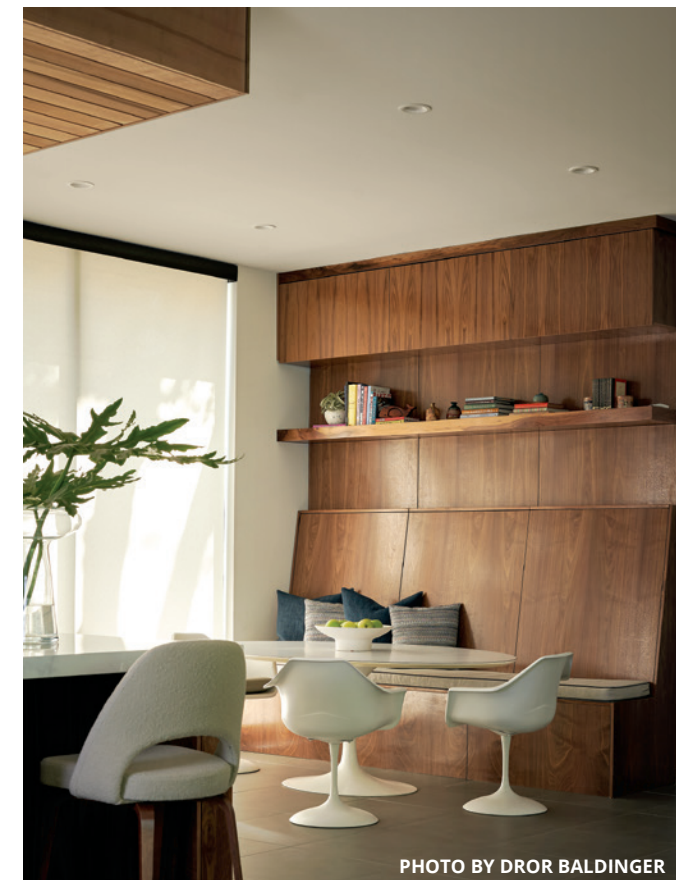


PHOTO BY DROR BALDINGER

ORIGINALLY, THE HOMEOWNERS PLANNED ON AN addition to their existing home, built in 1960, and a new-build casita on property, but ultimately the decision was made to only save the existing footprint of the original home with the addition of a primary suite. Elizabeth Haynes, AIA, connected with the clients through a current mentor who recognized they would be a perfect fit.

Although the project had some significant challenges, including rainwater that would drain across the site, eroding precious top soil, Elizabeth and the homeowners were

The ultra-modern kitchen makes a seamless presentation with flush appliances, white cabinets by Palmer Todd and a gray veined quartz by Sublime Custom Stone on the countertops and walls surrounding the window. Additionally, the walnut banquette and island cabinets, custom built by Ironside Building Group, lend balance to the room with warm natural tones.

keen to take it on. “I call the clients mavericks because nothing scared them. Those are fun clients, too,” she said. “It’s a contemporary project but still feels organic and part of the land.”

A giant oak tree served as the fulcrum for the build with all construction based and centered to provide scenic views of the ancient tree. The home is largely made up of steel, glass, cedar and stucco, but the significant use of windows, often floor to ceiling, served to truly showcase the idyllic environment. “We kept the landscape natural and paths

organic with winding trails so that every turn was exciting and fun, but again, the highlight was the oak tree. Every view from the house and the casita has a view of this oak tree. It just transports you when you walk onto the site,” explained Elizabeth.

The main house is comprised of living and dining areas, four bedrooms, each with an ensuite bath, a personal gym, home theatre and a swimming pool, while the casita has a kitchen, living/dining area, two bedrooms and two baths.



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Here again, everywhere you go, you will discover a picturesque view of the outdoors, including the stairwell with two-story windows on either side and a landing that bridges the upstairs rooms and doubles as a place to simply admire the scenery.

The homeowners found this magnificent dining table on their own in Leakey, Texas. The living-edged table is yet another natural touch that brings the entire modern organic motif to life when paired with the iconic Charles Rennie Mackintosh chair and other pieces from the homeowners' art collection.



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Incredible exterior views from the primary suite create a treehouse effect, with automated black shades that can be drawn as desired. Although not LEAD certified, this home does feature many smartly-incorporated capabilities. The walnut headboard with connected nightstands and bedframe artfully mirrors the TV wall, and was custom built by the team at Ironside Building Group. In addition to the light-filled bathroom with a spacious shower/bath wet room, the primary suite also includes a grand closet and dressing area and an attached sitting room and private office.



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A blend of modern minimalism and unabashed nature, both the main home and casita's clean lines of iron, warm Texas cedar and stucco plays both center stage and alluring backdrop to its beautiful surroundings. To solve the problem of the water drainage, the design team brought in a civil engineer as well as Landscape Architect, John Troy. The well-placed retaining wall helps to divert water right in front of the casita and direct it down towards the main house under the primary suite.



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Bright pops of color give the casita a more youthful vibe, yet it still retains a contemporary look and feel. The multi-colored blue tile in the kitchen stands out against a serene sea of white, while the rug, with its swooping rainbow of colors, adds a touch of playfulness to the living room. With two private bedrooms and baths, along with a comfortable common living area, the casita is ideal for overnight guests.

The clients really cherished the site and wanted to take advantage of all its innate assets with the ultimate goal to create a forever home that could be a family oasis. As they have young adult children, the casita offers a more private residence for family and guests.

“This would have to be one of my favorite projects from beginning to end. It was like meeting up with a group of friends every time,” confided Elizabeth.

The clients had previously worked with the chosen contractor on the project, Ironside Building Group, and really enjoyed the process of collaborating and designing on site. “Things change all the time, and we were continuously designing, even after finishing the drawings. I would draw on site, on a piece of wood, if I had to,” she elaborated.

The most stunning room in the house is the living room with high ceilings and two walls that are completely glass and steel, and a steel pivot door that leads outside to the elegant patio. It’s simplicity at its best. “The living room is kind of like a glass box, as I call it. It’s the entry point when on the site, where a guest would go. This used to be a screened porch in the original home so we wanted to keep that porch feeling. It feels like you’re outside but you’re not,” she said.

Throughout the house, the homeowners, along with the interior designer Holly Rabinowitz of Collected Design Studio, lovingly placed works of art in each thoughtfully-furnished room. The famous long-backed black chair by Charles Rennie Mackintosh in the dining room is just one notable example. “The clients’ style is very contemporary but also clean and just fun. They have fun taste when it comes to the lighting fixtures and artwork. Again, they’re not afraid to take risks,” shared Elizabeth.

As for Elizabeth, her joy comes from “just making func-

tional, happy places for my clients.” After working for the world-renowned Lake | Flato, she launched her own business over a decade ago and has been in the architectural field for about 20 years. However, she’s always had an artist’s spirit. “Growing up, I wanted to be an artist. It was my dream job as a little girl,” she said. “Then in Junior High I took geometry classes and absolutely loved it, so I asked my mom how can I put these together, and she said you should be an architect. I took some classes in college and fell in love and still love it.”

Having cut her teeth at Lake | Flato, Elizabeth learned to appreciate and facilitate the connections between the inside and the outdoors. “We were taught to look at sites and understand the sun’s path, where the breezes are coming in and know where to put those program spaces in the best area. You have to know your natural environment to design the spaces,” she explained.

Elizabeth also utilizes her experience and knowledge as a mother (now teenagers) to advise her residential clients, such as suggesting you might not want to put the kid’s room right next to the primary.

“Architects are also relationship managers. We work with couples and contractors to get them on the same page. I’m a people person so I love that aspect of it, too. Walking into a finished space and seeing the smiles and joy on their faces though... that’s hands down the best part of my job.” ♦

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