





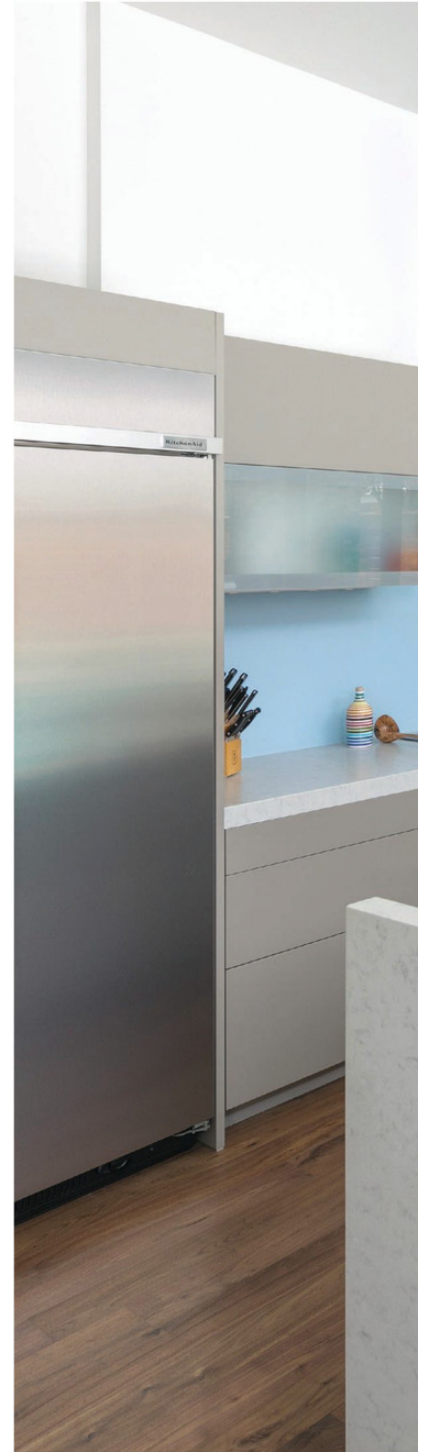


No one does indoor-outdoor living quite like the Aussies. Think open-air structures, natural materials, a calming palette and a host of environmentally specific design decisions. Sure, the practically perfect weather helps, along with the famously resort-minded residents. So, when John Warren and Jennifer Wallace Warren moved back to Houston after a stint in both Western and Southern Australia for John's job, it's no surprise this ethos followed them. "We had fallen in love with the Australian contemporary style while living there and considered building a warm Australian-style contemporary [home] when back in the States," says Jennifer. The Warrens enlisted an Australian architecture team, The Galvin Group, to design their dream home, and when they returned stateside, they called on 2Scale Architects' Greg Swedberg to make their dream a reality.

"They brought us a conceptual design," recalls Swedberg of the digital 3-D model that John

and Jennifer commissioned. The architect says his team's job was to bring it to fruition with the ability to withstand Houston's rainy springs and hot, humid summers—all while incorporating the clients' spatial and storage needs. "As much of a head start as it was," the architect says, "it also took a bit of backwards engineering." So began the process to transform a lot in Houston's Highland Village area into the Warrens' 3,855-square-foot, indoor-outdoor oasis.

A strong connection to the outdoors was clearly a top priority of 2Scale's design program. Witness the 27-foot wall of windows that (barely) separates the living and kitchen areas from the adjacent courtyard. Or the same system, on a smaller scale, that opens up the master bedroom to the pool. The Warrens wanted the windows to disappear when opened—not just fold in. Swedberg was tasked with creating walls that had extra thickness to pocket the massive sliding glass doors. In rooms that are necessarily enclosed, the architect found ways to bring the outside in. Take, for example, the clerestory windows that meet at a 90-degree corner





All of the cabinetry in the kitchen is by Poggenpohl. A pair of ovens, an induction stovetop, microwave drawer and dishwasher from Thermador appoint the space, along with a KitchenAid refrigerator, all purchased from Houston's K&N Kitchen Appliances. Opposite page: In the living room, a Heatilator fireplace is surrounded by rough-hewn Alamo Stone, a perfect complement to the walnut floors from Trinity Hardwood.







The same wood siding from the exterior was brought into the master bathroom. The free-standing tub is by MTI Baths from Lighting Inc., and the mosaic tile is from La Nova. Opposite page: The modern facade takes cues from the nature surrounding the home.



DESIGN DETAILS

TYPE

Single-family home

LOCATION

Highland Village

ARCHITECTURE

2Scale Architects
2scalearch.com

BUILDER

Winfrey Design Build
winfreydesignbuild.com

CONCEPTUAL DESIGN

The Galvin Group
galvingroup.com.au

POOL DESIGN

Lush Outdoor Living Inc.
lushoutdoors.com

RESOURCES

CHAIR KING

Select outdoor furniture pieces
chairking.com

LA NOVA

Mosaic tiles in bathrooms
lanovatile.com

POGGENPOHL

Cabinetry in kitchen
poggenpohl.com

THERMADOR

Cooking appliances in kitchen
thermador.com

TRINITY HARDWOOD

Walnut flooring throughout
trinityhardwood.net

WESTERN WINDOW SYSTEMS

Windows and doors throughout
westernwindowssystems.com

ZESTI WOODFIRED OVENS

Special-order pizza oven in courtyard
zesti.com.au

in the guest bathroom on the second floor, revealing the old oak trees that surround the property. Or the master bathroom that incorporates the same wood that clads the exterior facade. "It has nothing to do with resort-style living," says the architect. "It's all about feeling closer to nature."

When creating a house with such exposures, orientation to the sun is inevitably a huge factor. Swedberg says, "We took an approach to mitigate unnecessary use of the air conditioning"—a hard feat in Houston. To do this, west-facing walls were made mostly solid. "The bulk of our glass faces north and east," he says. The living room gets morning light, but by the time the afternoon sun peaks, and the homeowners are invariably poolside, the alfresco spaces are shaded by the rest of the home.

As for that courtyard, Swedberg says, he has to give the clients a lot of credit: "They came to the table with some cool things—we just had to find the right pool contractor to pull it off." The end result, which was completed by Lush Outdoor Living Inc., embodies the spirit of the entire project: a cutting-edge, modern design with a decided cool factor in the way of a transparent edge; a fire pit banquette that recesses into the pool with plenty of bench

seating; and the pool itself, which is surrounded by outdoor living essentials such as cozy chaise lounges, a dining table and chairs, and a pizza oven shipped in from an Australia maker (of course).

"We did not want a large home we could get lost in," says Jennifer, though the house is definitely sprawling. So Swedberg paid special attention to elements like ceiling heights and surface materials that impact the comfortableness of a room. "We always try to preserve a sense of human scale," he says. Examples of this are in the kitchen, where the ceiling was dropped intentionally to demarcate the space, and in the master bathroom, which has soaring ceilings to feel more like an outdoor room but with wood and mosaic tiles to tone down the room's immense spaciousness. "The whole house is a study of up and down, compression and release," the architect says. Jennifer seconds this notion: "We wanted something that retained a cozy, intimate feel when inside," she says. As for the final result, Jennifer admits to pinching herself on a daily basis. Swedberg concurs. "I have a good sense of how things are supposed to turn out, and sometimes I get surprised," he says. "I was pleasantly surprised with how this was put together." ■