

By ERIN QUINN-KONG

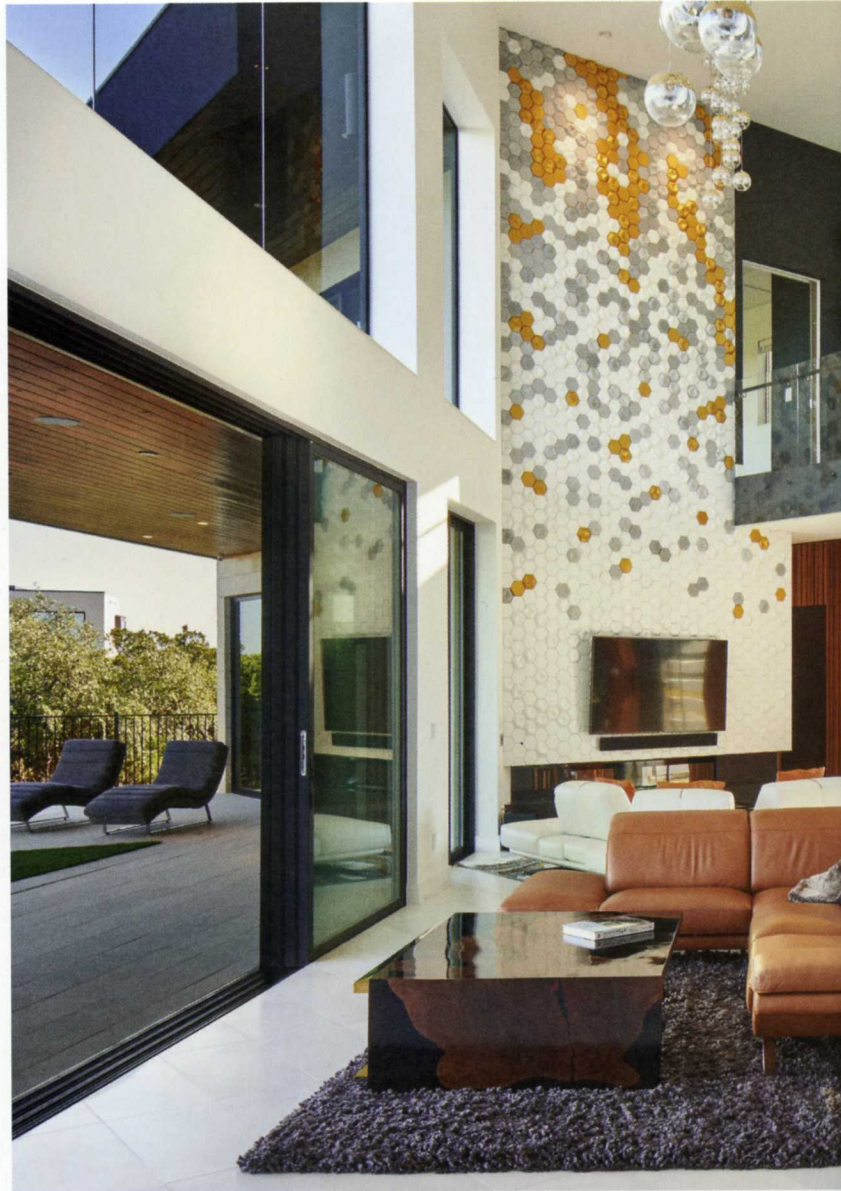
All the Right Angles



TO CREATE A TWO-FAMILY HOME
ON A LIMITED BUILDABLE ZONE,
AN ARCHITECT CAME UP WITH A
GEOMETRIC SOLUTION



W



When architect Winn Wittman got the call about designing a modern home in the Mirasol community overlooking Lake Travis, it came with a few challenges. The first was getting approval from two households instead of one. That's because the dwelling was for both the family of Faisal Momin, who is CEO of Start to Finish Construction and Design and STF Decor, and the family of his dentist brother, Samir. "Joint families are big in our culture," Momin says. "We wanted separate wings for both of us, but for it to feel like one house."

The challenge was not a new one for Wittman. "I have a lot of Indian clients, and it's more common for them to have family units like this, and it's typical for parents to come visit for several months at a time," he says. "The goal is for each [primary] suite to be equally amazing and unique."

Clockwise from top: The living room features a chandelier with 120 LED lights; the main kitchen has white lacquered cabinets with wood and stone accents; this primary bathroom has a sleek neutral palette.



The second constraint was that Wittman had to work within a limited buildable zone due to a significant amount of designated conservation area. Since the space was not rectangular, his solution was to design a parallelogram footprint, which seems simple but can be difficult to execute due to the unusual angles. The two-story structure has two wings, one for each primary suite, which were placed on separate floors and opposite ends of the house for extra privacy. The two families share the kitchen, living area, family room, and mezzanine that looks out over the living room and features built-in desks—something that has been very necessary with two children doing virtual schooling during the pandemic.

Along with the conservation area, consideration was also paid to the amazing views of Lake Travis and the orientation of the sun. “One interesting thing about the parallelogram worked in our favor: It protects the large glass back façade while still letting in light,” Wittman says. The negative-edge pool spa and fire pit were also designed as parallelograms.

The architect wanted to maintain the family’s views while keeping their energy costs low, and it worked. “Our typical house of 5,550 square feet uses only \$150 of electricity a month,” he says. His company makes sure to build with materials that reduce the energy consumption of the house, including energy-efficient glass, foam insulation, and reflective metals.

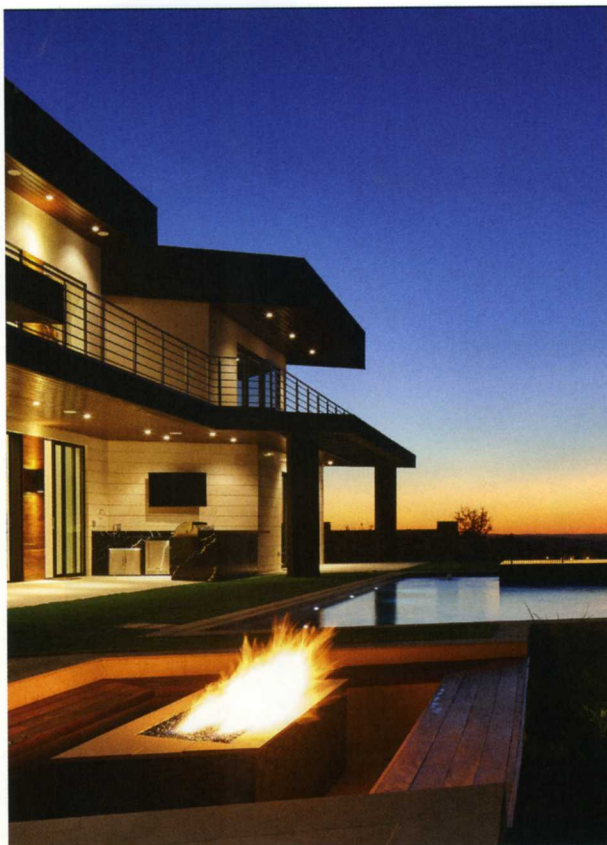
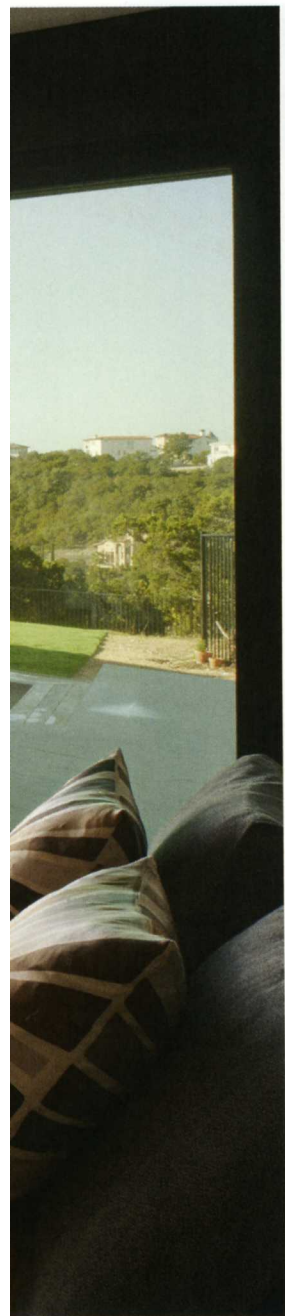
After the house was constructed, Momin took over to do the interiors. His goal was to create a space that was elegant and cozy—with an international twist.





“Everything was imported from other countries,” he says. The homeowner sourced fixtures, materials, and art from more than 15 countries, including stone from Egypt, Turkey, and Germany, custom-stained wood tile from Poland, cabinetry from Poland and Germany, and interior doors and art from Spain.

He also designed several pieces of furniture himself, including two of the most striking showpieces: the ball-hanging chandelier in the living room, which features 120 LED lights, and the resin-and-wood dining room table, made with wood imported from Vietnam. It weighs 600 pounds and took 12 people to install. “I wanted a huge table,” he says. “It’s almost 10 feet long, 48 inches wide, and 4 inches thick.” Since creating the table for his home, Momin has gone on to sell more than 30 of the tables to customers of his business.



Art is another one of Momin's loves. Since the living room has such expansive walls to decorate, he asked local artists in Spain to drastically increase the size of their work. The result is large, bold paintings on the wall—some of which are 8 feet by 10 feet.

One area of the home that's gotten more use than Momin planned for is the state-of-the-art kitchen. "I usually eat out every day, so I never thought I would use the steam oven or the microwave or the coffeemaker, but I thought 'might as well get the best,'" he says. Since the pandemic hit, he has turned into quite the cook, and he started eating every meal at home. His favorite dishes to cook? "Anything to do with meat," says Momin, who regularly grills steak and shrimp.

Now that both families have been living in the home for a year and a half, both Wittman and Momin look back at making the house a reality with fondness. "It was a really enjoyable project," Wittman says. "Their vision was in sync with our sensibilities and wheelhouse."

Momin agrees and says the end result has been perfect for his and his brother's families: "We've made full use of the house, every corner." ■



Opposite page: This primary bedroom includes custom artwork and a view of the patio. This page, from top: The rear patio has a negative-edge pool and a fire pit; the living room opens up to the pool area.