

# austin home

## Modern Family

An Urban Enclave Built for an Architect Couple's Growing Household



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A cantilevered roof reflects the floor plan's 21-degree orientation on the south property line.



By Anna Mazurek 🏠 Photographs by Andrea Calo

# A Fresh Angle

This Allandale home is configured around a protected cedar elm

5706





The verdant yard is accented with bright chairs by Kanna.

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**The neighborhood of** Allandale met all the criteria that architect Jed Duhon and his husband, Michael Harper, wanted for their two children: a pedestrian-friendly area that's within walking distance of restaurants, grocery stores, and a public library. "My son rides his bike to his school most days, and my daughter's school is only two miles from home," explains Duhon, principal architect at Studio Steinbomer, which designed the family's new 3,300-square-foot, two-story build on a quarter-acre lot. "I also appreciate that there are many similarly aged kids nearby, whom my kids will run off and play [with] in the neighborhood, just as I did as a kid."

A large protected cedar elm tree in the backyard became the centerpiece for the modern design. "I creatively angled the floor plan 21 degrees from the south property line, carving out a wedge for the tree to grow and provide shade for the house," Duhon says. "The 21-degree angle shows up throughout the house and creates the large, cantilevered roof wing on the front of the house."

His initial approach to the design focused on a glass enclosure with carefully positioned solid walls to maximize natural light in the five-bedroom and five-and-a-half-bath house. "All primary bedrooms, kitchen, living, dining, and office have direct views of the landscape and trees of the private rear yard, and all bathrooms and closets have windows for natural light," Duhon explains. "During daytime hours, most of the house functions with plenty of natural light without using any artificial lighting." The Austin Energy Green Building Program awarded the house a five-star rating for sustainability.



A brick wall in the guest room creates continuity between the home's facade and interior.

To find the right balance between light and privacy, he studied several options for arranging the open pattern layered over the dining room windows. For the exterior, a combination of brick, stucco, and an Acme cladding were used because they are durable, low maintenance, and require no painting.

The open floor plan offers continuity between interior and exterior spaces, a priority for the family. The living room opens fully to an outdoor kitchen with an L-shaped lift-slide door system, which has stacking doors that slide in both directions. Due to the sloped ceiling, the door panels had to be custom-made by the manufacturer, Loewen, and a team of installers spent a week putting them in.

Since the outdoor space was just as important as the indoor, Duhon's biggest struggle was weighing the square footage between the two. "It was critical to the design to have the primary bedroom, guest bedroom, office, kitchen, dining room, [and] living room all strategically spaced to be used flexibly along with the outdoor spaces, which was a delicate balance," says Duhon, who strongly believes in the health benefits of having visual connections with the outdoors and nature. "The outdoor spaces were integrated into the overall floor plans and functionality of our daily living."

Last summer, Duhon's 13-year-old daughter and 11-year-old son enjoyed the outdoor spaces and hosted impromptu

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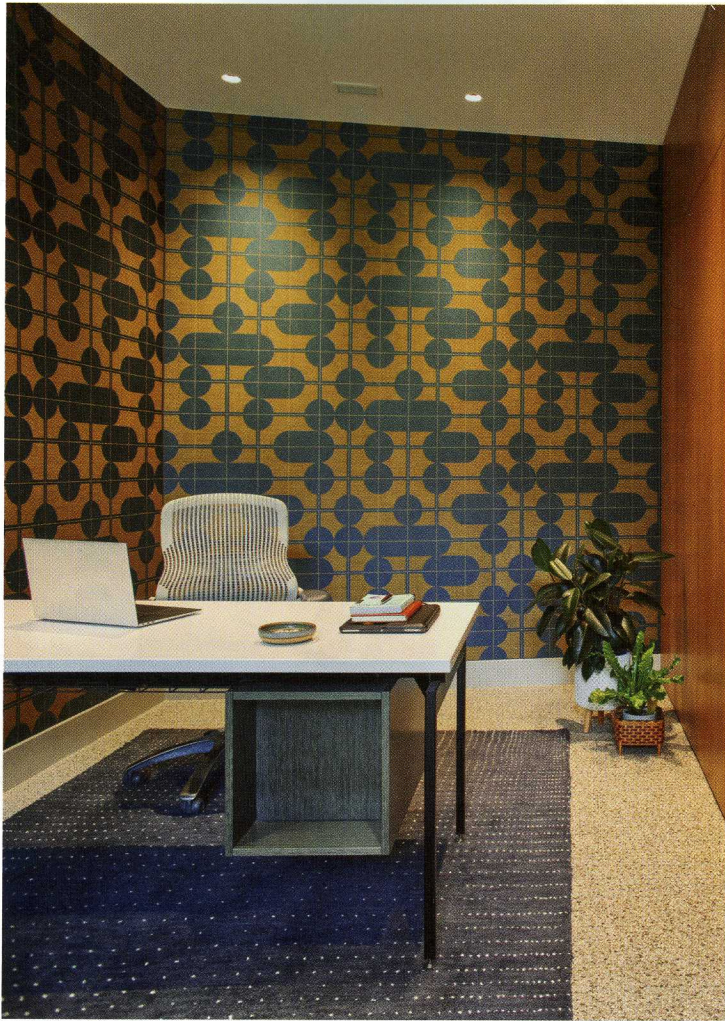
Stacking doors that slide in both directions open the living room to an outdoor kitchen.



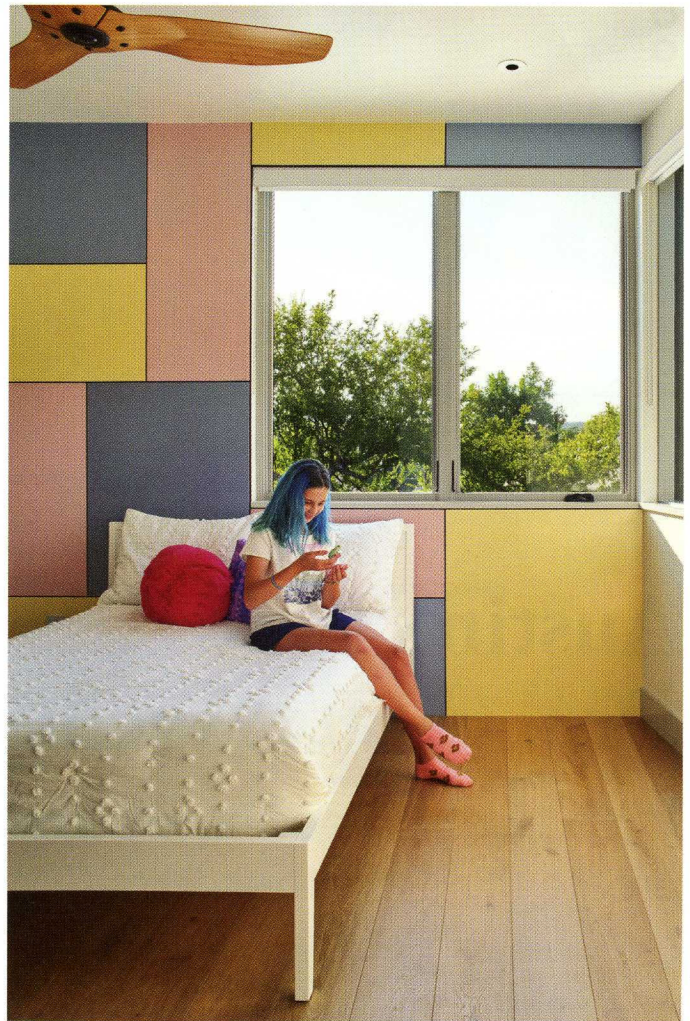
A floating bench in the breakfast nook was crafted from rift-sawn white oak and stained to match the kitchen cabinets.







Creative wall treatments include a Koro-seal wallcovering in the office (left) and colorful panel systems in the kids' rooms (right).



neighborhood pool parties. “I designed an outdoor pool bath, shower, and outdoor refrigerator—all intentionally planned to keep the kids outside for many hours,” says Duhon, noting that adults can sit on the covered patio or indoors while still having direct views of the children playing.

He did most of the interiors himself and consulted interior designer Amity Worrel, who helped select the porcelain tile used for the majority of the ground level and the white oak flooring installed on the second floor. He also designed a colorful wooden wall panel system to add character to each of the children’s bedrooms. “Each kid selected the colors for their room—with a little guidance from me,” Duhon says. His daughter chose pink, yellow, and gray, while his son selected navy, gray, and teal. Each of their bedrooms includes a walk-in closet with built-in drawers and adjustable shelving for efficiently storing their toys and crafts. Both rooms are located on the second floor, along with a guest bedroom and a family room with a balcony overlooking the neighborhood. Duhon points out that the family room has some of the best natural light in the house and features a surround-sound TV, video games, and a sectional sofa mainly used by the children. “It’s perfect for the kids and their friends, so that they can have a place for TV or board games while the adults entertain downstairs,” he says.

One challenge of designing his own home was ensuring that his husband was included in the process. “I intentionally communicated to Michael as a client so he could better understand the design and construction process,” Duhon says. “He trusted my design decisions, but at the same time, I didn’t want to create any surprises for him.” ▲