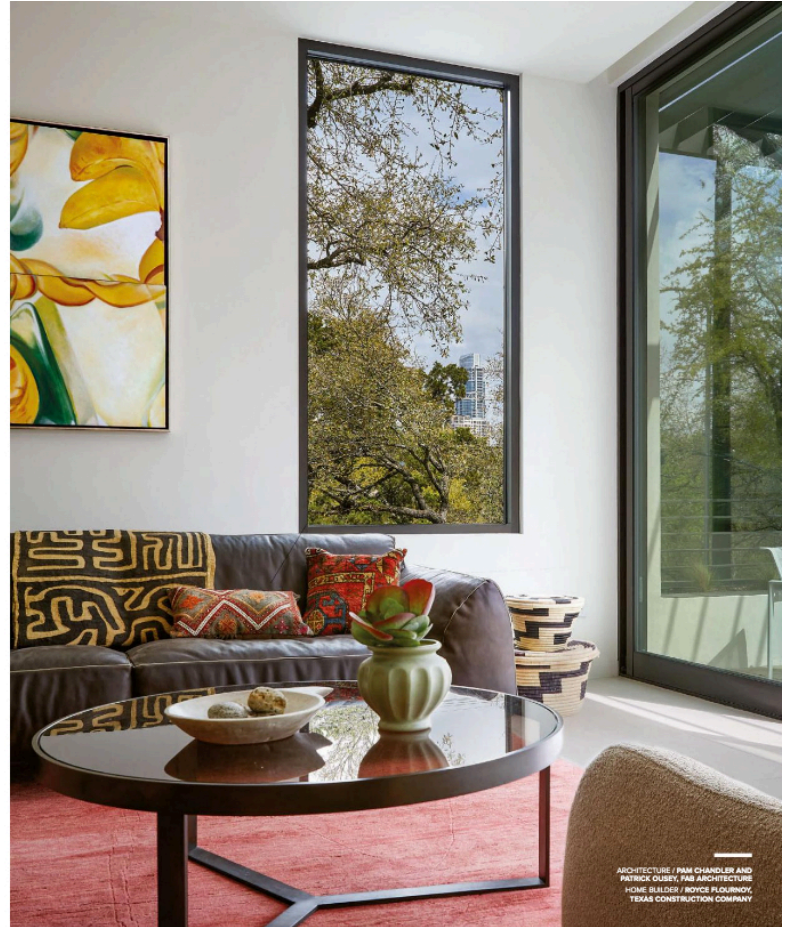


# BRIGHT FUTURE

A COUPLE ENLISTS A PROVEN TEAM TO REALIZE THEIR  
DREAM OF A MODERN HOME NEAR DOWNTOWN AUSTIN.

WRITTEN BY TATE GUNNERSON / PHOTOGRAPHY BY DORIS BALDINGER



ARCHITECTURE / FRANK CHANDLER AND  
PATRICK DUBBY, FRANK ARCHITECTURE  
HOME BUILDER / BOYCE FLOUNNOY,  
TEXAS CONSTRUCTION COMPANY

With its music scene, tech industry and scenic lake trail, Austin is attracting throngs of new residents. As two of its newest, a couple from West Lake Hills nearing retirement decided to swap their longtime estate for a sloped lot three blocks from the city skyline. "We wanted to build a house with all the amenities that would allow us to stay there for the rest of our lives," the wife says. "We were looking toward the future."

In place of the property's existing house, the couple envisioned a modern abode. "Clean lines that celebrate structure have always appealed to us," the wife says. "That's how we approach our lives, too. We appreciate the details that create a happy environment, but the underlying structure of things—buildings, relationships, art, books, marriage, even golf—keeps us honest and on solid footing and makes for a deep contentment." Inspired by this mind-set, architects Patrick Ousey and Pam Chandler, with project manager Kristen Brown, blueprinted a monolithic residence executed by builder Royce Flournoy, whose project manager was Peter Grant. It was a reunion of sorts for the architects and builder, who had collaborated on past projects. "We all had a sense of trust with each other," Flournoy says. "That led to a very positive outcome."

Not everything on the site was demolished, though. Flournoy and his crew preserved the lot's lush heritage oak and palm trees and kept portions of the original house that could be used for the new build. "The clients wanted to carry a piece of the old home forward," Flournoy explains. So at the direction of the owners and based on a design by the architects, the team salvaged a concrete retaining wall, essentially building a portion of the new residence on top of it. "The rough old wall is a great counterpoint to the new slick surfaces," the wife says. Now part of a modern structure, the wall defines an intimate courtyard and the lower-level guest suite, where it remains exposed.

Mark Brechler of Pearson Landscape installed this Austin home's landscaping as well as the fencing and gates, an iron-wood deck, the outdoor lighting and the concrete stepping stones. The steel-and-glass pivot entry door with two steel side panels was designed by FAB Architecture and fabricated by Steel House MFG.







Porcelain-tile flooring from Architectural Tile & Stone complements a plasterwork wall by Mission Plastering in the living area. The wall showcases a Montigo fireplace from Perini & Company and custom steel niches designed by P&B Architecture and constructed by Steel House MFG. Also a Dorji rug by Colgaard Carpets from David Alan Rugs are a sofa from Nest Modern, B&B ball armchairs and a custom coffee table designed by P&B Architecture and built by Laura Garanzuzy Studio.

The rough-hewn surface of the wall juxtaposes the three-level home's white-plaster exterior, which features a flat roofline with few adornments—a deliberate nod to the classic modernism of the 1920s and '30s. A spacious outdoor main terrace extends the living area outward while offering bird's-eye views of the neighborhood and city just beyond. "It pulls you out to the edge of the site and captures the downtown vistas," Ousey says.

Large overhangs offer privacy while protecting the interior from harsh summer sunlight. At the same time, various openings that lead to a series of terraces expand from wall to wall and floor to ceiling. The clerestory windows have no headers, which enables indirect light to filter inside. "It allows the spaces to feel more expansive, and the walls seem to melt away," Chandler says.

Inside, a central staircase with floating wood treads and a vertical slotted-steel screen in place of a guardrail creates a focal point throughout the house. In essence, this feature is the home's only circulation path, so the architects labored to make it special. "It's a visually lively, light-filled element in this very simple space," Chandler says, pointing to a double-height window at the landing of the stairs.

Requiring close collaboration among several craftsmen, the stairway's complex intersection of horizontal, vertical and diagonal lines creates a dramatic backdrop for the open kitchen, where gray quartz countertops play off both the steel elements and the white laminated-melamine cabinetry that appears to recede into the walls. "The owners wanted a very minimal project—as contemporary as we could make it," Ousey says. When closed, the cabinets create a simple, clean backdrop.

Expansive Heritage glass windows and doors from Exclusive Windows and Doors of Austin connect the living area to a terrace that dons pavers installed by Thomas Kutzsch of Arcan Architectural Inc. A home automation system by Unified Integration allows the homeowners to enjoy their favorite music while relaxing in Richard Schultz for Knoll 1966 lounge chairs from Scott + Cozner.

Several of the interior walls wear the same steel-troweled plaster as the exterior. "We played with subtle shifts in material," Chandler explains. The plaster wraps around the wall between the foyer and dining area and makes an encore appearance in the living room. There, it adds texture to a wall outfitted with a linear horizontal fireplace and steel shelves showcasing the homeowners' pottery pieces.

"We were aware of our clients' art, objects and furnishings and planned appropriate spaces for them," Ousey says. As such, white walls and porcelain-tile flooring provide a gallery-like backdrop for the decor, which the homeowners arranged with consultation from interior designer Janet Balser of Janet Balser Design. A solid-red rug adds softness and color to the living area, where a leather sofa and a pair of contemporary chairs create the warm, modern look the owners envisioned. The formula was reinforced in the master bedroom—a light-filled space with a vibrant patterned rug and a chaise lounge positioned with views out the corner windows.

Constituting the entire third floor, the serene master suite also includes a gleaming white bathroom, an intimate sitting area and two covered terraces, where the wife enjoys her morning coffee in unexpected solace. "Even though I'm looking out over the neighborhood," she explains, "nobody is looking back at me."

There's even more privacy on the rooftop terrace, which features a hot tub and fireplace. It's the ideal spot for watching the New Year's Eve fireworks over downtown Austin, as the owners experienced with close friends just a couple of weeks after moving in. "We have a crop-dead gorgeous view of the city," the wife says, adding the project was a great collaboration all around. "We gave the architects a three-page list of our needs and wants for the home, and they fulfilled every single item."







**Left:** A Hubbardton Forge chandelier from Lights Fantastic illuminates the Mottogress dining room table from Scott + Clasper. The side chairs, which have walnut legs, are vintage Eric Saarinen Executive armchairs for Knoll from Metro Retro Furniture; the host chairs are the same but sport oak legs as well as Kelly Wearstler for Groundworks fabric from Stockton House Laffey upholstered by Under Cover Art is from the owners' collection.

**Opposite:** Leucht's kitchen cabinetry serves as a minimal and functional backdrop for the open living and dining areas. The waterfall island's Calacatta marble countertop is from Architecture Tile & Stone. Steel House MFG fabricated the adjacent central stair structure and steel screen, which FAB Architecture designed.

An exposed-concrete retaining wall from the original home remains on the site, running through the guest bedroom and bathroom. The maple headboard and table lamp are from Copenhagen Imports. The bathroom's V&V hardware from Alexander Merchant pairs with Anemone's Logica single-suspension light from Lights Fantastic. The faucet is Rohl from Moore Supply Co.; TNC Carpentry Services fabricated the cabinetry.



Kundalini sconces from Lights Fantastic shine in the master bathroom (below, left), where cabinetry melds with Calacatan stone countertops and a backsplash by Porcelanosa from Architecture Tile & Stone. The faucet is by Patricia Urquiola for Aesir from Moore Supply Co. Art from the owners' collection adds warmth, as do a wax Balmes stool and an Italian agamé mirror paired in the vanity area below, right.

