



# BUILDING MEMORIES

By Julie Catalano Photography by Nick Johnson

*For a nature-loving family from Austin, a waterfront weekend home in the Hill Country became a special place to create lasting memories of good times together.*



**O**n the family's initial visit to the private community of Frio Cañon, the 3.5-acre site was love at first sight: "The combination of crystal clear spring water and giant cypress trees that line the Frio River," recalls the homeowner. "It's just an incredible spot."

"They were really excited about the country experience and being in a good place to raise kids," says David Dagleish, builder and owner of Dagleish Construction Company in Aus-

tin, and founder and developer of Frio Cañon, a 200-acre development near Leakey that includes more than 100 acres of wildlife preserve, hiking trails, a history trail, and swimming and kayaking on the Frio River ([www.friocanon.com](http://www.friocanon.com)).

For this country-style project of nearly 7,500 square feet encompassing three buildings — main lodge, sleeping cottage and guest quarters over the three-car garage — the emphasis was on craftsmanship over showmanship, resulting in "an air of authenticity in the home," says Dagleish.



PAUL FINKEL

Natural materials like exterior limestone, rough sawn cedar board and batten siding, reclaimed barn wood inside and out, reclaimed oak flooring from century-old fencing sourced from Kentucky and Tennessee, and limestone floor and patio tiles display an exquisite attention to detail that “makes you feel like you’ve gone back 100 years when people cared about fine craftsmanship.” The architectural and design team included David Shiflet, Shiflet Group Architects; Blair Burton,

Blair Burton Interiors; and landscaping by Rick Scheen ASLA, LandWest Design Group Ltd., all of Austin. The 3,500-square-foot main lodge boasts an open floor plan of living, dining and kitchen areas warmed by an impressive limestone fireplace. Sunlight streams through a custom structural steel ridge skylight over hand hewn timber beams from a 19th century Vermont barn and a custom Paul Ferrante chandelier from George Cameron Nash. Cus-

tom Shaker cabinets by KingWood Fine Cabinetry in Fredericksburg, Caesarstone® countertops from Alpha Granite, and a distressed and stained island by Evco Painting grace the sleek yet welcoming kitchen. Lueders limestone tiles from Hill Country Stone in Kerrville were hand tooled “to make it look like an old floor that’s been walked on for hundreds of years,” says Dagleish. Other distinctive touches include 1 x 6 horizontal painted poplar

planking wall treatments throughout the home, and custom vertical grain incense cedar exterior doors and windows. In the living area, pocket doors slip seamlessly out of sight to showcase the home’s inviting screened wraparound porch — a favorite of homeowner and builder alike — that make the space truly indoor/outdoor. “For half the year, those doors are open,” says the homeowner, for lively games of ping-pong or board games, grilling in the outdoor kitchen, or just relaxing



on couches with wine and conversation by the corner fireplace. “There is a television in the main lodge,” says Dalglish, “but it’s behind French doors. The homeowners didn’t want it or video games to be the focus.”

A subtle, soothing palette of colors from nature allows furnishings and artwork to shine, particularly the unique items found on trips to the Marburger Farm Antique Show at Round Top. An extra special find is the French country

dining table that evokes happy memories of a family trip to France.

At day’s end, the family retires to the nearby detached 1,500-square-foot sleeping cottage, where each of the three bedrooms has a loft and bathroom, with a shared kitchenette. Guests head for the 1,000-square-foot studio-style living quarters above the three-car garage, with a queen bed, sitting area, double bunks and bath.

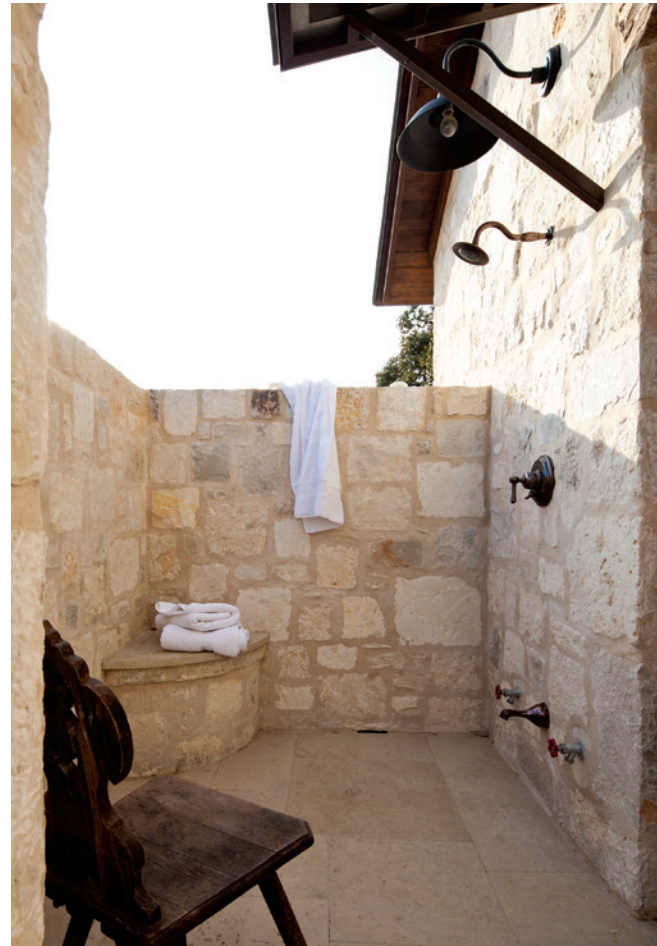


If this sounds like a glorious summer camp, that was the idea, says the homeowner, who wanted family and friends to enjoy outdoor activities, then relax in their own sleeping areas to rest up for another day of carefree fun. “The kids can be at the river the entire day and come back at dark. There’s a rope swing, the kayaks, water bikes and floaties,” he says. “They love it.”

Soon there will be even more to love, with the construction of a fourth structure — a 1,500-square-foot master suite comprised of three bedrooms and three baths, connected to the main lodge with a 25-foot delicate steel and glass enclosed bridge, continuing the design style and theme of a family camp-style retreat, a trend that Dalglish says is becoming more popular in second homes. Homeowners want ample square footage (the addition will bring this compound to approximately 9,000 total) but not necessarily all in one place. “So architects and designers break it down into cottage scale. It’s much more heartwarming to walk into something that feels like a cabin than an auditorium.”

The magic of the home’s setting, says the homeowner, “is not due to one thing. It’s everything — the river, trees, change in elevation, the cool breezes that come up the river.” A favorite part of the day is the evening, when “behind the porch, between the house and the river, is like a giant football field that gets a lot of use, whether it’s kickball or throwing a football





or kids just running around.” With no light pollution from big cities, the night sky is brilliant with countless stars to watch and reflect on treasured memories that will last a lifetime. “I love this house,” says the homeowner. “I hope it stays in our family forever.” ♦

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