



FARMHOUSE + MODERN

By Claudia Alarcon | Photography by Paul Finkel

Designing for function and convenience while maintaining an inviting environment can be a tricky proposition, yet it's a balance highly sought after by homeowners today. That's why architects are gravitating towards Farmhouse Modern, a design that blends traditional with a touch of industrial, and the sleek elegance of modern.

Tarrytown, one of the oldest neighborhoods in Austin, has seen its share of change over the years. Architectural styles have varied from craftsman bungalows to Spanish-inspired homes and even Greek revival mansions. Today, modern constructions are popping up among the tree-line streets, not always blending in with the surrounding homes. April Clark AIA and Ed Richardson AIA, principals of Clark Richardson Architects, sought to make a more seamless transition into the neighborhood by using the Farmhouse Modern style for this house designed for a private investor and built by Hudson Design Development.



“Our Tarrytown residence adopts the Farmhouse Modern aesthetic while still embracing the urban neighborhood context,” says architect April Clark. “In a typical urban situation, we prefer to strike a balance between the client’s desired aesthetic, scale of the neighborhood and the demands of the program. To us, the Farmhouse Modern style is a blending of modern architectural concepts, such as an open floor plan, with a more traditional form and a muted material palette that adds warmth.”

The home features classic gables that form a high peak over a flat-roof car canopy. The gables are made from white siding from James Hardie®, outlined by black metal paneling that traces the flush eaves and wraps into the entry patio continuing across the carport. “The intersecting of these initial forms, the traditional with the modern, and the way their material

detailing follows their lead, is the simple standard for how we executed the entire design,” says Clark.

Beyond a wood accent wall on the ground floor is the kitchen and open dining and living spaces. These wrap around a screened porch with glass doors that lead to the kitchen on one side and double screen doors that open to the ample backyard on the other, expanding the home into the outdoors in a comfortable way.

With the goal of maximizing the layout of the four-bedroom, four-bath single family residence, the stair became a vertical spine linking foyer spaces on the first and second floors, allowing the foyer to function as a traffic hub for the rest of the home. The private foyer space at the second-floor landing leads to two bedrooms — one stacked above the first-floor guest suite, and the master suite overlooking the backyard. The master suite features a second story screened balcony with wire mesh railing on the bottom portion for



added safety while still maintaining the transparency and openness of the balcony.

The team extended the space further with a large third-story attic space, hidden from the front street façade by design for privacy of the homeowners. Designed as a multipurpose space with a counter, sink and undercounter fridge, it opens into a large sun deck that expands the attic space, allows for more natural light and provides a treehouse atmosphere. “We imagined this space could be used as a play room for kids, extra guest bedroom or even a movie or exercise room,” says Clark. “By tucking the attic into the formal massing of the roof and then carving out the outdoor balcony, we were able to expand the useable area of the home without increasing the perceptible size of the house from the street.”

Efficiency and a small carbon footprint were important considerations for the project. First, the compact design minimizes the concrete area. “Cement, the main component of concrete, is one of the primary producers of carbon dioxide,” explains Clark. The team used spray foam insulation throughout, making the home very tight and keeping outside sounds





muted, as well as high performance, Low E windows with low Solar Heat Gain Coefficients (SHGC). The SHGC is the amount of solar heat gain that is admitted, so the lower the number, the less solar radiation that passes. This essentially blocks heat gain while allowing for natural light to pass, which is critical in the Central Texas climate. “Additionally, the size and locations of the windows were designed to maximize the natural daylight while minimizing heat gain based on the locations. Thoughtful design and placement of windows goes a long way towards reducing electric lighting use and minimizing the demand on the air conditioning,” says Clark. For extra energy savings, can lights throughout the house use LED bulbs, which consume less energy.

The architects relied on Rachel Horn Interiors for material selections such as wood species, tile selections, cabinet style and fixtures. White oak flooring and accents play a central role

in maintaining the warmth of the spaces and balance the minimal modern detailing. The kitchen features European cabinetry by Bauformat®, a stove and convection oven by Bertazzoni Italia, and the kitchen counter and island are a manufactured quartz. Clark adds, “Interior materials are simple and elegant, contributing to the clean lines of the house and setting the backdrop for the homeowners’ own personalities.”

By making full use of Farmhouse Modern ideology, the team’s successful combination of traditional and modern materials, complemented by a clean and warm palette, creates a sophisticated environment that does not feel pretentious or unapproachable, and respectfully joins existing homes in its classic neighborhood. ♦

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