



# ENDLESS SUMMER

By Julie Catalano Photography by Paul Finkel

*An Austin family looking for a Hill Country escape found a year-round waterfront retreat that hits all the right notes.*



“**T**hey wanted a family gathering place for their kids, grandkids and friends’ kids,” says David Dagleish, president and owner of Dagleish Construction Company in Austin, and founder/developer of Frio Cañon, a private development near Leakey with 75 acres of scenic home sites and 120 acres of common property. The team consisted of Dagleish, the company’s Hill Country Division senior project manager Darin Alford, and Summit Landscape Group of Hondo.

“It was a big leap for us,” says the homeowner, “but we knew in our hearts it was right.” What sealed the deal was Dagleish describing his overarching vision for the family-friendly Frio Cañon community offering fishing, kayaking, nature trails, wildlife reserve and more.

“When he used the words ‘summer camp,’” says the home-

owner, who treasures her time as a former children’s camp counselor, “I was in.”

It’s certainly a picturesque locale to spend a summer — or anytime. Against a bucolic setting, exterior materials blend beauty, practicality and history — a limestone skirt in random pattern with a slurried mortar complements rough-sawn cedar, and board and batten siding with a specialized stain gives the appearance of old barnwood. Andersen™ E-Series windows add a playful pop of color with a Fire Engine Red clad exterior. Overhead, the paint grip standing seam roof conjures the venerable German craftsmanship of another Hill Country town. “You’ll see a lot of hand-hemmed ridge roofs in Fredericksburg,” says Dagleish. “It’s what they did at the turn of the 20th century.”

This roof style is used on all the structures on the 1.7-acre lot, including a building dubbed the Kids Kabin — a playroom-

style space for games, television and extra sleeping quarters if needed. Another separate hut-style building houses a dry sauna for the family and guests to enjoy.

The 600-square-foot single-car garage with barnwood-style door, workshop and attached carport welcomes guests to king suite quarters on the second floor, with kitchenette, bath and reading bay.

The one-story, 2,732-square-foot main house consists of the primary living, kitchen, dining area, two bedrooms, utility room and powder bath. On the left side of the living area, a connected master wing provides a peaceful, inspiring view of the Frio River through a horizontal expanse of windows and reading bay. On the right side, a grandmother’s suite is tucked behind a stone wall that separates the private quarters from the main living area, giving the charming impression of “an add-on to the side of an old building,” says Dagleish. (And yes, there is a real grandmother.)

Striking wood flooring in the living area, bedrooms and hallways is antique reclaimed oak Kentucky fence from Quality Hardwoods in Fredericksburg, the black marks a reminder of controlled burns in meadows and fields. Its hard, unflappable surface is perfect for the family’s active indoor-outdoor lifestyle and perpetual foot traffic. “It’s what I call wet dog architecture,” says Dagleish of the durable wood





that holds up to just about anything, including a dripping pooch scrambling through. The gas fireplace surround and mantel are crafted in Texas limestone.

The kitchen features countertops in a variation of Caesarstone® and stainless steel, with clay tile backsplash from Clay Imports. The island is topped with stained butcher block and illuminated by ELK Lighting pendants from Ferguson. The appliance package is KitchenAid®, including refrigerator, range and oven. Custom cabinetry is not overlay, explains Dalglish, but “more of an authentic cottage style.”

Behind the nearby informal dining table, bench and chairs are wood walls of vertical planking in paint grade penny gap poplar, repeated on the side of the island and ceiling. Beams

of stained Douglas Fir form a tray ceiling, an impressive architectural feature that spans the living area.

Attention to detail ruled throughout the project, says the homeowner, “everything from coordinating colors and textures to the landscaping. They were very conscientious about the materials used.” The homeowners’ daughter worked with the family to choose practical indoor/outdoor furnishings that endure while providing cozy comfort for relaxing or an impromptu singalong — a favorite activity of the musically-inclined family that plays piano, drums, guitar and keyboard.

Hands down, the most popular room in the house is the screened porch, which faces the rightful star of the show — the Frio River. “It’s where everyone wants to hang out,” says Dalglish of the porch space that runs parallel to the main living area where an outdoor living and dining area beckon with television and nearby grill. Porch flooring is Ipe, a smooth, rich-looking South American hardwood that is “so dense it doesn’t float,” says Dalglish, and installed with hidden fasteners for a seamless look that lasts for decades.

Clear view mesh porch window screens were chosen specifically for their thinner, tighter weaves that provide an almost transparent view of the outdoors with a “hidden” feature that scores high on practicality. “Each screen is self-contained,” says Dalglish. “If it gets torn or damaged, you remove the wood stops, pop out the screen, get it repaired and set it back in.”

The lawn slopes gently downward toward the river and the dock, where family and friends enjoy a spectacular stretch of the cold, clear Frio River and its majestic cypress trees — often a prime spot for outdoor family concerts, a spontaneous neighborhood baseball game or simply stargazing under the endless night sky.

From a longtime wish for a “camp house” came “so much more than we ever dreamed,” says the homeowner. “This beautiful home on this beautiful river, it’s thrilling. The bonus is that this community is so special. We’ve made great friendships here that we will treasure forever.” ♦

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