

# CHANNELING CHILDHOOD

A COUPLE REIMAGINES THEIR AUSTIN HOME  
WITH MEMORIES FROM FAVORITE DESTINATIONS  
AND GENERAL FEEL-GOOD VIBES  
FROM GROWING UP ABROAD.

By **Claudia Alarcón** | Photography by **Avery Nicole Photography**







AFTER LIVING IN THEIR TRADITIONAL, COLONIAL-style home in Rob Roy for many years, the homeowners decided it was time for a change. They always knew that someday they would want to transform the home into a modern version of itself — the existing bones were good, but it needed a makeover to suit their lifestyle and aesthetic. Ready to turn their vision into reality, they engaged local architect Katie Hastings and interior designer Ariel Bleich.

“When I first met the homeowner, she brought a stack of magazine clippings,” says Bleich. “But they were not room examples, just images she loved showing color, texture, travel destinations and even food. She wanted her house to convey a certain feeling, like the images did. They were actively engaged in the design, but deferred to Katie and me to bring the vision to life.” The builders for the project were Jim Behl and Ryan Brown, with Luxe Endeavors.

The homeowner grew up in Paris, France, and then moved to Costa Rica where she met her husband, who had spent his childhood living and exploring the beauty of Costa Rica. “When we looked through her stack [of magazines], we talked about creating a finish scheme that reminded her of the places in which she had lived while also conveying the feeling you’d have on a relaxing vacation. Connecting the interior and exterior was a key part of the project, and

incorporates the way they live and entertain,” says Bleich.

Hastings worked with the structure, infusing a modern character to the exterior with all new windows and railings, a double steel column detail at the front balcony, a steel and glass front door system and a master suite addition. The house is about 4,500 square feet, of which 1,100 square feet were added to the original building. It has four bedrooms and five full bathrooms, a full kitchen, a secondary kitchen/laundry area adjacent to the pool room, a TV room and a hidden office.

The back of the home wraps around a central courtyard pool area, which allows the interior and exterior to blend seamlessly. There are two large door systems that open to the backyard making the spaces feel like one — one in the living area and the other in the pool room, near the back entry and second kitchenette.

Bleich maintained a neutral color palette in whites and greys, adding touches of color and form with custom draperies, area rugs and interesting light fixtures throughout the house. “My favorite room in the house is the front living room with the second fireplace,” says Bleich. “I love the light in that room and the way you see the space when you walk in the entryway. It’s an inviting room with its mix of colors, textures and furniture. It makes you feel like you’re on a sunny vacation every day.”







The curvy light fixture from Y Lighting adds a bit of sophistication, as does the female sculpture that the homeowner found one day while shopping. “She wanted to buy it as soon as she saw the sculpture but was unsure how it would fit into the new remodel,” says Bleich. “Six months later, she went back and decided it was meant to be since it was still for sale. During the renovation, we made sure to make it a feature in the living room.”

The bright, neutral kitchen boasts shaker-style cabinets painted in White Flour from Sherwin Williams®, while the island is coated in PPG Tradewinds. Both have brass hardware from Top Knobs and porcelain countertops with a faux marble finish. The custom floating shelves above the sink are white oak, stained to match the bleached, 7-inch plank flooring throughout the home. The Newport Brass faucet ties into the cabinet fixtures.

A plaster vent hood above the range is surrounded by white subway tile with a handmade look to contrast with the stainless-steel appliances from Sub-Zero® and Thermador®. Bleich added warm touches with pendant lights from Restoration Hardware, counter stools from Four Hands and a vintage runner. The dining chandelier is the Nula light purchased from Y Lighting.





The master suite, which was added to the existing home, opens to the courtyard area and has views to the pool area. “They have a lovely shared master closet that spans the entire back wall behind the bed wall. It has a cozy built-in banquette in a cheerful patterned yellow fabric. I love how every corner of their house has a cheerful vibe, even in the closet!” says Bleich. The homeowner adds, “Every day I wake up to a heavenly space and truly enjoy every moment of it.” The beautiful chandelier is from Arteriors.

The master bathroom truly invokes the relaxing feeling of a high-end spa, with floor and shower tiles from Mews collection by Stone Source. The white oak vanity was custom stained to match the overall house flooring, topped with a Caesar Stone® Frosty Carrina countertop. The centerpiece bathtub is by Signature Hardware, with faucets, tub filler and shower plumbing fixtures in polished nickel from Kohler® Purist. Other custom details include the mirrors and drapery. Outside the master bathroom is a private garden accessible only through the sliding glass doors behind the freestanding tub.

Hastings and Bleich fully understood the homeowners’ vision and created a home that exudes serenity and relaxation, a peaceful environment that is just as inviting to their guests as it is a retreat for their family. The homeowner sums it up, “The space conveys feelings of peace, comfort and beauty. It is gorgeous to see how everyone’s ideas all came together in harmony. If I were to build a home in France or Costa Rica in the future, I would love to involve Ariel and Katie again.” ♦

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