

GERMAN ROOTS

BY CLAUDIA ALARCÓN | PHOTOGRAPHY BY MATTHEW NEIMANN

FOR HOMEOWNERS WHO LEAD BUSY LIVES WITH BOTH BUSINESS AND PHILANTHROPIC TRAVELS, THEIR VISION WAS TO HAVE A HOME NESTLED IN THE COUNTRYSIDE AS A RETREAT AND A RESPITE FROM THEIR HECTIC LIFE PACE.

ACCORDING TO INTERIOR DESIGNER DEBBIE BAXTER, BUILDING a new home is more fun and less stress to accomplish when the homeowners choose a team comprised of an architect skilled in their desired style, a top-tier general contractor with a seasoned superintendent and an interior designer with a depth of experience in regional design. Such was the case when these homeowners chose the dream team of architect Mac Chesney of Chesney Morales Partners, Mauze Construction Corporation as the contractor and senior designer Jackie Newsome of Baxter Design Group as project designer for this Hill Country farmhouse.

In the living room, a green wool rug serves to tie the space to the outdoors, visible through the floor-to-ceiling windows. Motorized Conrad window shades in a soft organic weave provide comfort and convenience throughout the day, and add a contemporary feel to the pair of generously sized leather lounge chairs, rough-hewn ceiling beams and reclaimed wood floorboards.





The homeowners desired a casual, comfortable interior with a definite nod to the natural materials typical of the region and style. The home site is full of native live oaks, mesquite and indigenous shrubbery. Cows graze at the property line daily, and it is not uncommon to see a variety of other animals around.

After sharing their love of the German farmhouses scattered throughout the Hill Country to their architect and interior design teams for inspiration, the result was a three-bedroom, two-story farmhouse with a master suite and two guest rooms, one of which serves as a home office. There is also a complete guest suite, accessible from the garage for privacy. Landscaping is true to the natural elements, including the pool area which was added during construction.

“The owners had a definite vision for each of the main rooms,” said Debbie. “She brought excellent concept photos to our very first meeting, which proved to be the jumping off points. She wanted a white kitchen with white marble countertops, but with touches of natural wood to bring in warmth. There was a family chest they wanted

incorporated into their master closet, and we designed the functional space around it.”

The design team selected all the architectural finish materials and presented to the homeowners for their approval. The homeowners also collaborated in selecting the hand-hewn, reclaimed wooden floor planks to be used throughout the home. “Our scaled elevations, overlaid on the architectural

An elegant but rustic iron light fixture, rough-hewn ceiling beams and a reclaimed wood trim on the custom vent hood serve the same purpose — to marry contemporary and Hill Country styles when poised against the white kitchen with an oversized island.

For the foyer flooring, old Chicago brick was laid in a herringbone pattern. This entry point leads to the living, dining and kitchen areas, which are separated by a two-way fireplace.

The master bath stands alone as a spa-style area, with a free-standing tub that features a contemporary floor mount faucet set. Details such as travertine stone floors and shower walls, stained maple cabinetry with marble countertops and wall mount faucets, custom iron mirrors and sconces, mixed hardware metals, a vintage Persian rug and a Ralph Lauren chandelier wrapped with leather accents all contribute to what Debbie referred to as “a rustic vibe within a modern-day sensibility and lifestyle.”





plans, helped the owners visualize how these materials would be used,” explained Debbie. “They were excited when we suggested a custom driftwood mantel for the fireplace as well as the antique reproduction sink vanities in the guest baths. They preferred a more contemporary vanity for their master bath, and we made that work within the context of the home style by employing reclaimed wood paneling for the walls.”

While the architectural style reflects a classic farmhouse, the interior furnishings are modern, for an Old World meets New World aesthetic. The homeowners’ vintage pieces are interspersed throughout, creating a sense of history in the interiors. “We used as many of the homeowners’ existing pieces as they wanted, and it was successful,” said Debbie. “They were very receptive to our guidance, and if we felt a

In one guest bedroom, which also serves as the homeowner’s office, family pieces were repurposed in a satin black paint to bridge the old with the new. The design team countered the striking black bed and antique nightstand with a blue color scheme and neutral wool rug, which provides a soothing balance to the sharper elements. Custom bedding by Baxter Design Group extends to an upholstered bench that doubles as storage. The adjacent bath features a reproduction Farmhouse-style vanity with an encaustic tile splash and wainscot, reclaimed wood mirror and a single sconce in a classic white enamel.

The second guest bedroom centers around a Farmhouse-style white wood bed with more custom bedding, drapery and upholstery by Baxter Design Group. On one side, the homeowners’ dark oak cabinet is repurposed as a nightstand, their pine chest sits at the foot of the bed and an Ikat-patterned wool rug is soft underfoot.

piece would not fit, they honored our professional opinions. As the building process progressed, they realized we were assets to them, and the trust factor grew even stronger.” ♦

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The guest suite above the garage is referred to as the Sunday suite by the homeowners as it is based on the Sunday House concept. Debbie explained, “Sunday houses were small second dwellings maintained near a church as a weekend place of residence. They became popular in the late 1800s among farmers and ranchers who lived in areas too remote to permit commuting to services.” This family wanted a place for their children and grandchildren to spend the night when they visit. To accomplish that, two distressed white iron beds covered in custom bedding by Baxter Design Group flank a vintage side table. Barn doors, stained to appear vintage, separate the bedroom from a sitting room, where the homeowners’ leather sofa and a new transitional chair rest on a wool striped rug to anchor the space. Debbie referred to this rug as “a nod to the handwoven, homemade goods of the era,” adding, “A contemporary iron side table reminds us that this is a home for modern living, designed and furnished with deep respect for the past.”

