

RELAXED

fit

Redefine ranch style by blending modern touches with period charm and lived-in comfort.

BY MARGIE MONIN DOMBROWSKI
PHOTOGRAPHY BY BRET GUM
STYLING BY JICKIE TORRES AND ELENA OH



wouldn't it be nice

TO ESCAPE FROM YOUR BUSY LIFE TO A SERENE SETTING OF NOTHING BUT GREEN PASTURES

for miles and miles? On days when some rest and relaxation are in order, this family of four, who appreciate the calm and quiet of a small town outside of Austin, Texas, retreat to their midcentury ranch where they can enjoy the simple life. They rebuilt the home from its dilapidated state into a welcoming space that spoke to the family's desire for comfort and togetherness and that also tips its hat to Texas style.

"They were looking for a place where their family could spend quality time and not be focused on the modern-day routine," says Christina Simon, senior designer for Mark Ashby Design. She worked with lead designer Mark Ashby on the project to give the home its relaxed, "underdesigned" flair. "It's based around nature ... and stripped down in its simplicity." Here Christina lets us in on the basic elements behind the home's casual and comfortable aesthetic.



WHIMSICAL WELCOME. This Dutch door has quaint, old-fashioned charm, but—don't tell—it was added in the remodel.



ON THE PLANE. The kitchen and dining surfaces are all about variety, from the smooth marble of the Eero Saarinen dining tabletop and the sharp black island top to the looks-like-it's-always-been-there mesquite countertop.



SHOW OFF YOUR DRAWERS. Shaker style cabinetry painted green looks like it could be original to the home, while matching green leather pulls add some Texas flair.





HANDMADE DETAILS. Special consideration was given to include handmade details from local artisans, including the wall hooks and bench in the entry and the industrial-style custom light fixture above the kitchen island.



NATURE PLUS NURTURE

Not one detail was unchanged or overlooked in the renovation. Everything besides the rustic stone façade of the front porch was updated and replaced. "It was gutted to the studs," Christina says. This gave the designers the opportunity to open up the space and let natural light stream in by adding white shiplap walls throughout.

In the kitchen, glazed clay zellige tile gives the white walls a slight shimmer. "It's beautiful and tactile, warm and polished at the same time," says Christina, and it also blends in well with the white open kitchen shelves—a perfect choice for such an open and inviting home. With all of the reflective surfaces, the home receives plenty of cheerful sunshine. "While it's light and clean, it's not boring. We wanted to fill the home with a lot of these special moments such as the tiles."

The kitchen cabinetry was painted in a forest green hue that infuses the home's interior with the lush green color of outdoors to create a quintessential farmhouse look. Warm textures—from the mesquite kitchen counters and wood floors to the soft leather furnishings and Moroccan rugs—lend a timeworn quality to the completely renovated home. "A lot of the design decisions



QUALITY CHOICES. The back entry mudroom proves that in serene minimal spaces each element must be impactful. The Moroccan-inspired tiles sing in the space, while richly textured items like the bench and the hand-made iron wall hooks complement the space.

LOCAL FLAVOR. Artwork from local artists and antiques sourced from area shops fill the home with plenty of character. Barndoors used inside keep the ranch flavor in the modern mix. Here they open to the main hallway that runs the width of the home. Close them to create a cleaner more uninterrupted look for the main living space.

TO PULL OFF AN EFFORTLESS AND ECLECTIC AESTHETIC, THEY JUXTAPOSED A MIX OF MIDCENTURY AND MODERN FURNISHINGS WITH HANDMADE ACCESSORIES AND ARTWORK BY LOCAL ARTISANS.



were based on what could have been [in the past]," Christina says. "It's not obvious that this was a 100-percent new build."

NEW AND OLD TOUCHES

While the family has an eye for design, they were mindful from the beginning about keeping the vibe low-key and easygoing. Christina accompanied the couple on many shopping excursions to scout unique finds that capture a well-traveled look.

To pull off an effortless and eclectic aesthetic, they juxtaposed a mix of midcentury and modern furnishings with handmade accessories and artwork by local artisans. "They wanted to make sure that everything in their house resonates with them and isn't merely for show," says Christina.

Furniture in neutral shades, both midcentury and modern, warms up the interior and adds a stylish touch, such as Hans Wegner wishbone chairs gathered around the dining table, clean-lined wood bar stools, a super-soft leather sofa and a hand-built wooden bench in the entry. "That's the great thing about modernism—the designs are so classic that they will endure as good design," Christina says. "The simplicity of the lines is what makes them classic. They just feel good."

Black details punctuate the space here and there for contrast, as small pops of color in the one-of-a-kind pieces of art, antiques spotted at local shops and decorative guitars throughout add a dose of playfulness and pay tribute to the things this family loves. In the boys' bedroom with black vintage-style spindle beds side by side, an antique bunny art print, a bright blue Moroccan rug and multicolor bedding create a layered look. "It doesn't feel 'decorated,'" Christina points out. "The overall tone of the house is eclectic, collected and comfortable." **CB**



CHIC TENT. Another nod to bohemian influence, the master bedroom is a cozy nest, thanks to floor-to-ceiling draperies that wrap across the walls and a full upholstered bed with ample luxe bedding.

[OPPOSITE] AIRING YOUR LAUNDRY.

Space was carved out to include a laundry area in a recessed portion of a hallway, where a sleek black counter (which pops out into a bathroom on the other side of the wall) and open white shelves provide stylish storage, and a cute curtain neatly hides the appliances.



HIGH CAMP. A pair of twin spindle beds covered with bright Pendleton blankets give this kids' room nostalgic timeless style. The shiplap walls capture a classic look while infusing the room with a treehouse-like coziness.



NEO GEO. The guest bath reflects the owner's love of modern art, with patterns and colors that reference fun pop-art aesthetics.