

Destination Home

Family, friends and travel inspire the design of a vibrant Dallas house for fun-loving clients.

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Architecture: Robbie Fusch and Mike Schotte, Fusch Architects Interior Design: Erin Sander, Erin Sander Design
Home Builder: Jon David Smith, J.D. Smith Custom Homes

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ometimes the phrase ‘family friendly’ can sound boring, but that doesn’t have to be the case,” interior designer Erin Sander says. “It’s possible to inject color and pattern without sacrificing durability, while also designing an

enduring home that reflects your true personality and style.” So, when a young Dallas family asked Sander to help flesh out the design of their new residence, she knew exactly where to look for inspiration: their trips to Central America.

“We wanted the heart of this home to radiate the warmth we found throughout our travels,” the husband adds. “Our hope was for the house to say, ‘Come, stay for a bit and enjoy.’”

The couple, who have three children, began their wish list with a pool featuring a two-story waterslide. Architects Robbie Fusch and Mike Schotte responded with an overall design brought to life by the clients’ longtime friend, builder Jon David Smith. “They wanted a transitional style with a terra-cotta tile roof, which gave the front façade a lot of character,” Fusch says. “I love the British Arts and Crafts movement and there’s an Edwin Lutyens influence here as well—but the back is more open and contemporary.” The house essentially wraps around a pool occupying the entire backyard for a resort-like effect. “This was never going to be an English garden,” the architect adds. “They wanted something more fun.”

That lively spirit continues inside, where Sander realized colorful spaces designed to welcome visitors. “These clients have an open-door policy and needed rooms large enough to host gatherings without seeming ostentatious or precious,” she explains. “Everything needed to be approachable.” Her cues came from images shared by the homeowners, as well as her own travels to their beloved Central America. “I called to mind the people, cultures and colors,” she notes. But when she and the couple found a photograph by Dallas artist Carolyn Brown of a vegetable market in Guatemala, “It really pulled everything together,” she says of the work that now hangs

in the breakfast room. “It really captured the brightness and vibrancy we were seeking.”

At the core of the home is the kitchen, which centers on a deep-purple range. “The commitment to plum came early,” Sander remembers, “and we decided on the rest of the palette after that.” Adjoining the space is the family’s main living area, which features a large fireplace and built-in seat where the wife especially enjoys curling up. Here, Sander paired cream-colored sofas with a set of blue armchairs that swivel toward the kitchen. Nearby are the wife’s sitting room, a cheery spot with a pair of green-velvet chairs; a mudroom featuring a built-in kennel for the family dog; and a walk-through pantry leading to the bright and airy dining room. The designer gave the latter a playful vibe with a boldly patterned rug and a chandelier that “looks like a floating garden above the table,” she describes.

But perhaps the biggest “wow” moments come from the husband’s office and the couple’s bedroom suite. The former is a double-height space with a sweeping staircase to a mezzanine, where the client keeps memorabilia. “Because he works from home, the office needed to be a place for hosting meetings with colleagues,” notes Sander, who created various seating areas for both larger and smaller groups, and utilized armchairs throughout that can pivot or move easily within the space. “There’s still a lot of color in the office, but we went for more muted jewel tones,” she continues. Meanwhile, in the couple’s bedroom, the designer washed the plaster walls and ceiling with blue “to play up the architecture,” she describes. “It feels like a cocoon.”

In the kids’ game room, Sander created an almost tropical feel and placed a custom neon sign that reads “Come as you are” above the pool table. It’s a fitting message for a home built for fun. Just outside are four patio areas—sitting and dining arrangements, a bar and two swinging chairs—abutting the pool, a layout devised with landscape designer Tal Thevenot. “It’s all about entertaining,” Sander says. “These clients have such incredible generosity, and they wanted this home to be a place for everyone to gather. It’s a house that opens its arms to people.” ■



A custom built-in seat in Casamance’s Bongo fabric occupies a living room corner. The pillows’ Tulu print from James Showroom complements a rug from Holland & Sherry. Nearby are a Porta Romana sconce and painting by Maggie Maier from Gut Gallery.



Right: Leather-wrapped doors reveal the cocktail bar lined with Schumacher's grass cloth, cabinets in Benjamin Moore's Grappa and a Breccia Capraia marble backsplash. Art is by Tom Stanley. Haile Wossen designed the florals.

Opposite: The office features a Baker table and chairs from Allan Knight upholstered in a fabric from ID Collection. The large-scale brushstroke abstract by Donald Martiny through Galleri Urbane mingles with a Kyle Bunting rug.





Above: Swivel barstools highlight the kitchen island with Caesarstone's honed Statuario Nuvo countertop and a Waterstone faucet, above which hang pendants from Allied Maker. Below a burnished-brass hood fabricated by Orona is a Lacanche range.

Opposite: A custom burlwood chair and photograph by Carolyn Brown from Craighead Green Gallery mark the mudroom entrance. Flooring is a mix of limestones: Paris Ceramics' Belgium Blue Cathedral and White Jura. The rattan ceiling light is from Soane Britain.



Right: Vanguard chairs from David W. Gilbert & Associates, where the coffee table was also sourced, wear a vibrant print from Romo in the game room. A custom neon sign overlooks the pool table from Blatt Billiards.

Opposite: Lighting from The Urban Electric Co. and a Currey & Company lamp illuminate the game room. Limestone flooring from Paris Ceramics and a Stark rug run underfoot. Art includes framed Carmen Crawford works and an Arieenne Lepreire canvas.





Above: Chairs from Hollywood at Home encircle the custom dining room table crafted by AF Home. The rug from Holland & Sherry accompanies a folded-paper artwork by Matthew Shlian commissioned through Gut Gallery. A chandelier by Apsara Interior Design completes the space.

Opposite: Shiplap walls and an antique stool bring a cozy feel to the utility room. An apron-front sink in honed Belgian bluestone references the Belgium Blue Cathedral limestone flooring from Paris Ceramics.



Above: The primary bathroom's American Clay plaster walls don a custom blue paint. A Mr. Brown London bench from C. Maddox & Company pulls up to a vanity equipped with Watermark faucets. The mirror was fabricated by Glasshouse.

Opposite: Atop a rug from Interior Resources, the primary bedroom's Natasha Baradaran sofa in a George Spencer Designs fabric pairs with an accent pillow in Imogen Heath material from Supply Showroom. The onyx-base table is Made Goods, and the chandelier and lounge chair are Palecek.



Above: Porter Teleo wallpaper swathes the powder room walls. A mirror from Laura Lee Clark and Visual Comfort & Co. lamp join a Calacatta Lincoln marble vanity punctuated by a Waterworks faucet.

Opposite: Katie Kime wallpaper appears in a child's bedroom nook. Rounding out the scene are a tiered chandelier from Made Goods, a bench from Scout Design Studio and draperies in Raoul Textiles.

