

# COLORFUL CREATION

A FAMILY FRIENDLY MODERN HOME MIXES STYLE,  
SCENERY AND INTERNATIONAL FLAVORS

BY ELAINE ROGERS • PHOTOGRAPHY BY TERRI GLANGER



The cantilevered deck juts out over the hilly terrain and features a dramatic vanishing edge pool with a sweeping 12-foot waterfall and raised spa. Offering stunning views from multiple perspectives, the contemporary, Mediterranean-influenced home is encased by hilly terrain, with only a few hints of its proximity to neighboring homes.







**When Vasu and Mala Rangadass decided to build a new home in north Arlington, it wasn't the most typical of plans.**

**Finding the land was easy enough: Vasu says they toured 2.7-acres of lushly wooded property in a developing gated community and bought it immediately. "Actually, this was the first property we looked at," he says simply. "We wanted to stay in this area and we liked all the trees."**

But with the undisturbed beauty and uneven terrain came the challenges of achieving proper drainage, symmetry and the best use of the hilly acreage and its scenic surroundings. A modern, multi-level style seemed best-suited to both the land and their tastes, and the Rangadasses spent a total of four years developing ideas and making their plans with Cedar Hill architect Carl Christensen of Christensen Design Associates and Arlington contractor Gary Krier of Krier Custom Homes, L.L.C.

In August 2004, they finally moved into their spacious, contemporary residence and two years later, the couple and their two young daughters have proven that a Mediterranean-influenced structure with the look of a glamorous address in the hills of L.A. and a style suited to hosting Hollywood celebrity parties also easily accommodates a far quieter, family-friendly lifestyle when nestled unobtrusively in a nook of the Metroplex's mid-cities.

Vasu and Mala do entertain a lot, but mostly in the form of extended visits from parents and relatives from India. The 6,500 square foot home affords a gracious place for visitors to settle in while its art, architecture and decor provide many cultural reminders of home.

Much of the residence's ethnic tone and celebration of Indian culture is due to efforts by interior designer Gayla Jett Shannon of Inside Incorporated, who helped the homeowners choose interior materials such as flooring, cabinetry and fabrics that would reflect the family's heritage and preferences.

At the entrance, a polished granite wall, flat roof and tiled steps hint at the exotic flavors within; the home's unusual domed atrium glimpsed through tiny, geometric windows confirms it. And once visitors set foot through the double-wide steel doors, they enter a gracious space bearing its share of traditional Indian fabrics, colors and art. Oversized honed finished marble tile in crema marfil and the home's expansive white walls create a soft palette to balance the impact of the second floor's domed ceiling, spectacularly painted in turquoise Venetian plaster. Towering window

**LEFT:** The cantilevered deck juts out over the hilly terrain and features a dramatic vanishing edge pool with a sweeping 12-foot waterfall and raised spa. Offering stunning views from multiple perspectives, the contemporary, Mediterranean-influenced home is encased by hilly terrain, with only a few hints of its proximity to neighboring homes.

draperies of magenta and orange in the formal living room complement a vibrantly colored Indian painting showcased on a large accent wall built specifically for it.

Furnishings here and in the family room, are mostly Italian and European and tout a very modern style. Splashes of color top the classic contrast of a black grand piano against the room's white walls and cream-colored marble tile floors, and instructional books indicate music lessons are on the schedule. Playful touches such as outdoor hurricane lanterns and beaded votive candles on the black lacquered wood coffee table and accent pieces imbue the space with a family-friendly feel that it might have lacked otherwise.

Cherrywood floors take over where the marble leaves off in the family room and kitchen, bringing in a warmer mood that is echoed by a butter-colored, Euro styled leather sofa and furnishings with brown, orange and russet accents.

Steps separate the family room from the kitchen and define the spaces as distinct, yet the rooms remain visually interconnected and, together, serve as the hub of the house. The oversized kitchen, is a crisp, well-equipped cook zone with high-end appliances, curving track lighting and abundant counter space with a large, L-shaped island, both adorned in absolute black granite. Cool touches range from steel pillars and a matching glass and stainless breakfast table, but natural maple cabinets and a frosted glass backsplash from Ann Sacks in light turquoise soften the room's cool tone. Features such as a built-in aquarium and the family room's mosaic-tiled wet bar and a spiral, metal staircase painted canary yellow all draw the eye, yet the overall feel of a comfortable family space remains strong.

"With the modern flavor of the family room, I think we achieved the goal of establishing the kind of flow where you can't tell where the architecture ends and the furnishings begin," Shannon explains, "but because Mala and Vasu are also very family-oriented, we wanted to make sure the room would have a very warm feel too."

On the patio beyond the kitchen and the curving terrace that extends from the family room, Mediterranean influences touch the tiered levels of the cantilevered deck with sand-colored tile and stacked stone and a curved wall in yellow granite. A balcony railing, painted deep blue, complements the deeper hue of the vanishing edge pool and its reflection of the sky on a sunny day.

In these serene outer areas, the accoutrements of luxurious living are not ignored. A built-in, stone firepit beyond the pool doesn't get much use, but adds to the sense of the space being a cherished retreat from workaday routines. A circular stone spa sends a sweeping 12-foot waterfall spilling over into the pool, and

**RIGHT:** To celebrate the culture of India, designers chose a traditional color palette of magenta and orange for the towering draperies in the formal living room. Here, a black grand piano creates drama atop the space's oversized honed finished marble tile in crema marfil.









another waterfall washes off the pool's edge, seemingly into the terrain below. Architect Christensen says the exterior was designed to bring the home "into the trees."

"The site drops about 20 feet at that point, so the cantilevered decking creates sort of a treehouse effect," he explains. "Vasu wanted to save as many trees as possible while still getting good use of the land."

On the kitchen side, the patio seating has a friendlier, less formal mood than the terrace and pool deck, and here, the Rangadass family enjoys the best of both worlds with a large, rounded oven to prepare traditional Indian dishes and a generous stainless grill station for less exotic options. A hopscotch course built into the stone tile appears a permanent admission of the importance of youthful activities, even within the constraints of the home's sleek design.

Color splashes continue to offer surprises upstairs where built-in shelving backed by bright hues like ochre and turquoise provide a colorful contrast to the tall white walls and expansive bamboo aisles. In a media room, an acid green on the ceiling is echoed by lighter paint tones on the walls, and in the girl's large bedroom, Shannon created a vibrant color scheme with white walls topped with green and white wallpaper on the ceiling and coordinating cushions lining a long built-in window seat.

"I like to have just one dominant color rather than several competing things on both the walls and the ceiling," Shannon explains. "You don't want to overdo."

In the master bedroom, she suggested subtle colors "to keep it serene," and the Rangadasses achieved this with a light aqua bedspread, and chairs covered in aubergine. Red lacquered side tables, while adding a touch of drama to the mix, are toned down with white marble tops matched to the marble in the spacious master bath.

From both the upper and lower levels, window views are an intrinsic component of the home's design. A tiny balcony beckons from the master bedroom, the children's bedroom features expansive views from a series of windows, a larger balcony touts dizzying third floor vistas, and access to the land's natural scenery is striking in both the living room and its nearby private study. Yet, as impressive as the new home appears now, Christensen notes that the land-loving quality of this residence is only in its initial stage. Already, he and Vasu are making plans for new phases of development that may include a tennis court, a greenhouse and even a cabana to provide shelter and access more scenery during outdoor entertainments.

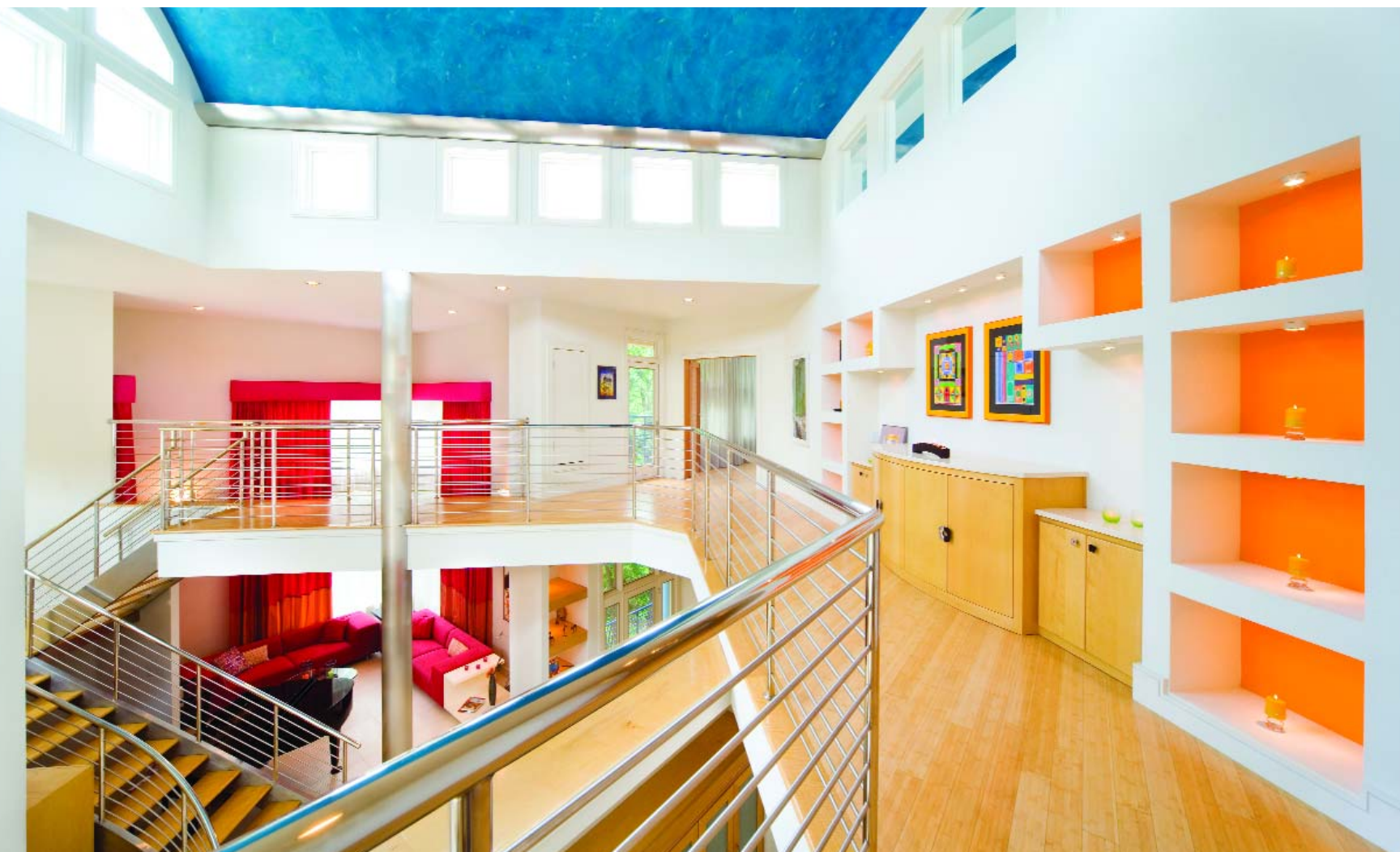
**LEFT:** The sleekly designed kitchen touts curving track lighting to match its stainless appliances and steel pillars, plus countertops and a large, L-shaped island adorned in absolute black granite. Warming up the zone: natural maple cabinets and a frosted glass backsplash from Ann Sacks in light turquoise.

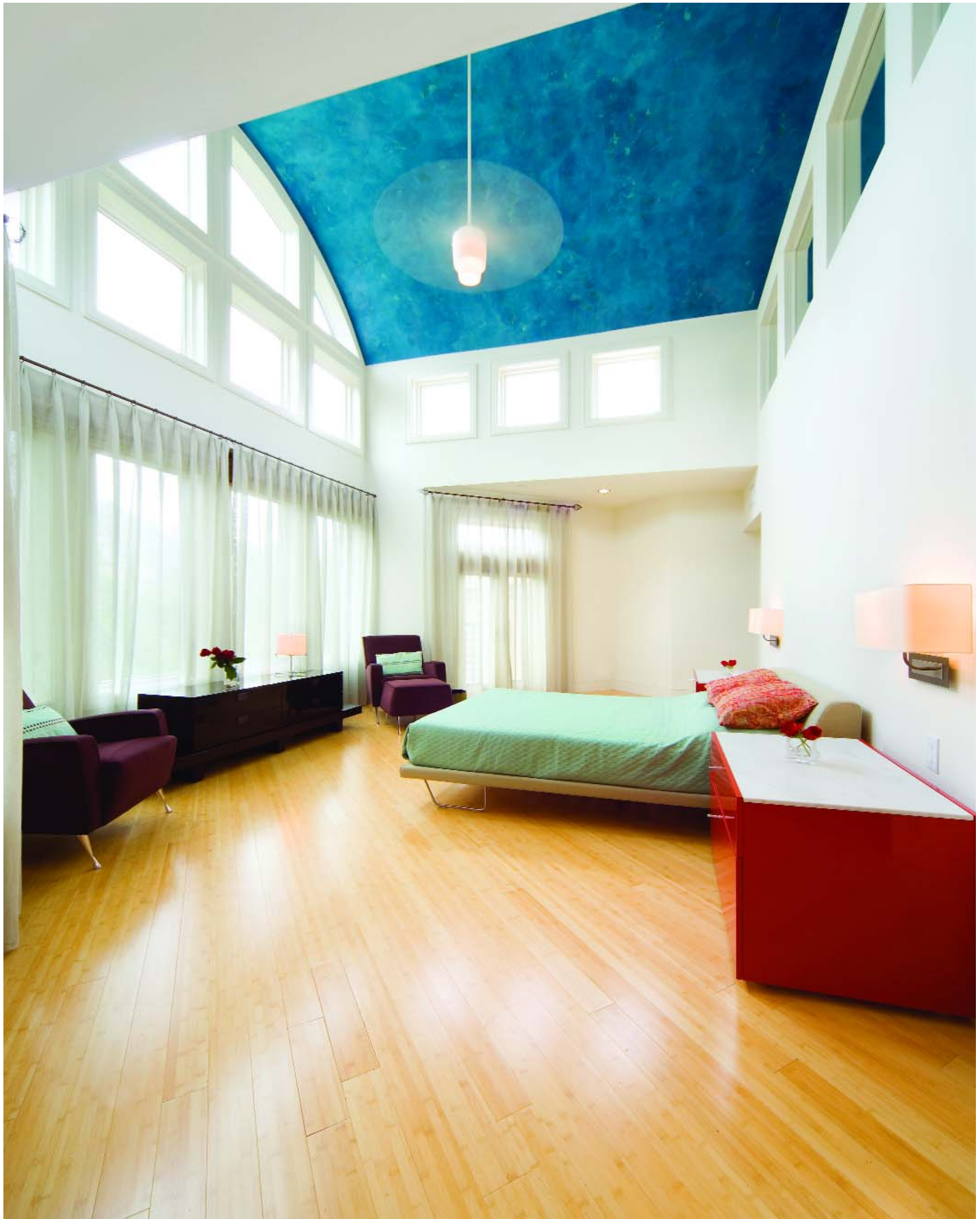




**ABOVE:** An oversized and vibrantly decorated children's bedroom touts white walls topped with green and white wallpaper on the ceiling and coordinating window treatments. The long built-in window seat offers plenty of seating for favorite stuffed animals and room for the imagination to run free.

**BELOW:** Upstairs, the airiness of the home is well evidenced where extra wide hallway in light-colored bamboo access bedrooms and a media room. While walls are kept white, color abounds with brightly painted backing on built-in shelving, extra tall magenta draperies in the formal living room and the unusual ceiling.





A glimpse into the master bedroom shows a minimalist, uncluttered style and accents that include aubergine chairs separated by a Holly Hunt console and red lacquered side tables toned down with white marble tops.



**ABOVE:** Although also glimpsed from several main rooms on the ground floor, the home's unique domed ceiling in turquoise Venetian plaster dominates the master bath, adding a startling blast of color to the room's classic mix of black and white marble.

**OPPOSITE:** Where a terrace and tiered levels of a stone deck overlook vistas of undisturbed land, the curved walls of the home are accented by a blue metal railing and window frames that provide a bright contrast to the yellow granite, stacked stone and sand-colored tile.

