

CRISP COMFORT

an airy,
artistic
abode with
lake views
and kid-
friendly
appeal

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While many of the homes lining White Rock Lake in Dallas produce grand silhouettes with their manicured lawns and traditional entryways, the beauty of the lakeside residence owned by Robin and Trey Herndon is of a more subtle variety. Placed with its back to the lake, the structure is initially unobtrusive, yet interiors display crisp architectural lines and a modern, minimalist style that is also rich in artistic content.

Robin, a nurse turned glass artisan, has skillfully decorated the home with pottery, sculpture and other creations of Texas artists, many of whom are personal friends. And the home's backdrop of concrete, wood and glass provides the perfect setting for such treasures.

There is not a story of immediate gratification, however. The couple purchased their one acre lot a decade ago, back before property values in the area skyrocketed, then spent several years deciding what they were going to do with it. Once they finally began the process of designing their future home, they invested a lot of time and energy into an initial plan, then "scratched it and started over," this time, working for six months with local architects, Mark Domiteaux and Laura Baggett. After two years, they finally had a design that was ready to be set in stone.

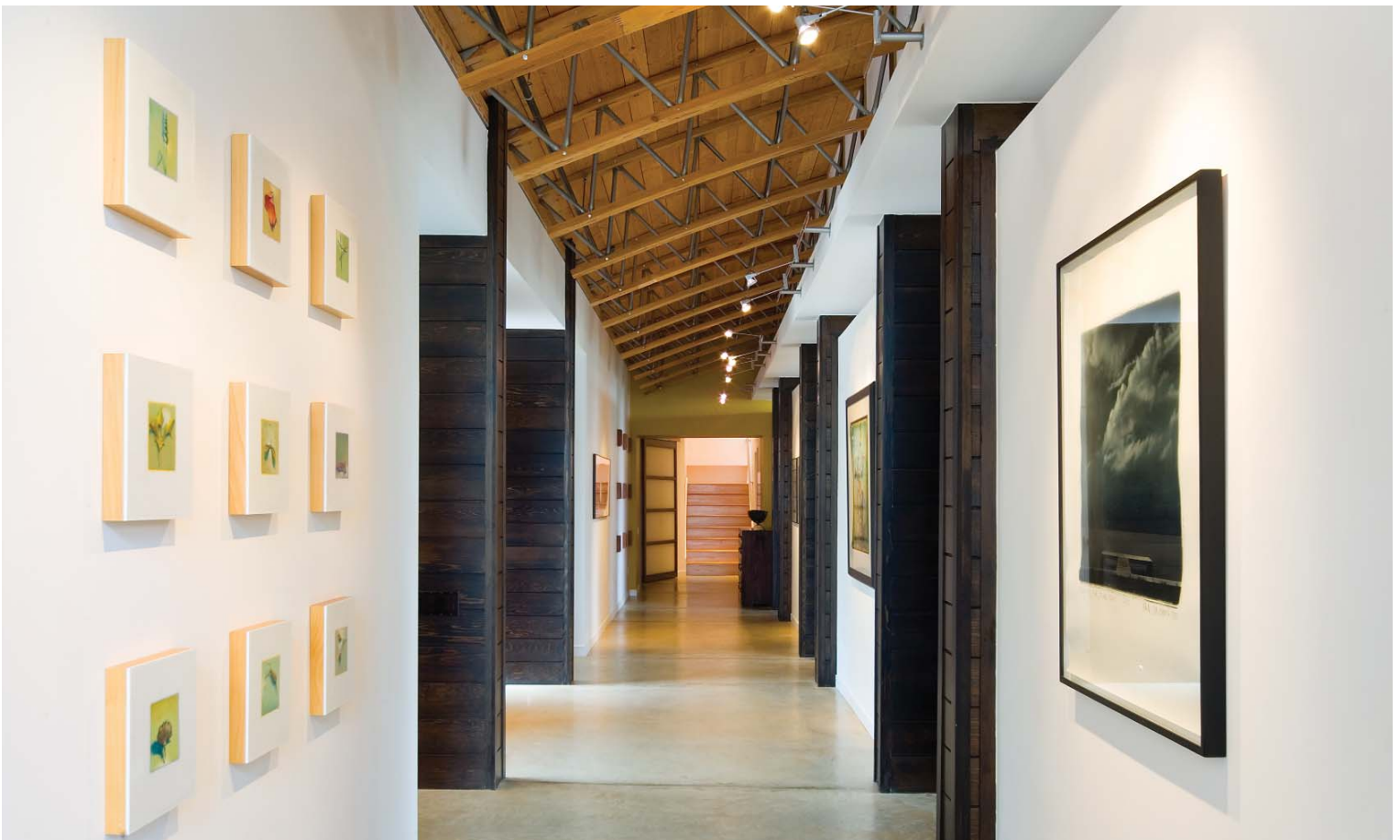
"It took us another two years to build and we had two kids during that same time frame," Robin says. "So, a lot of things changed as we went along. It was really a collaborative process."

Now, three years after move-in, she notes: "I'm not sure how we lived through all of that, but we're still on speaking terms with both the architect and the

Against a backdrop of concrete and wood, the spacious living and dining areas showcase terrific views of White Rock Lake and also art from local artisans. Above the contemporary furnishings, the unusual arched wood and steel ceiling beams add architectural interest.

Right: An exterior of concrete blocks transitions to interior concrete components such as bench seating and the fireplace hearth and mantel. Artistic touches here include sculpture and art from local artisans as well as decorative glass insets above the fireplace.





The contrast between the concrete and black cedar makes the extra wide hallway a dramatic space that easily accommodates both art displays and active kids.

builder, so I guess that says a lot.”

A striking aspect of the home’s design is its generous use of concrete. An exterior of concrete blocks stretches to interior uses of concrete flooring in the wide entryway and kitchen, as well as honed concrete countertops in both the kitchen and bathrooms. In the living room, the fireplace mantle and hearth are of concrete, while a built-in concrete bench on a far wall of the living room also has surprising appeal.

This much concrete in a residential setting is quite atypical says the home’s builder Harry Purdom. “Most people aren’t that adventurous and they tend to go with what they know, so they wouldn’t think to use concrete this way,” he explains.

Mixed with the concrete is the generous use of stained black cedar on several walls and doorway frames, and Robin says, initially, the couple had planned to use concrete stone in several of these spaces. “We were going to go with even more concrete here, but I decided it would be too cold-looking, so we went with the wood instead.

Wood floors and cabinetry in the expansive living/dining areas give those rooms the warmth Robin was striving for, while the arched wood and steel components of the ceiling add architectural interest. The Hermdons leave the stretch of windows facing out to their backyard and the lake beyond uncovered, and it’s a move that definitely adds to the appealing airiness of the home. “At first, I was self-conscious about those windows being open all the time,” Robin recalls. “But, really, we’re pretty far from the lake and we finally realized that if anybody outside wanted to try and look in at us, we could see them better than they could see us. So now we don’t even worry about it.”

Window views and natural sunlight also rule in the kitchen, a roomy, party-friendly zone with high-end appliances, a large black granite-covered island, natural cherry cabinetry and a unique backsplash of green crystalline glazed tile created for the home by local artist and friend, Rose Downs.

The seven-foot concrete entryway connects to a downstairs den and beyond that, a wood staircase leading to two children’s bedrooms and a guest suite. Along the entry and stairs, art displays are a constant, yet, kid-friendliness was clearly a

The master bath, with his and hers sinks on a honed concrete vanity, touts the same cherrywood cabinetry viewed in other parts of the house plus limestone tile floors, glass shower and an unusual Japanese spa tub.



A playful “3-D” elephant wall painting provide a clever surprise in the upstairs daughter’s room.



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Adjacent to the dining/living areas, the kitchen is centered by an oversized black granite island and offers views of a tiled patio and outdoor kitchen plus lake views beyond. The concrete floor and honed concrete counters contrast with natural cherry cabinetry, but color comes from various art pieces and an unusual backsplash of crystalline glazed porcelain tile.

priority for the couple too.

“We wanted the entry to be extra wide and we thought the concrete would be great for kids,” Robin says. “But we were more right about that than we even expected.” She notes that sometimes her youngsters have been known to ride tricycles on the wide, smooth space.

Meanwhile, a built-in console in the living room is a perfect hideaway for a television and VCR set-up the kids use for viewing videotapes, and the room’s attractive cedar cabinetry that showcases art displays on upper shelves and counters also affords easy toy storage below. The room’s contemporary furnishings, despite their clean lines, handle small and energetic residents well—the large black leather ottoman is a favorite jumping spot for her son and daughter, aged three and five.

Asian touches are also evident in the Herndon home, although Robin says that was more happenstance than indicative of her Japanese heritage. “I didn’t really start out with that in mind,” Robin explains, “but I had some antique furniture from my mother, so we put it to use and it really worked well with

the architecture.” Other elements that play to this theme include the deep Japanese bathtub the couple installed in their master bathroom and both decorative and functional oversized sliding doors that Domiteaux designed using sun glass panes and black cedar frames. “Mark was very clever in how he worked elements like that into the design,” Robin says.

As often happens, although the Herndons are quite pleased with the home they envisioned and eventually built, it continues to be a work in progress. An outdoor kitchen with lake views is a newer addition and occasional improvements to the grounds continue. Of late, Robin has begun working with Purdom again with the goal of constructing a new art studio to house her kiln and glassworks adjacent to the garage.

Beyond this, she’s not sure what additional home projects are in store, but jokes that Trey doesn’t seem to remember how hard they worked to create this personalized home and haven. “I think he’d be willing to go through this all over again,” she says, then adds with a laugh: “but I just tell him he’d have to do that with his next wife, not me.” ■

Down the hall in the son’s room, a painted tree complete with small, stuffed monkeys hanging from its branches. A hidden secret of sorts, the home backs onto White Rock Lake and touts a wall of windows that affords all manner of light and lakeside views. Besides the exterior of concrete blocks, the residence blends an unusual amount of concrete into its interior settings.



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