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ARCHITECTURE / REAGAN MILLER, REAGAN & ANDRÉ ARCHITECTURE STUDIO  
INTERIOR DESIGN / SHANNON MANN, MANN DESIGNS  
HOME BUILDER / KURT LOBPRIES AND ROBERT HANNA, BUILDERS WEST, INC.







# BRIGHT IDEA

MARRYING TRADITIONAL WITH MODERN, A NEW HOUSTON  
DWELLING BLURS THE LINE BETWEEN INSIDE AND OUT.

WRITTEN BY TATE GUNNERSON / PHOTOGRAPHY BY PETER MOLICK



**Top:** In this Houston home by architect Reagan Miller, hand-scraped, waxed-walnut floors from Schenck & Company lead from the entry, featuring art by Elizabeth Chandler from Gremillion & Co. Fine Art, to the living room. Mann Made Systems designed and installed a Savant whole-home integration system, including the living room's automated sheers by D&D Drapery tucked into the ceiling reveal.

**Bottom:** Interior designer Shannon Mann selected art by Nicola Parente from Gremillion & Co. Fine Art to make a statement in the living room. The piece overlooks a pair of charcoal-gray velvet sofas fabricated by Neal & Company Upholstery and a custom coffee table made by Studio Lifestyle. The sofa throw pillows wear Pierre Frey fabrics, and the rug is from Sunland Home Decor in Tucson, Arizona.







When a couple with two teenagers enlisted architect Reagan Miller to design a home for them in Houston's historic Boulevard Oaks neighborhood, they told him they wanted their new residence to bridge the divide between inside and outside. "They wanted a real connection with the outdoors," Miller explains, "and that was a wonderful challenge to be presented with—especially in our hot and humid climate." The result is a stucco-and-painted-brick dwelling with mahogany accents defined by ample balconies, terraces and open-air breezeways. And while Miller gave the façade a distinctly modern vibe, he also incorporated a gabled roofline, allowing it to mingle well with the more traditional neighboring residences—another owner request. "Reagan's first sketch was spot-on," the wife recalls. "He is an exceptional architect, because he sits back and really listens to you."

Laying a foundation for furnishings by interior designer Shannon Mann, Miller took every opportunity to bring to life the indoor-outdoor connection the couple sought while keeping the heat and humidity in mind. With Kurt Lobpries and his project manager, Robert Hanna, as builders, Miller connected the second floor to a detached garage and guest suite via a breezeway, for example, that was "intended to capture the breeze and bring it into the courtyard," he says. Working with intern architect Raul Baez, he also incorporated a rooftop terrace and added a second-floor balcony facing the swimming pool. And he designed a retractable door system near the breakfast room banquette that collapses into the wall, creating a continuous space with the covered poolside porch—where a swing with upholstered cushions is the perfect spot for a nap. "When you come down the stairs," the wife says, "you can run out through the opening and jump right into the water—and that's exactly what my kids do."









A charcoal suede wall treatment by Anything But Plain and a Shrir rug from David Sutherland create a rich backdrop for the residents' dining room table—a family heirloom—and a set of upholstered leather chairs. The vintage brass chandelier was sourced through Shabby Slips. Sheers made with Jim Thompson fabric are automated to open and close.

Further bringing in the outdoors, the home features tall windows throughout that filter in plenty of natural light while offering inviting views of the exterior spaces. "This house has a transparency, which allows you to really feel the depth of the lot," Miller says. The large family room, for example, overlooks the side yard as well as the front courtyard entrance.

The exterior's contemporary-meets-traditional look carries indoors as well. With a simple floor plan as a background for the furnishings—and fussy trim nowhere in sight—Mann went with the modern vibe established by the architect while mixing in a few older antique pieces. In the dining room, where walls feature a decorative plaster finish for added depth and texture, Mann paired a 1960s table that once belonged to the wife's grandmother with a linear vintage brass chandelier found at a Paris flea market. "The lighting established the mood for the space," says Mann, whose design associates were Tricia Cane and Kandice Eiskant, with Gabriela Fenton as project manager. "In each room, there's a standout piece that sets the tone for everything else."

In the living room, that defining piece is a custom cocktail table made of rosewood, walnut, brass and bronze. "It was like a puzzle to put together," says Mann, who collaborated with a local artisan to fine-tune the design. The wood tones of the table pop against the nearby contemporary limestone fireplace mantel, two sleek low-profile leather swivel chairs and a pair of sofas the interior designer covered in dark gray velvet for a bit of contrast.



A Lindsey Adelman chandelier illuminates the kitchen's wenge veneer-clad island, topped with leathersed quartzite, and a raised counter Custom Floors Unlimited fabricated from salvaged beams. The glazed backsplash brick is from Materials Marketing, and the Rocky Mountain Hardware pieces are from Hollywood Builders Hardware.









Phillip Jeffries raffia wallcovering introduces warmth and texture to the master bedroom. Hellman-Chang's Hayden nightstand perches next to Holly Hunt's Sorraia bed, featuring a headboard upholstered in leather by Jerry Pair Leather. The bedding from Kuhl-Linscomb and Peacockley; custom square accent pillows feature a patterned Sahco fabric. The rug is from Creative Flooring.





Pennsylvania bluestone and a grade-level ipe-wood deck surround the swimming pool, while Kettal's Maia egg swings from Internum encourage spending time outside. Peck & Company fabricated the custom outdoor wall lighting. Kainer & Kainer Landscape Architecture designed the pool and landscaping.





**Below, left:** Automated by Mann Made Systems, a Hartmann & Forbes window shade on the door to the balcony ensures privacy in the master bedroom. At the foot of the bed, a custom tufted bench wears Osborne & Little fabric.

**Below, right:** Floor-to-ceiling backsplash tile from Ann Sacks adds a graphic punch behind the powder room's Sonoma Cast Stone sink from Elegant Additions. The glass pendant light is from Y Lighting, and the mirror is from CB2.







A custom glass chandelier makes an equally grand statement in the open and spacious kitchen, which the couple envisioned as the center of their home. "We love to entertain, and we gather weekly for a meal with friends," the wife says. Appliances are concealed behind custom cabinetry accented by a glazed clay-brick backsplash and a clean-lined plaster hood. By contrast, wenge wood covers the base of the kitchen island, which features an elevated dining portion for extra seating that was constructed using four reclaimed hickory beams.

Things become softer and more subdued upstairs in the master suite, where light-colored walls and vaulted wood-covered ceilings form a bright and airy retreat that

further underscores the home's indoor-outdoor connection. "I wanted it to feel like we're in a tree house," the wife explains, pointing to the giant oak tree canopies visible through the windows. The room is replete with a four-poster bed flanked by end tables that "add a clean edge to the space," Mann says, while a pair of plush upholstered chairs offer cozy seating.

Recalling the relaxation the couple's new residence brings them, the wife says, "there's a calmness about our home, even when life is completely chaotic." And for the architect, the structure is also proof it is possible to create a house that engages the outdoors in tough climates, imparting a sense of peace only outdoor living can provide. "It exceeded all of our expectations," Miller says. **L**

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Sporting travertine floor tile from Materials Marketing and glass doors by Western Window Systems that nest into the walls, the covered outdoor patio allows for a seamless transition from outdoors to inside. The swing—an RH sofa modified by Lozano Upholstery with a metal base and large ropes—sways in front of a coffee table from Area; the white chairs from Janus et Cie pair with a side table from Found.