



COOL, CALM & COLLECTED

A HOMEOWNER'S EYE FOR MEMORABLE
PIECES IS THE REASON THIS HOUSE IN THE
SUBURBS LOOKS LIKE IT'S BEEN THERE FOREVER

BY KK YOUNG / PHOTOGRAPHY BY RYANN FORD

LESA SHAW REMEMBERS WHEN SHE BEGAN FILLING A NOTEBOOK WITH PAGES CLIPPED FROM INTERIOR DESIGN MAGAZINES. THE HOMEMAKER AND COMPETITIVE TENNIS PLAYER PLANNED TO USE IT AS INSPIRATION FOR REMODELING THE TARRYTOWN HOME SHE SHARED WITH HER HUSBAND AND THREE CHILDREN, BUT KEEPING UP WITH RUNNING A HOUSEHOLD SIDELINED HER PLANS. EVEN SO, SHE DIDN'T FORGET THE NOTEBOOK WHICH GREW FATTER BY THE WEEK.

Nearly 10 years later, however, Shaw found that she was spending many hours a week chauffeuring her kids to classes, volleyball practices and football games at Regents, a private school in Southwest Austin. "That," she says, "was a defining realization." It prompted her and her husband, Stuart, a commercial real estate developer, to consider building their dream home in Covenant Estates, a lush open neighborhood within walking distance to their children's school.

Because their Tarrytown home embodied a traditional style, the Shaws wanted to embrace a lighter, airier feel in the new house, something a little more contemporary. They enlisted the help of Santa Fe-based architect Tara Teilmann, who had worked with Stuart Shaw on a commercial development project. Lesa drove Teilmann around Austin to show her examples of the type of architecture she appreciated. "We had many, many conversations about the ideas included in the notebook I'd compiled over the years," Lesa says. The constant collaboration proved beneficial. "It set the stage visually," says the Santa Fe architect, "for what became the final blueprint."

Along the way, Teilmann had to consider multiple challenges that faced the Shaw project. The main one



A La Cornue stove is the centerpiece of this livable kitchen. French antique jars have been repurposed as pendant lighting; Desiron barstools are upholstered in leather for durable seating for family and friends. Oak floors are stained dark.





A French antique mirror hangs in the foyer over a velvet upholstered banquette. In the dining room, the walnut trestle table and chairs are from Twenty Three 07. With its windows, the walk-in pantry (right) is a good place to grow herbs.

was the slope of the site and the positioning of the home's footprint, which forced Teilmann constantly to reflect on her design decisions.

"It was definitely an organic process, where we'd be going along and would suddenly come up with a new idea as to how the home could best work with the site," Teilmann observes. The result? An open floor plan with a front porch, back terrace, and ample windows that allow natural light to flood the rooms during the day and offer a picturesque view of the Austin skyline by night.

While the four bedroom, five-and-a-half bath home boasts the clean lines and open spaces of a modern design, the interior melds different eras







Sofa and chairs are upholstered in Belgian linen; coffee table by Julian Chichester and gold-leaf floor lamps by John Rosselli. The Meredith Pardue painting (left) is from Jean-Marc Fray; the Chagall print on the mantel is from The Russell Collection.

and styles into an aesthetic juxtaposition. Contemporary accents punctuate European-inspired furnishings in the living room; large brass doorknobs from London adorn a heavy set of antique doors from Gonzales, Texas, in the dining room; and refurbished thrift-store finds blend seamlessly with turn-of-the-century antiques in the master suite. Even the paint on the walls—a brushed-on antique white enamel—lends a turn-of-the-century feel to the home's interior. "It doesn't seem like a new house," explains Austin-based interior designer Suzi Page, whom Shaw met many years ago through mutual friends. "It's an exercise in restraint—livable and collected but not decorated."

Indeed, many pieces throughout the home serve as witness to their owner's adventures in antique-hunting. "Every time I walk by a particular light fixture or catch a glimpse of a piece of hardware I collected from some trip, it brings back memories," Shaw says.

In the kitchen, cloche bell jars once used in late 19th-century France to cover strawberry plants serve as light fixtures situated over a Carrera marble-topped island. Many of the light fixtures—including a rustic chandelier in the dining room—and reupholstered antique French ballroom chairs in the bedroom hail from the Marburger Farm Antique Show, to which Shaw and her girlfriends have trekked for years.

"The overall look is one of quiet, sophisticated elegance," designer Page says, "but it's not fussy. There's no wasted space, and it's kid-friendly." Shaw agrees. "Part of my criteria for this house was that we use every room," she explains. "I wanted a big, open floor



An antique carpet is warm underfoot in the light-filled bathroom with Irish linen Roman shades custom through Twenty Three 07. The Kohler tub is made for soaking; the chaise is slip-covered in Irish linen. Floors are polished marble.



plan where we could entertain our friends and where their children and ours would feel at home.” Since the Shaw family moved into the house last year, it has become a regular after-school hangout: “Our three children were a big part of the planning process,” Lesa Shaw says. “We wanted the house to be a place where they could be with their friends.” That philosophy extends to the outdoors, where a pool and a petanque court are regular meeting places for the Shaw children and their guests.

The grounds curve beyond the pool, where a fruit vineyard and fire pit await. Nearby, a vintage cutting and herb garden in structured stone



planters surrounds a contemporary French farm table made by Twenty Three 07 where Lesa and Stuart have staged many a fete.

If every detail of the home—from the Bevolo lanterns flanking each side of the pool to the slate-blue La Cornue French oven in the heart of the Shaws' kitchen—seems planned, it is clearly no accident.

"I took my notebook of clippings and really worked to implement everything I loved into this house," Shaw says. "We started out just thinking that we'd build a house close to our kids' school that would suit our needs, but it has become our dream home."

Kravet silk drapery, bed skirt and hand-stamped fabric pillows are custom through Twenty Three 07; the bedside tables are part of the owners' antique collection; chandelier and mirror are some of Lesa's antiquing finds.