

MODERN FRONTIER

Designed by Mary Anne Smiley, a modern ranch is imbued by arresting views, a *mélange* of contemporary and Western art, and architecture by Vernon Berry.



A modern ranch house articulated by Vernon Berry of Sharif-Munir. Opposite: Saint Clair Cemin, *A de Amor*, 2014, polished stainless steel, 80.75 x 86.62 in. from the *Myth and Math Series*, Kasmin Gallery, New York.

BY PEGGY LEVINSON

PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAN PIASSICK AND JOHN SMITH



On the way to Gunter, Texas, about an hour north of Dallas, you follow a winding road that takes you by a few country churches, a horse farm or two, and some scattered longhorns. Along the way, you are entranced by the hilly, winding terrain dotted with groves of oak trees—it looks like scenes from yesteryear of the old Texas ranchlands. However, you know you're out of yesteryear when you pass through a modern-steel gateway and start noticing oversized contemporary steel sculptures on the expansive grounds that lead up a long driveway to a modern ranch. Designer Mary Anne Smiley lovingly created the ranch with architect Vernon Berry (who had been referred by Smiley).

When the owners found an old equestrian center on an idyllic piece of land about an hour north of Dallas, they knew just who to call to create their dream house. Mary Anne Smiley had already done several projects with them—starting with designing their daughter's home in Highland Park. Then they enlisted her to redo both their home in Preston Hollow and a house in Vail, Colorado. They knew that she could use both their extensive contemporary and Western art collections and their love of bright color to create exactly what they wanted. “He loves red and she loves turquoise. I convinced them to start with a neutral palette and add the spectrum of warm colors leading to red—yellow, gold, orange, and then red. And add pops of turquoise and other cool blues,” says Smiley. The results create a soft glow in the home lit by all the abundant natural light flooding the house through floor-to-ceiling windows. Solar shades can be used for privacy or sun protection when needed but disappear seamlessly when not in use.



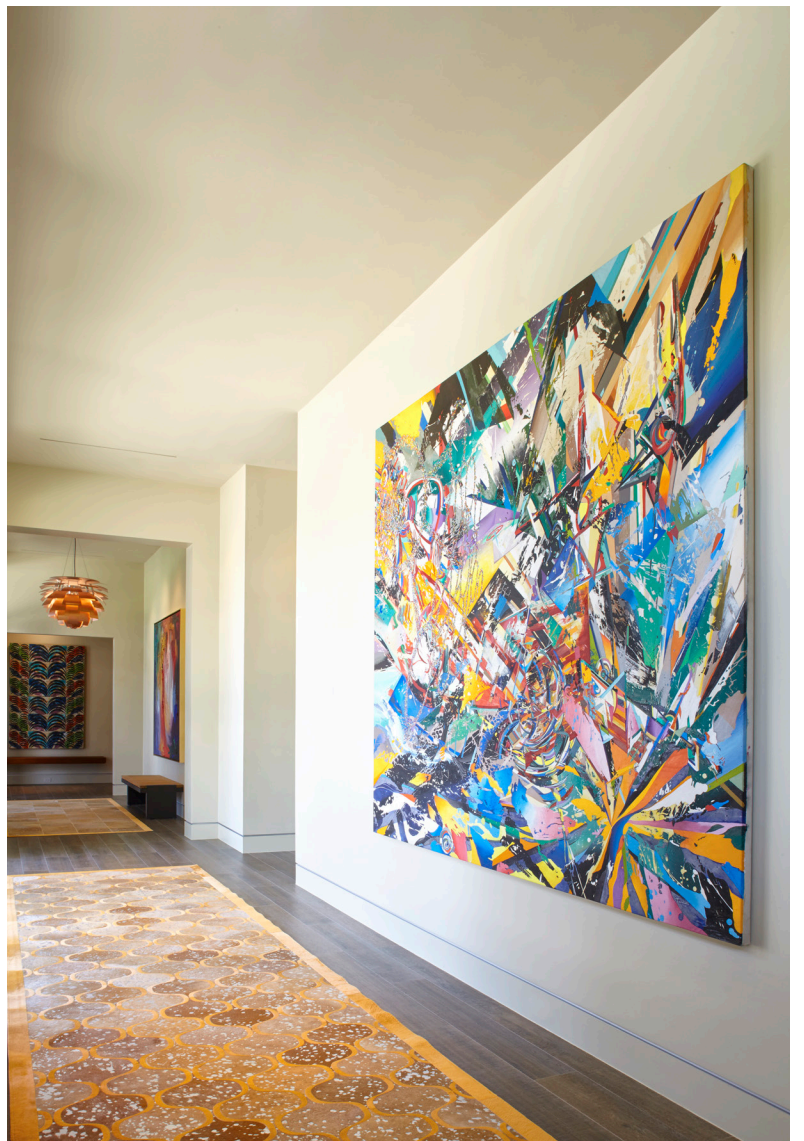


Above: Spinneybeck Alaska leathercovered tête-à-tête and sofa by J. Robert Scott available at Allan Knight; Knoll Womb Chairs covered in Knoll Dynamic Bumble; Custom fire screen by James Ray Lockridge; All custom cowhide patchwork rugs by Dallas Rugs. Below: A view of the great room with Womb Chairs by Eero Saarinen from Scott + Cooner; Adriana Hoyos Bolero sofa covered in Casamance Ondulation and Spinneybeck Alaska, with custom pillows by Mary Anne Smiley; Lorin Marsh chipped Lucite-top side tables with gunmetal base from David Sutherland; Demoraïs International Monet three-tier table; custom dining tables are surrounded by iconic Brno chairs; Glass hanging sculpture, Carlyn Ray and Emily Teng Yan, *Horizons*, 2014, blown-glass plates and pulled-glass ribbons, 10 x 15 x 5 ft.; Custom cowhide patchwork rugs by Dallas Rugs.





The bar top features longhorn hides protected by a resin coating designed by Mary Anne Smiley and produced by Luminexa Surfacing; pendant lamps by Foscarini from Scott + Cooner; Artifort tulip chairs also from Scott + Cooner. The wine bar features backlit custom artwork by Richard Bettinger.





Architect Vernon Berry with Sharif-Munir Custom Homes designed the approximately twenty-thousand-square-foot (under roof) ranch home with one thing in mind—to make the home fit the site so as to fully enjoy the southerly breezes and the view of the fountains in the lakes. “The style is an articulated Hill Country contemporary with an unusual shape in order for all the rooms to have expansive views. The house is really one room deep with wall-to-wall windows looking toward the beautiful scenery and bringing the outdoors in. We created a seamless floor plan with no thresholds and with the same wall color throughout, so that the rooms flow into each other. Porcelain wood-plank flooring used throughout the house is maintenance-free but has the look of old plank floors,” says Berry. To continue the flow of inside to outside and vice versa, a fun element was added to the decks. Tiny fiber-optic cable was installed under the limestone with tiny holes drilled to emit a starlight-like illusion when it’s dark outside. The tan of the Oklahoma stone used exclusively on the exterior keeps the look of the house informal and adds to the golden light of colors used within.

Smiley and her assistant designer Dani Burbidge exclusively

used local showrooms and artisans for the interiors. “Due to largesse of the great room, we had to rescale some of the furniture, but used the original designer or manufacturer to build it for us. We created four distinct areas within the space to bring it to a human scale—a kitchen area, a dining area, seating in front of the fireplace, and a bar. We designed the kitchen to be open to the dining area, but raised the bar to hide preparation areas. The focal point of the kitchen is the hanging glass ceiling art of blown-glass plates and pulled-glass ribbons designed by Carlyn Ray and Emily Teng Yan. The dining tables are a combination of an amber-resin top by Ironies from Culp Associates, paired with a stainless-steel-column base from David Sutherland. We ordered the iconic Brno chairs and covered them in orange leather from Spinneybeck. The circle light fixtures from Allan Knight were particularly tricky—there are two of them, and the ceiling slants from twenty to fourteen feet, and they had to be absolutely level,” says Smiley. All rugs in the house are works of art in themselves—designed by Smiley and rendered in hair on hide by Alex Hussein, the charming owner of Dallas Rugs.

Custom-sized sofas by J. Robert Scott front the massive

In the guest suite, clockwise from left: custom window-facing bed ensemble designed by Mary Anne Smiley; Christopher Martin, *Sonora*, 2015, 60 x 192 in. from the Bala Series; Heather Gorham, *Wild Pack of Family Dogs*, bronze, from Craighead-Green Gallery. Opposite: The hallway serves as a contemporary art gallery including clockwise from top left: Beat Zoderer, *Excentric Hours No. 7*, 2014, transparent foils, nails, framed, 72 x 64.2 in. from Taubert Contemporary (Berlin); Christopher Martin, *Prismatic Rings*, 96 x 144 in. from Christopher Martin Gallery; Roy Tamboli, *Divina Ora*, oil on canvas, 95 x 107 in. from Mary Tomás Gallery; Adrian Esparza, *Start and Stop*, 2014, serape, wood, nails, enamel, 84 x 94 in. from Taubert Contemporary (Berlin); Custom cowhide patchwork runner by Dallas Rugs.



This page: The master bedroom features Knoll Barcelona chairs covered in Spinneybeck Alaska; an exquisite acrylic desk by Vladimir Kagan from David Sutherland; and a custom bed by Mary Anne Smiley. Donghia Esha Altal Lamps perch on Lorin Marsh Tuxedo bedside chests with high gloss bleached goatskin from David Sutherland; striped custom cowhide rug from Dallas Rugs; above and flanking the bed: Christopher Martin, *Elestial 2*, 96 x 48 in. from *Arc Series*, and two works by Christopher Martin from the *Lattice Series*, *Arroyo 3*, each 66 x 88 in. Opposite: (above) A parade saddle from the owner's collection. In her study (below): custom fire screen by James Ray Lockridge; Womb Chair from Scott + Cooner; custom turquoise cowhide rug from Dallas Rugs; Markus Linnenbrink, *hellooneworld*, 2011, epoxy resin on wood from Taubert Contemporary (Berlin).



fireplace in the great room with tables by Holly Hunt. The branch light by Jonathan Browning from David Sutherland brings the height of the ceiling down to room scale to provide a comfortable sitting area. James Lockeridge designed this fire screen, as well as all the fireplace screens in the house. The bar area is particularly innovative—the counter surface is covered in longhorn hides protected under a resin coat Smiley commissioned from Dallas-based Luminexa Surfacing. A backlit painting on acrylic by Richard Bettinger is behind the bar. The red pendant lights and tulip bar chairs are from Scott + Cooner.

On both sides of the fireplace (and throughout the home) are bronzes of Native Americans by New Mexico sculptor Dave McGary who created incredibly lifelike sculpture using the lost wax method accented with patina and paint. His intricately detailed statues with their expressive faces, colorful feathers, and beads just beg to be touched. Along with the McGary sculptures, the owners are avid collectors of Western regalia—especially parade saddles. Two stunning saddles mounted on specially designed acrylic stands flank the entry door like sentries. Some of these parade saddles were designed specifically for only one parade, but the workmanship is outstanding. The leather is carved with floral and foliate designs; the sterling-silver mountings are etched in intricate Western and geometric motifs. Other historical memorabilia include a pair of spurs worn by the legendary cowboy, Tom Mix.





Custom billiards table by Mitchell Exclusive Billiard Designs; pendant light by Jonathan Browning from David Sutherland; Michael Berman Limited Fargo Game table with driftwood oak top, ebonized matte walnut base and Michael Berman Limited Futura dining side chairs covered in Edelman Cavallini burnt orange hair-on-hide, all from Allan Knight; cowhide patchwork rug from Dallas Rugs; (Sculpture) Markus Linnenbrink, *Buildingsteamwithagrainsofsalt*, 2010/2011, epoxy resin, pigments, wood foam, 35 x 76 x 40 in. from Taubert Contemporary (Berlin).

The gallery wing fronting the billiard room and leading to the master suite is full of great Western art by such masters as R.S. Riddick, Jim Norton, Roy Andersen, Robert Pummill, and Xiang Zhang represented by Southwest Gallery. The colorful billiard room is dominated by a custom pool table with a cobalt blue euro cloth top commissioned from Mitchell Exclusive Billiard Designs. A pendant fixture by Jonathan Browning from David Sutherland Showroom provides the light.

In keeping with Smiley's support-local mandate, the majority of the contemporary art in the house was purchased in Dallas on Dragon Street from elite galleries such as Craighead Green, Christopher Martin Gallery, Laura Rathe Fine Art, Samuel Lynne Galleries, and Mary Tomás Gallery. Smiley did find some important pieces at the Dallas Art Fair and at Art Basel Miami. When she saw a large-scale amorphous-polished stainless-steel sculpture in Miami, she knew it was perfect for the entry to the home. After approval from her clients, she contacted the Paul Kasmin Gallery

in New York and had the splendid Saint Clair Cemin sculpture *A de Amor* sent to Dallas.

Several great additions to the art collection were found at the Dallas Art Fair. The draped ottoman sculpture and other drip-and-drill paintings are by Markus Linnenbrink, represented by Taubert Contemporary in Berlin. Linnenbrink builds his compositions using layer upon layer of controlled drips in saturated, glossy colors evoking the stripe paintings of Morris Louis. Another great piece found at the Dallas Art Fair is by Adrian Esparza, the El Paso artist also represented by Taubert Contemporary. Using serape, nails, and board, Esparza composes his art by stretching threads from the serape over geometric shapes formed by the wooden strips. You can also admire an Esparza installation at the Dallas Museum of Art. *25 Eccentric Hours No. 7* is also from Taubert Contemporary by Beat Zoderer.

Several contemporary works from prominent Dallas galleries line the hallway leading to the guest wing. Of particular note is

the explosive abstract by Roy Tamboli, *Divina Ora* from the Mary Tomás Gallery, using oil paint in conjunction with hot and cold chrome. The Christopher Martin Gallery provided the *Prismatic Rings* paintings. A custom bed designed by Mary Anne Smiley that faces the windows dominates the guest room. A bronze sculpture *Wild Pack of Family Dogs* by Heather Gorham from the Craighead Green Gallery provides a touch of whimsy to the room.

The spacious master bedroom seems to glow with the golden colors of the striped rug by Dallas Rugs, the pillows, and the complementary golden oranges of the Barcelona chairs from Knoll. A work by Christopher Martin hangs above the bed, and is flanked by two paintings from Martin's *Arroyo* series. The acrylic desk by Vladimir Kagan (recently autographed by the designer when he was in town), seems to float in the space. Wall-to-wall windows look out at the fountain and a sculpture by Juanluis Gonzales from Samuel Lynne Galleries; a winding metal stairway leads up to a cozy aerie—a place to see for miles and miles, or just enjoy a lovely sunset.

The ranch is a comfortable marriage of contemporary art, Western art, and colorful furnishings. The interiors flow to the exterior deck areas with inviting room settings of teak tables and chairs from Sutherland Teak and Perennials Fabrics. But, here, sitting on the sparkly deck, the art is provided by the pastoral scenery of lakes, rolling hills, and oak trees. **P**

Below and right: All outdoor seating by Sutherland Teak and Perennials Fabrics; black iron sculpture by Juanluis Gonzales from Samuel Lynne Galleries.

