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Bedrooms: 5
Baths: 4.5
Garage: 3-Car Attached
Ready: August 2009

- * Media and Game Room
- * Courtyard
- * Rear Covered Patio
- * Lake View
- * Two Fireplaces
- * Three-Car Garage

Floor Plan



18635 Duke Lake Drive



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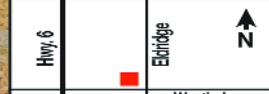
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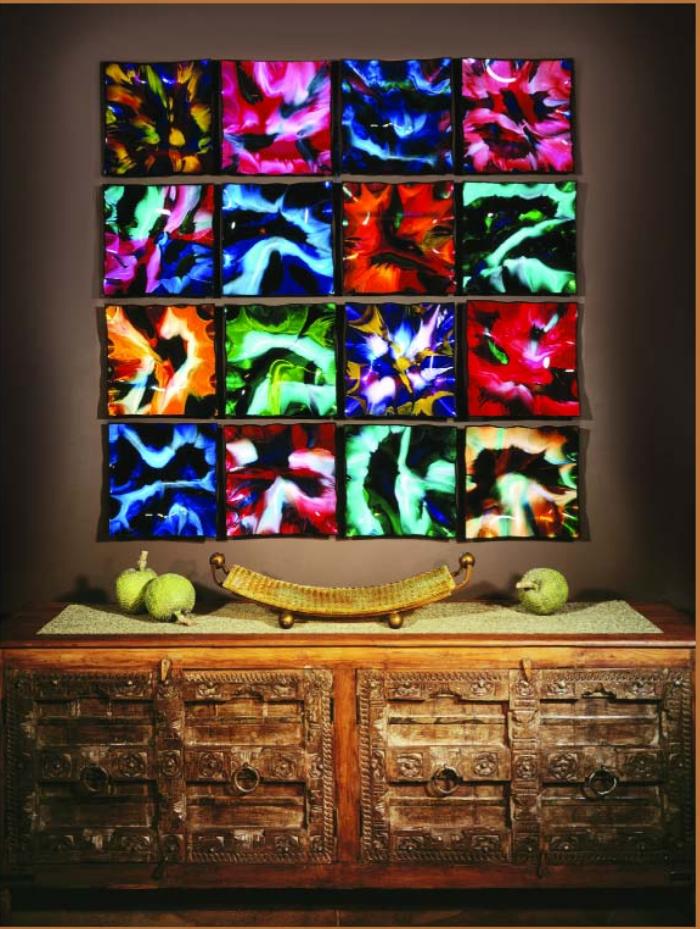


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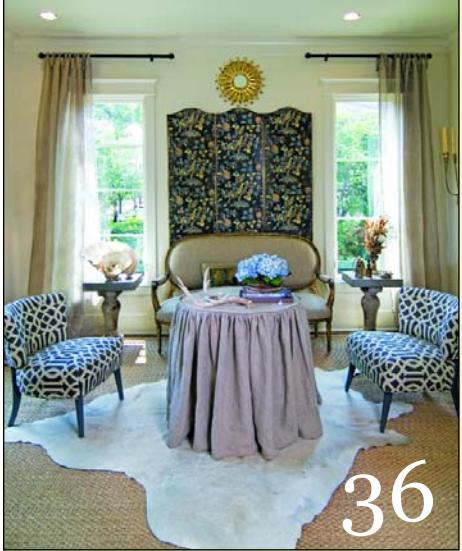
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HOME FURNISHINGS & ACCESSORIES

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On the Cover

Calm, collected Belgian-style furnishings in creams, grays and taupes make for a soothing environment in the West University home of Sally and Mark Wheat. Flowers by Aubrey Sellers Photography by Miro Dvorscak

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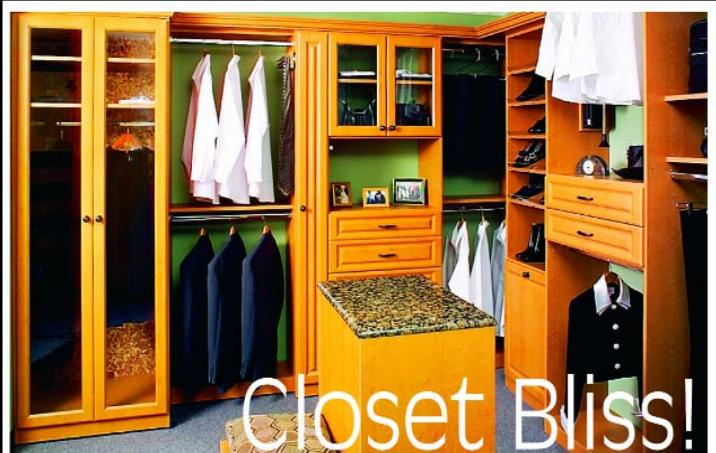
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editor's note

When my desktop computer's hard drive crashed a couple of years ago in my office at home, I decided to take the plunge, buy a laptop and go wifi. It changed my life.

During the workday at *House & Home's* offices, I still sit properly upright at my desk and click away at the desktop keyboard. But at home, my laptop takes me to a completely different virtual world. With wifi (wireless networking), I can lounge comfortably in my easy chair, feet propped up, laptop in lap, and read softer non-work-related feature stories and catch up with news clips via YouTube. When you're physically comfortable, you can linger longer online. Sometimes the little magic machine accompanies me to the kitchen where I click on my favorite food blogs' recipes and whip up whatever's the latest rage—charentais with mint vinaigrette, anyone?—without printing a word. And, yes, before bedtime, the laptop becomes my electronic lullaby, where propped up on pillows, I read my favorite blogs, usually design or travel sites.

For Houston design resources, I hope you're reading *Houston House & Home* online. In addition, some blogs by individual Houstonians are very much worth bookmarking. In particular, I'm a fan *Cote De Texas* (cotedetexas.blogspot.com) by Houston designer Joni Webb. We featured her home in our Nov. 07 issue.

I read Joni because she knows her own mind, holds informed opinions, and, most importantly, is passionate about her topic. She visits more shops a week than I'll ever have time to get to, sees details in a room no one else catches and keeps a sense of humor about her. Since she began her blog, she has developed quite a national following and now has a radio show on I-Tunes and at skirtedroundtable.blogspot.com.

Like many of us who love good houses, Joni develops crushes on houses. But unlike many of us, she's very good at devising friendly and legal ways to get inside those houses and see them. In this month's issue, her story "Stalking the Wheats" is the result of a house crush she developed a couple of years ago on a house in her West University neighborhood. She couldn't have found a more talented couple to "stalk," Mark and Sally Wheat, who've opened their doors generously to Joni and to us.

Sally is an interior decorator who keeps a small shop inside Antiques and Interiors on Dunlavy. National magazines have got her number, and you'll be seeing more of her work in print and online.

Happy end of summer. Now where's that cool front?

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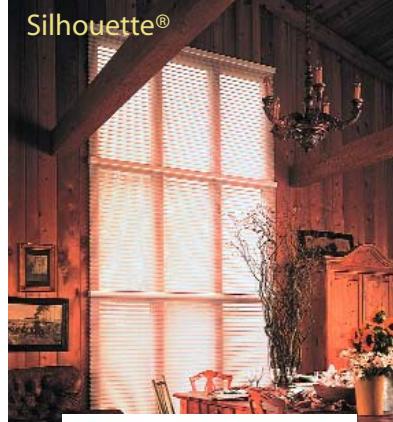
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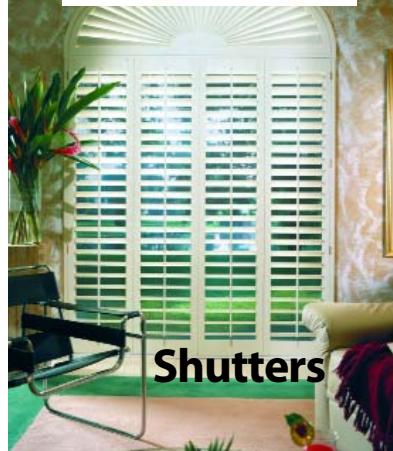
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At the MFAH: Pam by Amy Blakemore, 1997. Chromogenic photograph. Courtesy the artist and Inman Gallery, Houston.

home show

The 7th Annual Fall Home & Garden Show at The Woodlands Aug. 29-30 features 19 speakers on two stages bringing you the latest information about green building, home improvement, gardening and more. In the exhibit hall, find products for kitchens and baths, outdoor living, pools, spas and more. The show is located at the Waterway Marriott Hotel & Convention Center, 1601 Lake Robbins Drive. Tickets are \$9 for adults, \$6 for seniors, children under 12 free. Information: WoodlandsShows.com

exhibits

Body in Fragments opens Aug. 21 at The Menil Collection, 1515 Sul Ross. Drawn from the Menil's diverse collection of more than 16,000 objects, the exhibit curated by Kristina Van Dyke explores how the human form is dissected and reconfigured in the art of various times and places, conveying spiritual, physical, and intellectual notions of personhood. John and Dominique de Menil collected an extensive array of art portraying the human figure in fragmented form. Information: 713.525.9400 or www.menil.org

Amy Blakemore: Photographs 1988-2008 at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, 1001 Bissonnet St.,

surveys this Houston-based photographer's career, ranging from her early black-and-white photographs to her lushly colored portraits and landscapes. Her casual shots reveal a mysterious and psychologically revealing view of our world. Information: 713.639.7300 or www.mfah.org

Four great new shows debut at Lawndale Art Center, 4912 Main St., on Aug. 24. At the **Lawndale Art Center 30th Anniversary Exhibition**, curator Clint Willour takes a look at the last five years, gathering work



At HCCC's Unknitting show: Media Noche, 2007, a Lambda metallic print by Sandra Valenzuela.

from artists who have shown in Lawndale galleries. In **Me, Mine and not Yours**, Joe Ives and Jahjehan Bath Ives present an installation of playful sculptures and videos for people who want to be alone in a household with other people. In **Paper or Plastic?**, Nathaniel Donnett explores the historic brown bag paper test used to separate darker and lighter skinned African Americans. Adela Andea's **The Green cyber web** is a kinetic installation incorporating computer gadgets in an intricate spatial web design. Information: 713.528.5858 or www.lawndaleartcenter.org

At the Houston Center for Contemporary Craft, 4848 Main St., two exhibitions, **Challenge VII: dysFUNctional and Unknitting: Challenging Textile Traditions**, challenge the traditional uses of wood, textiles and other materials while celebrating the unexpected. Information: 713.529.4848 or www.crafthouston.org



At The Menil Collection: Bonne fête (Happy Birthday), 1892, by Henri Rousseau. Oil, cardboard mounted on cradled panel. Photo by Paul Hester

The Heritage Society Museum, 1100 Bagby, in collaboration with The Center for Advancement and Study of Early Texas Art, presents **Miles and Miles of Texas: The Lone Star State Through the Eyes of Buck Schiwetz**. Information: 713.655.1912 or www.heritagesociety.org

events

Get ideas for your vacation home by touring the furnished **Cottonwood Casita** by Southern Living magazine and Myhomeideas.com at Traditions

Club in Bryan, Texas. Start at the Information Center, 2100 Traditions Boulevard. Touring times through Aug. 30 are Thursdays, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Fridays and Saturdays, 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. and Sunday, 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. Admission is \$5. Information: 979.821.2582 or www.traditionsclub.com.

The Houston Glass Club's **35th Annual Festival of Glass and Antiques Show and Sale**, Aug. 14-16 at Fort Bend County Fairgrounds is one of the best in the country for 20th-century American-made glassware. Information: 713.729.4267 or www.houstonglassclub.org

classes

At Houston Arboretum, 4501 Woodway Drive, native plant and wildlife expert Glenn Olsen tells how to identify and attract **dragonflies and damselflies of the Upper Texas Coast** on Aug. 18, 7-9 p.m. Field trip is Aug. 23, 1-4 p.m. Cost is \$40 for members, \$55 for non-members. Learn where to find and how to **identify edible wild plants** with Mark Vorderbruggen, a research chemist and explorer, on Aug. 23, 1:30-5 p.m. Cost is \$40 for members, \$60 for nonmembers. Information: 713.681.8433 or www.HoustonArboretum.org.

what's new

House geeks, home remodelers and designers seeking light summer reading for the beach or mountain retreat will laugh out loud reading **Confessions of a Contractor** (Berkley Books, New York), a novel by Richard Murphy. The author worked 12 years as a remodeler of fine houses in the Hollywood suburbs before switching his craft to screenwriting. Discover the thrills and foibles of home improvement, as seen through the eyes of a remodeler who sometimes gets too close to his wealthy clients. Plenty of design talk: His quip on shabby chic gone bad is worth the price of the book. It's HGTV meets *Sex and the City*. No surprise, then, that a TV series based on the book is in the making.



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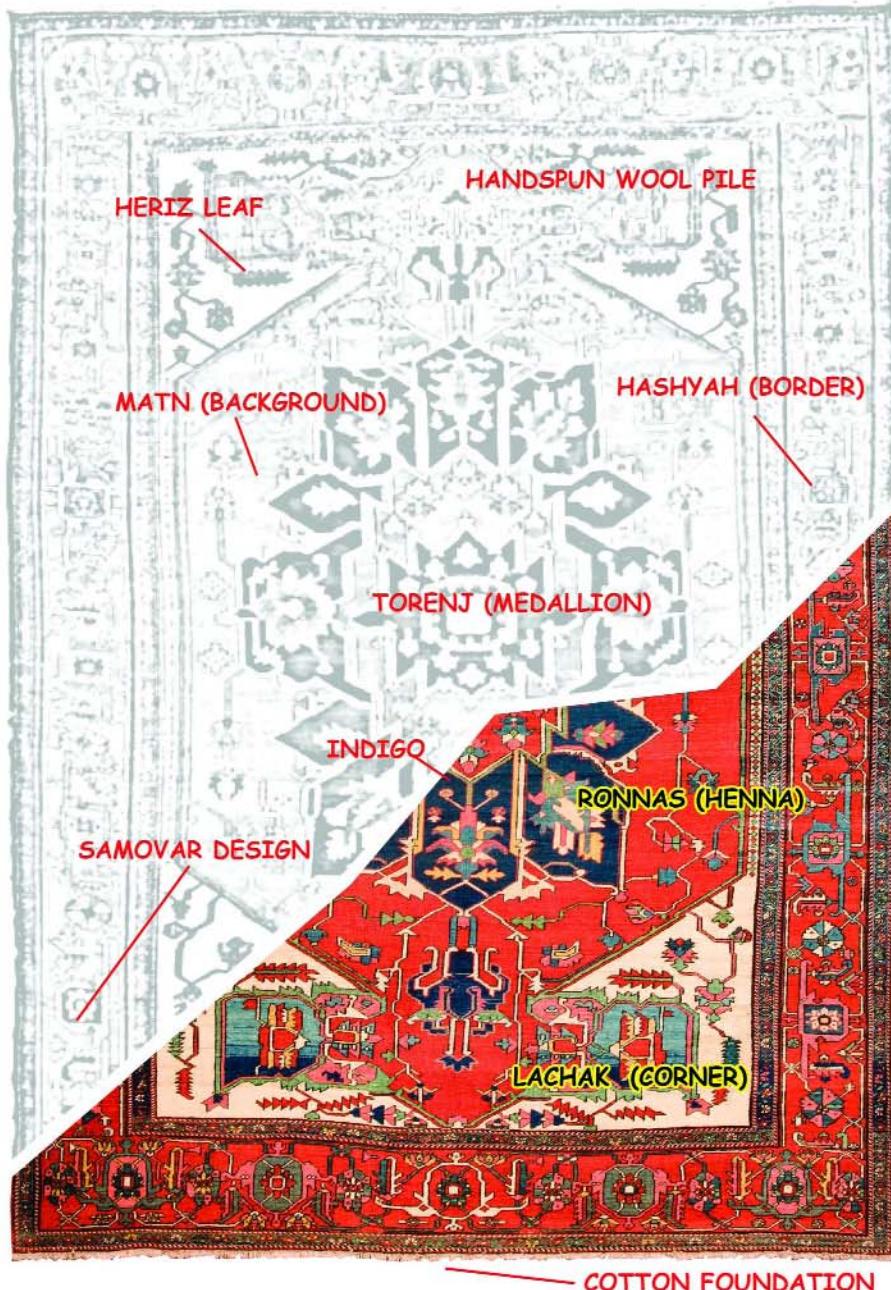
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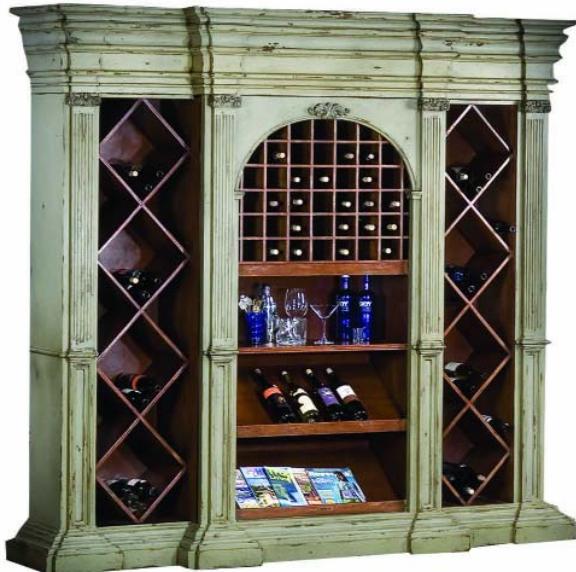
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in the spotlight

By Holly Rotenberry

SPECIAL EVENT AUCTION SEPT. 7

Vintage juke boxes, spectacular estate jewelry and more go up for bid at Gallery Auctions' Labor Day Extravaganza on Monday, Sept. 7



Gallery Auctions, a full-time, full-service auction house in North Houston, is a place where people who love unusual items and amazing deals find themselves in what can only be described as a candy store of merchandise.

While Gallery Auctions is known for bringing furniture and decorative items, both antique and replicas, to customers faithfully every Monday morning, it has also become known for its big event auctions. Held a couple of times throughout the year, these auctions bring buyers an even wider variety of merchandise. This fall, Gallery Auctions' upcoming Labor Day Extravaganza titled "Bee Bop and Bling Bling" may even surpass owner Vikki Vines' high expectations for these event auctions.

The Labor Day Extravaganza, which begins Monday, Sept. 7 at 10 a.m. and runs until buyers have cleaned out the sale room, will offer everything from decorative items to furniture, both antique and new designer selections. However, as the theme of the auction suggests, this auction is more in the direction of toys for us "big kids".

A Houston collector, who for 40 years had been internationally recognized in juke box restoration and maintained a private museum in Spring Branch, has passed away and left his treasures for lucky buyers to acquire for their own homes. Eleven of his fully restored and working 1950s and 1960s juke boxes will be auctioned. Complementing the juke boxes will be a great collection of full-sized antique advertising signs, a life size Jar Jar Binks, pub signs, pub bars, pedal cars, game room décor and more.

To push this auction another step over the top, there will also be a selection of spectacular estate jewelry. Not what you would typically find at your average jeweler's, some jewelry pieces are antique, some are individual designs, and all are completely certified. Buyers are guaranteed that the jewelry will appraise for what they pay for it or more. If it doesn't, they have the option of returning the jewelry.

This auction is sure to be the hallmark auction of the year for Gallery Auctions, and all are welcome.

LABOR DAY EXTRAVAGANZA

MONDAY SEPTEMBER 7TH , 10AM

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BUILDING BLOCKS of the MODERN BATH

TODAY'S BATH NEEDS SPACE—AND PLENTY OF IT—ALONG WITH GOOD FIXTURES, CABINETS, MIRRORS AND LIGHTING TO CREATE A RELAXING SPA-LIKE ENVIRONMENT

By LEIGH BELL



ABOVE LEFT & THIS IMAGE: Dornbracht's Supernova bathroom by Sieger Design features a suite of fittings for tub, lavatory, bidet and shower. Dornbracht products are available through Elegant Additions and Westheimer Plumbing and Hardware.

ABOVE: The Jeton Collection by designer Bill Sofield for Kallista combines the classicism of 20th-Century French architecture and the spontaneity of haute couture.

RIGHT: This tub by interior designers Ludovica and Roberto Palomba for Laufen is available through TKO Associates, Dallas.



Beyond the kitchen, our bathroom is the most utilitarian space in the house, and let's be honest: We spend a lot of time there.

It reflects our lifestyle. So, we can't talk about the modern bath without talking about the modern lifestyle and how the evolution of American living has transformed the bathroom.

These days, both parents work and together raise a busy family that likely consists of children, and sometimes, an aging mother or father. Then there's the baby-boomer couple who are emptying the nest and making a home that will age with them.

No matter its demographics, households have tightened the purse strings in this struggling economy, and, although the average house downsized by 200 square feet since last year, the bathroom is larger than ever.

What does that say about the modern bath? A lot.

First, the bathroom must be important if it's growing while house size shrinks. Today's households have higher demands, to which the modern bath must respond. It's spacious and makes better use of space. It facilitates two people simultaneously getting dressed. It's friendly to the environment and baby boomer's wheelchairs or arthritic knees. The modern bath is a refuge and spa-like, as families cut back on outside luxuries but still need a "getaway." It's a place to linger.

The modern bath must be many things.

And larger is the greatest request. The average bath today is three times larger than 20 years ago, says Kohler's Senior Interior Designer Diana Schrage.

"Now, the size of the master bath rivals the size of the master bedroom," she says.

TANDEM BATHS

Fewer stay-at-home moms and more domestic partners mean two people are getting ready for work each morning in American bathrooms. This societal shift requires two vanities and sinks, a larger shower – often with two heads for personal temperature and water-pressure preferences – and, if not two separate lavatories, then one private toilet.

The bathroom becomes a meeting place for couples in the morning. They plan the day – who's picking up the kids, what's for dinner – while shaving, putting on makeup and getting dressed.

The divided bath often includes a vanity, and shared countertops separate space at varying heights, maybe 36 inches on one side and 42 inches on the other, with a raised toe kick and stock cabinetry beneath.

"Regardless of space, we are seeing the separation of the bathroom," Schrage said. "Each may have a privatized toilet and storage. They don't have to be huge, but it's a degree of separation."

CALGON TAKE ME AWAY

If one thing has influenced the modern bath it's the spa, Schrage says.

If there was one word to describe the modern bath, it would be Zen, says Peggy McGowen founder of Kitchen & Bath Concepts.

"And if you want to know what it's like to have a Zen-like bathroom, to have a spa-comfort feeling," McGowen says, "go treat yourself to a day at the spa."

Then save yourself some money and recreate that feeling at home. Products abound to help, allowing the "spa concept" to go from simple – replace the clutter with a few candles – to extreme. These are just a few examples.

Kohler offers VibrAcoustic bathtubs (\$3,000ish to \$6,000ish) that emit soundwave vibrations beneath the water that choreograph with above-water music and colors to control breathing and achieve different goals from calming and relaxation.

Chromatherapy in bathtubs and showers (\$2,000ish to \$10,000+) distribute light throughout your entire shower or bathroom. Steam showers with jets and other accoutrements is an entire market, and some bathtubs allow aromatic oils to be infused in the bath water.

"Now the size of the master bath rivals the size of the master bedroom."

—Diana Schrage
Senior Interior Designer,
Kohler

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Toilets light up, heat up, play music, and wash and dry you. (Check out Toto's Neorest 600 for about \$3,000). The list of luxurious indulgences go on.

High-priced purchases for the bathroom "are still occurring but people must perceive that they add value to the home," Schrage says.

THE SPA SPACE

The "spa experience" has also greatly influenced the design and lighting of the modern bath, reducing aesthetic to simply minimal.

Smaller baths realize this look with higher ceilings, plenty of glass and smartly placed mirrors. Contributing to the overall ascetic look is cabinetry with clean lines that opens at the bottom — about 12-18 inches — and sits on slim legs, all of which create the sense of space and openness.

"I tend to take materials — like tiles, mirrors and doors — all the way up to the ceiling to elongate a room," says Laura Michaelides, founder of Four Square Design Studio.

Innovations in glass tile and its sleek style are ideal for the modern bath, and Michaelides likes to mix it with natural stone, like limestone and marble, in bathrooms.

Integrated basins and countertops, plenty of glass and doorless showers also contribute to the spa-look. Clutter is hidden in recessed-wall compartments, oversized under-sink storage and additional linen closets outside of the bathroom. After all, most of us are minimalist-minded but have a lot of stuff.

LET THERE BE LIGHT

Dark is out when it comes to color and lighting in the modern bath.

White is the go-to hue these days (52 percent prefer it), and once again, blame it on the spa. Kohler introduced "honed white" "in a direct response to the influences of the spa," Schrage says.

A splash of dark, on the countertop or in cabinets is common but used judiciously. White reflects and embellishes natural light, which Michaelides calls "integral" to the modern bath. Natural is, in fact, her first consideration when scoping out a bathroom makeover.

It makes sense. Poor lighting contributes to more shaving nicks and infamous makeup lines.

"Lighting is really a key issue," she says, adding a common and grave mistake in the bathroom is overhead lighting, which shadows your face. She prefers lighting on either side.



LEFT: A Fire and Ice bathroom created for Kohler by designer Beth Slifer lets alternating warm and cool tones and textures highlight the delicate balance of nature in this eco-friendly bathroom. Here, the warmth of the lighting balances with cool glass lavatory sinks which rest on a recycled concrete countertop set into a custom bamboo base cabinet.

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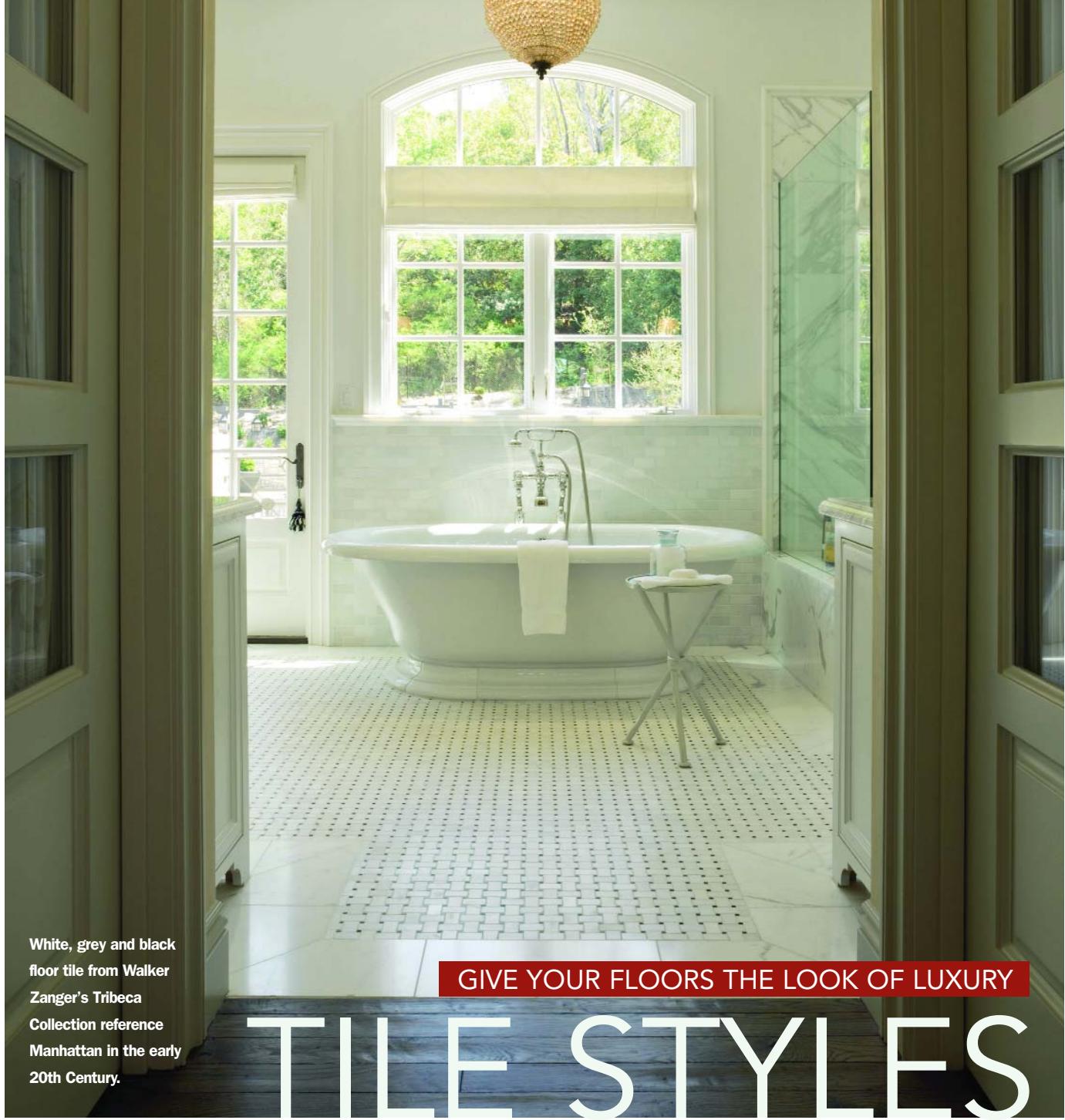
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TILE STYLES

By DEBI BRYANT

Think of tiles—marble, granite, slate, natural stone, ceramic, porcelain—and immediately a sense of cool elegance comes to mind. “Tile is a mindset,” says Tony Ferrante, owner of Ferrante Remodeling and New Construction. “Besides being pretty, tile is a piece of heritage. It has been around almost as long as we’ve had homes.”

Today, the hard part is deciding which type of tile, among the many excellent choices, to pick—but not to worry. “You can find fine quality in every flooring category,” says Sam Roberts, owner of Roberts Carpets & Fine Floors. “It’s only a matter of your taste and what you like best.”

Dave Allum, owner of Traditional Designs, suggests starting with some basic decisions. He says, “Pick your product for the application intended.” Along those lines, he lists five elementary considerations:

1. The size of the room or space. “If you have a large area, you might

want to consider arranging the tiles in a pattern,” he suggests.

2. The size of the tile and the scale of the room where it will go. Allum warns, “A small room can be overpowered by a large tile size.” Similarly, a large room with small floor tiles can seem too busy visually.

3. The color of the tile.

4. Durability. Be sure the glaze, if any, is suitable for the expected foot traffic, say, the wear-and-tear at a main entrance vs. in a guest bath.

5. The coefficient of friction (or how slippery it is). In wet areas like the bathroom and kitchen, you want little slickness, whereas in the living room or dining room, a smooth surface works fine.

Each flooring option has its strengths. Besides being beautiful, tile is also famously low maintenance. “Tile is the single easiest floor to maintain,” explains Roberts. “It is immune to moisture and, while you can chip it, it is really hard to do.”

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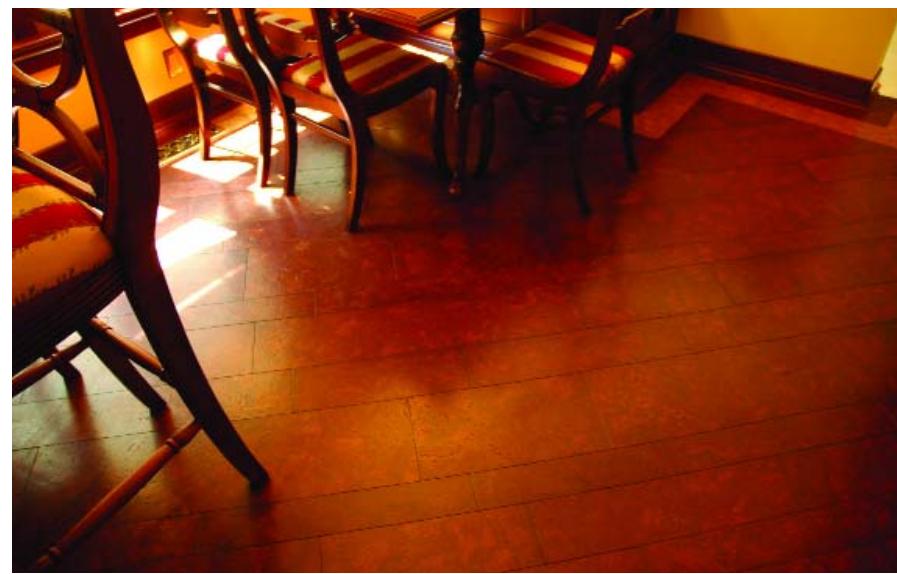
SCHONBEK
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ABOVE: The Alterna vinyl tile collection by Armstrong features true black and white colors in large tile format.



LEFT: The Paradigm Collection by Walker Zanger imagines the art form of stone mosaic with a decidedly modern sensibility.



These cork tiles in plank form have a traditional wood look. Photo courtesy www.corkfloor.com

Conversely, each category has its weaknesses. For instance, some tile types are slippery, so Allum cautions his customers about factoring in the slip resistance. "Marble and granite are generally slicker than slate, which has an uneven finish," he says. "You can drag your finger across a tile and feel what is slick and what isn't." Also, Roberts points out, "Tile doesn't absorb sound." This issue can be addressed by using tile in a smaller space or by pairing the tile with a luscious area rug.

The best way to decide on a tile for your home is to see and feel the tiles in person since tiles are so tactile. "When you see and touch the tiles, you can feel the quality," says Roberts.

Brian Anderson, sales manager of the Tile Zone's Katy location, offers this advice: If you plan to live in your home for a while, it's worth it to get exactly the floors you want. So if you don't have the budget for your preference—wait until you do. "You don't want to settle for something less and then wake up every morning and regret your choice when you first step out of bed," he says. ▶

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ABOVE: Real cork in three colors creates a weave pattern. Cork is notable for its soft feel underfoot and for its acousting sound-damping qualities. Photo courtesy www.corkfloor.com

RIGHT: Metallika Bronze glazed porcelain tile by Arizona Tile.

LEFT: Rustic Gold Slate tiles by Thorntree Slate & Marble.



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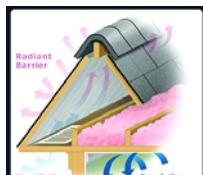
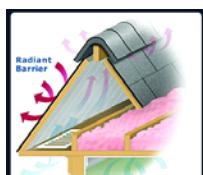
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ABOVE: Isparta travertine in a chiseled texture by Arizona Tile.

BETWEEN: Capture the look of refined slate with the tonal ranges and dramatic streaks of "Vesale Stone" glazed porcelain by Marazzi USA.



ABOVE: Octagon & Dot glazed tile by Daltile in matte white.



ABOVE: Stainless steel and bronzed copper tiles from Daltile's Metal Fusion series. Roberts Carpet & Fine Floors carries Daltile.

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Mannington Mill's Francesca porcelain floor tiles come in three color options, including "Bisque" shown here. Available through Roberts Carpets & Fine Floors



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After

Simplifying artwork, removing carpeting and transforming the entertainment cabinet into music and wine storage transformed the living room. Recessed can lights simplify the room's lighting.



After

New wine storage racks were moved into the entertainment cabinet and her Mom's grandfather clock was moved from the den into the living space. JC Penney sale plantation shutters update the space.

Before

Beautiful hardwood floors were hiding underneath green shag carpeting. The room arrangement discouraged casual conversation and proper use of the dining room table, being used as a sofa table.

Before

The dining table had to be moved to use it for entertaining friends and family. Dated shutters were in need of replacement.



REMOVING SHAG CARPET TO EXPOSE HARD-WOOD FLOORS MAKES ALL THE DIFFERENCE IN THIS LIVING ROOM

It never ceases to amaze me what removing wall-to-wall carpeting, rearranging furnishings and simplifying artwork and accessories can do to peel years off of a room.

CJ and Lynn Yeoman called me because they wanted a master plan to follow for their house. (Their kitchen makeover, "Down With The Furdown" was featured in DIY Decorating, May, 2009 issue of Houston House & Home.)

They knew the living room was awfully choppy, but didn't think they could do much other than rip out the old carpet and install recessed can lights. I suggested, among other things, that they needed to move the TV into the den and replace their beloved wine rack with one that would fit into the entertainment cabinet.

CJ admits that moving the sofa, moving the TV out of the room plus hanging the mirror over the buffet and adding buffet lamps were hard to visualize and were a leap of faith.

tip> If space allows, major seating should greet you like a clamshell, welcoming you into the living room. The dining room's purpose should be clearly visible.

SETTING THE STAGE

After the lovely red oak hardwood floors hiding beneath the green shag carpeting were exposed, the new recessed can lights and JC Penney sale plantation shutters really showcased the rooms' possibilities. Houston Structural accomplished these minor physical changes, repaired the sheetrock walls and painted the rooms "Ivory Lace" by Sherwin Williams.

"The changes were significant, and immensely enhanced the value of our 1960s-era home," CJ says. "We really love the sophisticated spaces now—they are a restful, uncluttered area in which to listen to music, read and dine."

Before, they just moved furniture around to make room to open the table when they had the family over for holidays. TIP: Ideally you should not have to move any furniture around to entertain. It should be ready to go.

Having the drop leaf dining table open all the time shows off a very pretty table and encourages entertaining friends and family, making the space updated, functional and more spacious.

THE TV DILEMMA

"You asked us the big question: how often do you watch TV in this room?" CJ recalls. It became clear that the larger TV and the DVD player should be in the den, where they would really enjoy it. "When we decided we no longer

trade secrets

• **Think "green".** Rearranging your furniture and giving unneeded pieces to charity keeps them out of the landfill and repurposes them.

• **Don't be afraid** to combine antique artwork, mirror and accessories with new budget-friendly lamps, rug and end table to create the room you have always dreamed of.

Think outside the box. A TV entertainment cabinet can be repurposed into a wine storage/music center.

• **Paint consistently gives the most bang for the buck.** Painting existing picture frames and re-matting them is less expensive than replacement.

• **Sometimes** the most effective strategy is not to buy more furniture and accessories for your home, but to first rethink the pieces that are already paid for.

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needed the sofa in front of the entertainment center to watch TV, that domino falling was what made the new room possible," she explains. Husband Lynn loved that they no longer needed to buy a new TV for the den, which he figured saved them a bundle.

The couple had wine stored in the breakfast room and the corner of the dining room, so I suggested they buy additional modular metal wine racks they had previously found at Pier 1 Imports and consolidate all of the wine into the living room entertainment cabinet. (CJ knew that a cabinet sturdy enough for a big TV would easily hold the extra weight of wine bottles and racks.)

REARRANGE AND UNIFY

Nearly everything found a home. The rocking chair was moved to the guest bedroom and a trunk they had just received from CJ's Mom was used as the coffee table. Art frames were painted using Modern Masters Metallic Paint Collection in "English Brown" and re-matted with off white or white mats and re-hung in the master bedroom, den, hallway and entry.

tip **Unify mismatched artwork frames with paint and the same neutral mat color. You will never see a colored mat in a fine gallery or art museum.**

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The black metal nesting tables that Lynn hated were moved to the den to replace a dated, combination lamp and glass table shelf. The couple also replaced their larger speakers with small speakers they had on a shelf in the den, placing them on black stands they bought online. They purchased a new glass-topped "Mix" side table from Crate & Barrel, and topped the table with a new lampshade for their existing lamp from Alcon Lightcraft.

The old sofa and blue chair were given to charity since I explained it would cost more to buy 20+ yards of fabric and pay to replace the foam cushions, restyle and reupholster them than to buy new pieces on sale. Their new Star Furniture sofa came with the throw pillows, which work well with their existing painting.

tip **Unless seating truly is sentimental, it usually is less expensive to replace low, outdated seating with quality sale merchandise.**

CJ says one of the biggest changes was centering the existing buffet and moving the large hall mirror over it. She moans that shopping for the buffet lamps to flank it was a daunting challenge, "The lamps I found were either too expensive or were really cheap from China and looked it. I was delighted to find the Trent buffet lamps from www.lightingdirect.com, which were in a mid-price range and the height you recommended.

"While we are still looking for a special family to give our big wine rack to, we absolutely love the rooms. It is a must to have a professional help you. Homeowners are just too close to their house to see what needs to be done," CJ says.



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Kids of all ages will have plenty to keep them busy, with activities such as fun jumps, face paintings, bungee run, jousting, and of course, the famous Grape Stomp!

While you are in Montgomery, take time to check out the many historic buildings and be sure to tour the N.H. Davis Pioneer Museum. A portion of the proceeds from the festival will benefit historic downtown revitalization projects and local charities.

Directions: take Interstate 45 North to Loop 336 in Conroe, and then take Texas Highway 105 west to Montgomery. Free parking and shuttle services are available. For more information, please visit www.hmba.biz or call 936/597-5004.



STALKING THE

Drapes throughout most of the house are unlined Belgian linen from Indulge Maison Décor in Houston. Seagrass on the sitting room floor gives the room a natural feel and texture, as does a soft white calfskin rug. The screen behind the settee is from Thompson + Hanson. Chairs flanking the linen-skirted roundtable are from The Guild Shop and Bluebird Circle. They were bought separately—they don't match—but Kelly Wearstler's divine "Imperial Trellis" upholstery fabric pulls them together visually.



WHEATS



The object of my obsession: The stucco exterior of the house is what first caught my attention. The stacked stone foundation, the stone walkway, the boxwoods, the wisteria over the doorway, the paneled wood door, the gas lanterns and the wood French-style shutters—all these details make the exterior special.

**HOUSTON DESIGNER AND BLOG WRITER
JONI WEBB DEVELOPS A SERIOUS HOUSE
CRUSH, MAKES FRIENDS WITH THE OWN-
ERS AND TAKES US INTO ONE OF HER
FAVORITE HOUSES IN WEST UNIVERSITY**

By JONI WEBB • Photography by MIRO DVORSCAK
Flowers by AUBREY SELLERS

Have you ever seen a house in your neighborhood that you've fallen just a little in love with, a house that makes you wistfully wish it were yours?

Or has a house ever caught your eye and caused you to slow your car to a crawl just to gaze at it?

Or better still – have you ever purposely driven by a house at dusk when it's easier to see inside the windows – just to steal a glimpse of its interiors?

I know a house like that. I stalked it for over a year until I finally was formally invited inside. The object of my desire was located on my daily Starbucks route and day after day after day, I would pass its white stuccoed, French-styled facade with wisteria dripping down over the planked wood front door and its authentically styled shutters.

I was in love.





The stars of the family room are the antique shutters from Bill Gardner Antiques. They were carefully painted gray by artisan James Farmer and now conceal TV and storage shelving. Curtains are from Olivine. Extra-long slipcovered sofas are reminiscent of Belgian style. Sally made the cross on the coffee table from driftwood she collects on Boliver Island.

There became a routine to my stalking: on each trip for a caffeine fix, I would deliberately drive just a little slower – hoping to see into its beautiful casement windows. I could make out certain elements – a wood chandelier, a painted screen, a floor length mirror – and with each new detail that I discovered, the obsession grew stronger. Somehow, I would have to gain entrance inside to see the furnishings – somehow, I would have to make it happen. And happen, thankfully, it did.

STEPPING INSIDE

As luck might have it, friends lived across the street from the house of my obsession, and an introduction was planned. (It didn't hurt, either, that one of the owners had read my design blog and was familiar with my work.) Finally! After a year of stalking a house with more dedication than a lover might stalk an old flame, I was being granted an entrance! Winning the lotto would have meant less to me.

The owners, Sally and Mark Wheat, graciously, or naively (take your pick) let their stalker inside – proudly showing me upstairs and down – even letting me sit on their linen slip covered sofa. Heaven might be nicer, but you would have to prove that to me.

The house – what can I say about the house that will do it justice? It started life as a more typical West University house

built on "spec" until, that is, the Wheats bought it early during its construction. This lucky stroke of timing allowed them to add all the charming touches and details that together make the house not typical, but special.

Sally, an interior decorator who also has an antiques business, and Mark, a real estate developer, both knew what they wanted. While Mark's wish list for the house revolved around HVAC and plumbing systems, Sally – with her unerring eye for beautiful objects – was more concerned with paint colors and stair railings, marble choices and cabinetry.

Together they transformed what was going to be a red brick Georgian house into one that would look at home in a field in Provence. Red brick Georgians don't attract stalkers, but French country houses make you turn your head for a second look.

DETAILS, SMALL BUT IMPORTANT

It's all in the details, and Sally had a list of those details she added, one by one.

Her changes for the outside included replacing the specified brick for white stucco with flagstone skirting. Wood plank French shutters were added next to casement windows that were originally supposed to be multi-paned.

Inside, even more drastic revisions happened: Light wood floors became very dark, sheet rocked corners were softly



A beautiful antique chandelier is the focal point of the dining room. Sally had furniture maker James Mol custom-build the dining table based on a picture she found in *World of Interiors* magazine. The French mouton-leg chairs are slipcovered. Sidney, the family's rescued pup, stands before a wall of framed botanicals.



In the kitchen, the doors were left off the upper cabinets to reveal a collection of ironstone. Counter-tops are white statuary marble; backsplashes are white subway tile. The hefty white sink is a Shaws farm sink. The two pendant lights are from Belgium, via BROWN, a Houston shop notable for its Belgian furnishings and accessories.

curved, squared openings were arched, wood stair railings became scrolled iron, and the kitchen's upper cabinet doors were never made, instead the shelves were left open to show off Sally's impressive collection of white ironstone and glass cake stands. A walk-in bar under the stairs was transformed into a much more needed small computer office.

But, perhaps the biggest metamorphosis came about with a chance visit to Bill Gardner's antique shop. There, Sally spotted two sets of green shutters which she had artisan James Farmer paint gray. Now the shutters close off what was to be open shelving flanking the family room's fireplace. The simple, yet stunning shutters became the focal point of the room. The television, thankfully, quietly hides behind them.

BELGIAN INFLUENCE

Though its facade and much of the antiques are French, the house has a decidedly Belgian feel to it – a style that is today all the rage in design circles. White walls, dark floors, simple moldings, and gray cabinetry set the stage for the clean-lined, oversized linen slip-covered sofas that were made in a decidedly Belgian style – a style whose sensibilities the Wheats have happily embraced.

The Belgian look is further punctuated with industrial accents, and Sally's Tolix and Panton chairs placed around her even more industrial-like zinc breakfast table fit that bill. Houston's biggest purveyor of the Belgian look, Jill Brown, owner of BROWN, provided the kitchen's hip light fixtures.

Sally collects driftwood during family vacations on Bolivar Island and fashions it into art and lamps – which she displays around the house ►



On the slate-paved back patio by Thompson + Hanson, the polycarbonate woven sofa and chair are from High Fashion Home. The frilly white metal chairs, vintage Mexican pieces, are from the Guild Shop. Sally painted them white and had brown cushions with crisp white piping custom-made for them. Sally designed the greenscape; husband Mark implemented it.



Around the breakfast room's industrial-like zinc table are Tolix and Panton chairs.

The bubbly pendant light is from Indulge Maison Décor.

and sells in her shop located inside Antiques and Interiors on Dunlavy. Although antiques abound throughout the house, newer, trendier pieces are also plentiful, a mix that Sally loves and calls "the high with the low." She particularly likes to hunt down vintage-styled upholstery pieces and covers them with trendy fabrics like Kelly Wearstler's "Imperial Trellis" found in her wonderful sitting room.

EVER EVOLVING

The Wheats with two young children are happily settled in their dream house. But Sally, with her continual exposure to new design styles and fabrics, is still applying finishing touches to her house – something that probably will continue for quite a while, she admits with a laugh. A frequent visitor notices that furniture and accessories routinely change, a hazard of being both an interior decorator and an antiques seller. But that's just fine with this stalker – anything that makes the Wheats' house look better, only improves upon perfection. ▶

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Joni Webb, a local designer, writes the popular blog Cote de Texas at www.cotedetexas.blogspot.com and is host of the weekly Skirted Roundtable radio show available on I-tunes and skirted-roundtable.blogspot.com.

RIGHT: An mirror reflects a view of the master bedroom, a symphony in cream, mushroom and taupe. The oversized headboard is tufted and upholstered. A white painted desk in the background holds a modern Kartell lamp.







Sally Wheat at home.

ELEMENTS THAT CHANGE A HO-HUM GEORGIAN HOUSE TO A STALKABLE BEAUTY

- White stucco with fieldstone skirting
- Wood planked shutters with iron hardware
- Hipped roofline
- Casement windows
- Iron stair rails
- Dark-stained hardwoods
- Arched doorways
- Open kitchen shelving
- Simple green landscaping with lots of boxwoods

DESIGN ELEMENTS SALLY WHEAT LOVES IN A HOUSE

- White or oyster walls
- Simple or no moldings
- Dark hardwoods
- Seagrass: rugs and wall-to-wall
- Slipcovers
- Open kitchen cabinetry with clean lines, no embellishments
- White marble or concrete countertops
- Shaws Farm Sink
- A mix of old and new, high and low
- Linen, linen, linen
- Touches of the Belgian industrial look
- Very simple window treatments, if any
- Antique tapestry pillows
- Portrait art
- Driftwood



LEFT: "I love to do girls' rooms," Sally says, and this one, for her daughter Sara is darling. On the antique chest hand-painted by James Farmer is a collection of Jonathan Adler pottery cats from Kuhl-Linscomb. "Love" pillows are from the witty British company Lush Designs (www.lushlampshades.co.uk). Black and white zigzag rug is by Madeline Weinrib of ABC Carpet & Home in New York.

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OUTDOOR FLOORS

By JUNE SANTON

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ABOVE: The planks for this expansive deck are Choicedek, composite decking made with recycled materials.

Patios and decks are among the most popular places to relax at home in our year-round climate. If you're thinking of building a deck or remodeling an existing one, you have more choices in materials than ever before.

Natural wood decks are still the standard. Most people choose pine treated with chemicals that make it stand up to weather and damp soil. However, other woods, synthetic woods, natural stone and concrete are all coming into increasing use and each has its strengths. Largely, it's a matter of taste.



Freehand Concepts, a Houston-based company, builds concrete deck floors that look like natural stone textures.

Natural woods other than pine also can be used. Redwood and cedar, for example, have resins that naturally protect them from weathering and rotting. They are, however, more expensive than treated pine. Choose materials for your deck that will complement the total look of your house, garden and any accessory structures in your landscape. Make sure the design of your deck is not only aesthetically pleasing, but also functional. If the deck is not comfortable, you won't want to spend time there.

ECO-SMART SYNTHETICS

One synthetic that is attracting a lot of attention is Trex, a composite that's half recycled plastic and half wood and guaranteed not to split, rot or crack for 10 years. Most of the plastic comes from plastic supermarket bags returned to the stores for recycling — plastics that otherwise would go to landfills. The wood used in Trex is also a waste product, coming from furniture manufacturers and used wood pallets. Trex doesn't need to be painted, and company officials recommend that it not be.

"I recommend using Trex for Houston's climate," Tim Turner of Windswept Landscape Studios says. "It has the same look as wood without the maintenance and longevity issues with wood."

Other popular synthetic decking materials include Choicedek, also made with recycled materials; and CorrectDeck, a polypropylene composite guaranteed not to rot, splinter or crack.

LIKE A ROCK

Another choice in decks is concrete, which lately has gotten enormous attention for its flexibility in building and design applications.

"We can make concrete deck floors that look like natural stone textures," says George Chopp of Freehand Concepts. "We can imprint



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divisions so that it looks like tiles or flagstone pieces, and it can have designs imprinted in the surface any colors the customer wants."

Chopp says he generally starts with the basic color mixed in with the concrete before it's poured. Then he applies accent colors over the top surface so that they wick in, creating a marbleized look. Finally, a sealing membrane covers the top surface.

"We're completing a home in Kingwood now, and the patio floor looks absolutely beautiful," he says. "We used a limestone-color base with accents of deep charcoal. A gold-buff color was flashed over the charcoal to highlight it, and then we picked up the red brick color of the brick house to complement it."

DESIGN DETAILS

As each builder and designer emphasizes, the material used should be chosen to complement the total setting, as well as to provide the function you want.

When considering the design for your deck, strive for an intimate setting that invites people to enter, sit down and relax. Don't try to cover your whole back yard with a deck. Instead, go for a smaller, cozier design that creates a vignette within the total yard setting.

Make use of the natural qualities of wood or synthetic wood products to create herringbone designs in the deck flooring for added visual interest. Bay-like structures and angled shapes, rather than a plain rectangular deck, can add interest. Multiple levels can add still more interest.

Any deck in Houston should be sheltered at least partially by some overhead structure, whether solid roof, vine-covered trellis or something else. Here, it's all about shade. That shading shelter can mean the patio will remain inviting, rather than sitting unused.

LEFT: Rock the hours away on your new deck by CorrectDeck, a polypropylene composite that's guaranteed not to rot, splinter or crack.

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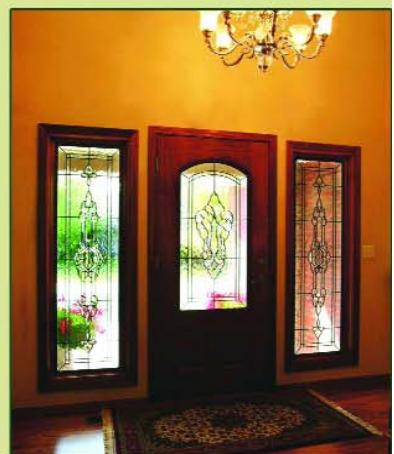
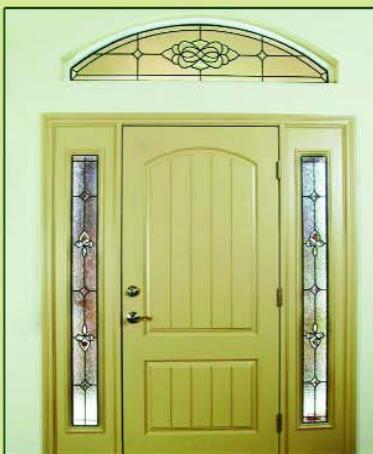
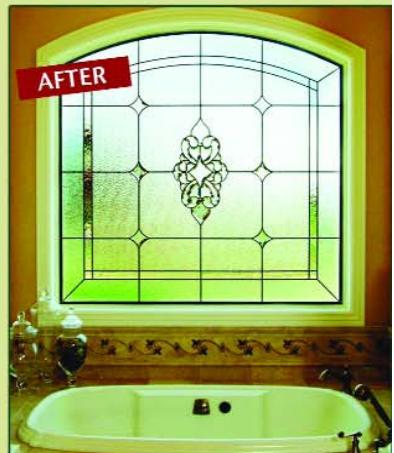
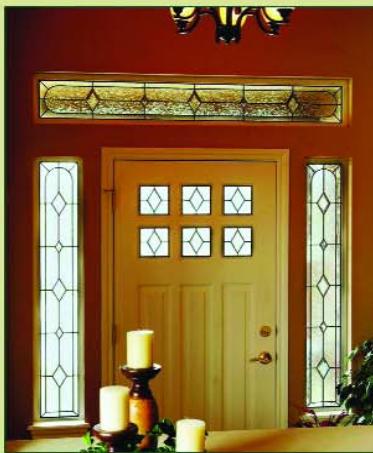
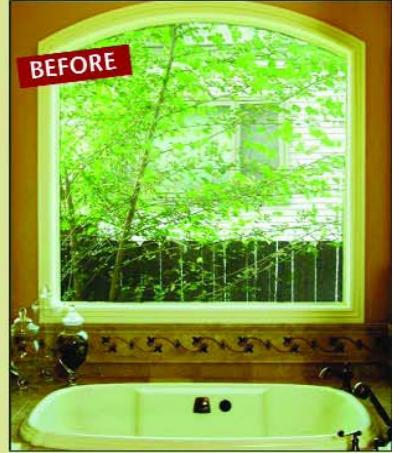
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The Tale of the Trail of Trash

Use it, toss it, bag it, carry it to the curb and forget about it — this is the way most of us think about trash. Out of sight, out of mind. Get the garbage as far away as possible. Even the most adventurous children hold their noses and make excuses to avoid carrying those nasty trash bags to the curb ("But, Mom, I did it last week!"). Of course, nobody wants to live next to their refuse ... nor should they, given the potential problems associated with exposure to harmful bacteria, heavy metals and chemical contamination.

So, as we push discards out of our homes and into the waste stream, precisely what journey does garbage take from the curb to its final resting place? The only slightly dramatized tale that follows is more grubby than epic, more nauseating than whimsical, but a tale that nevertheless must be told: the tale of the trail of our trash.

CHAPTER 1: TRUCKIN' THROUGH THE 'HOOD

Most homeowners have seen garbage trucks methodically making their way through the neighborhood, often with very sweaty men jumping on and off to hoist bulging bags or mechanical arms lifting overflowing bins into a chasm at the rear of the truck. Thus, the journey of trash begins with the solid waste collection vehicle — or in Britain, the quaint-sounding dustbin lorry — a rolling ferry transporting garbage away from the quiet solace of the shire to a land of, well, more garbage. Once secured by the collection vehicle, trash usually meets the wrath of a compactor to make room for its malodorous brethren. After collecting and compacting about six tons, the truck departs.

CHAPTER 2: A STOP ON THE WAY

While many trucks simply make their way to a landfill, others stop at a trash transfer station. Transfer stations are a kind of trash purgatory, a transitional space between initial collection and final disposition. These garbage depots consist of a simple slab of concrete — a tipping floor with or without walls or covering — designed to allow large trucks to dump their load into a large pile, where it is once again compacted and then packed into larger trucks destined for the landfill. As you can imagine, the stench inside

and surrounding such a site often proves unbearable. All this is before the vectors — rats, raccoons, roaches and the like — enter the scene.

CHAPTER 3: A HAPPIER PLACE

However, our discards occasionally meet with a different fate. Some facilities provide an area separate from the tipping floor for common recyclables, an area for brush and yard waste (used for composting), an area for building materials or furniture or appliances, etc. When the essential function of a transfer station becomes waste diversion and retrieval rather than waste compaction and disposal, our rubbish has stumbled into a materials recovery facility (MRF). Here, recyclable metals, compostable organics, intact construction supplies and reusable items ranging from paint to microwaves to bed frames to bicycles are separated from the refuse. Some MRFs even reach out to artists who can find aesthetic value in the unlikeliest junk. What's more, the economics of recovery rival the environmental benefit: a recent study found that the Greater Austin area buries in landfills about \$40 million annually in easily recoverable materials.

CHAPTER 4: AN UNPLEASANT GRAVE

Unfortunately, materials recovery facilities are a rare breed in Texas, which means that the journey taken by the vast majority of our trash still ends with land disposal. Trucks arrive from transfer stations or neighborhoods at the landfill gate, where they are weighed, sometimes inspected by a spotter perched above the scales (checking for illegal items like freon-filled refrigerators) and then waved on to the working face. There, trash meets with more trash meets with menacing compactors — behemoth vehicles often equipped with massive spiked metal wheels and a dozer blade — load after load, hour after hour until, finally, the waste is covered with 6 inches of dirt at the end of the day. This process of burying and covering garbage to prevent contact with moisture is fittingly known as dry entombment. Within this trash mountain our refuse finds its final resting place.

Or does it?

EPILOGUE: THE TRAIL OF TRASH ... CONTINUED

A number of studies show that even modern landfills with liners eventually leak, allowing household chemicals and heavy metals to leach into soil and nearby water sources. Garbage dumps are the largest source of human-caused methane emissions, a greenhouse gas 23 times more potent than carbon dioxide. Researchers have found high levels of mercury in some landfill gas intended for venting. The journey of our trash may not end with its entombment; it can come back to haunt us.

ALTERNATIVE ENDING: NO TRAIL AT ALL

In many ways, the tale of trash is choose-your-own-adventure rather than scripted drama. Opportunities to divert our detritus from the trash trail exist at every turn in the story: We can purchase recycled and recyclable goods, repair and reuse old items, donate to Goodwill or use Freecycle.org for unwanted things. Food and yard waste can go into compost. Best Buy recycles old TVs and computers. Even styrofoam has a better resting place than the landfill: local companies like Houston Foam Plastics and Avangard Industries recycle clean styrofoam and most packaging places, including UPS Stores are happy to take the peanuts. This is the happier ending of the tale of the trail of trash ... the ending that leaves no trail at all.

Jeffrey Jacoby is program director for Texas Campaign for the Environment, a grassroots nonprofit working to press for sustainable waste and recycling policies. Visit www.texasenvironment.org.





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Summer Gardening Texas Style



Plants in containers can add bright pops of summer color. If you have an irrigation system, make sure containers are on a separate zone from the rest of the landscape and water them daily during the summer.

If you have lived in Texas long enough you are well aware of its finicky weather patterns, but July is fairly predictable: hot and dry. A handful of ornamental plants thrive under these conditions, however most need a helping hand.

To have a fighting chance during the hottest time of the year, proper watering, fertilization and mulch are vital to help your garden through the summer months. The two primary issues this time of year are sun/shade variances and wet/dry conditions. Over-watering a plant that favors dry conditions and good drainage can kill even the healthiest specimen, whereas the summer sun is deadly no matter how much water shade-loving plants receive.

The first signs of heat stress usually appear in the wilting of leaves and tender stems. Succulent plants such as Impatiens or coleus will often lose moisture in the hot sun faster than it can be restored. Placing plants in locations best suited for their environmental requirements normally solve this problem. It's common to see wilt on new growth during the hottest part of the day; therefore it's necessary to check below the surface of the soil to access the moisture conditions and irrigate only when necessary.

Managing the irrigation system of your garden is necessary year-round but critical during the summer. A weekly inspection should include turning on each zone to ensure the valve is operating properly and inspecting the nozzles on every head to be sure that it has not become clogged or misdirected.

A recommended watering schedule for the summer will usually be three days a week for beds and turf. Remember, it is always better to water less frequently and more deeply than to water every day. If you have containers on your irrigation system — hopefully on a separate zone — you will need to water those containers daily. However if they are watered on the same zone as beds or turf, you should run the zones in a manner suitable for the bed or turf and supplement containers by hand watering.

During periods of normal rainfall, a well-maintained and programmed irrigation system will do an adequate job of supplementing the water requirements for most of our trees. Without soaking rains though, your trees will require a deeper watering than a normal irrigation cycle will deliver. In most cases, it is best to water manually with a hose or a soaker hose; water slowly for about an hour in the root zone under the tree canopy. Once the area is soaked, relocate and repeat watering process until all the

root zones have been well watered. Be sure to break up the watering times, if necessary, to prevent surface runoff. Frequency will be determined by both soil and environmental conditions so you must investigate below the surface grade. Using a soil probe, probe the root ball in a few locations to a depth of at least 6 inches. If the soil is dry, then it is time to water.

With irrigation under control, fertilization of your garden is next in helping your plants retain their vigor through weather stresses. Texas has cold spells in the winter and hot summers, but the extreme fluctuations in temperatures that occur in spring and fall are what truly stress our plants. The healthier they are when facing these extremes, the more likely they are to withstand them without substantial damage. To understand your soil's structure, a soil analysis is invaluable. Visit www.txplant-soillab.com or <http://soiltesting.tamu.edu> to find out how to submit a soil sample. The report generated will give an in-depth soil analysis of the level of nutrients in your soil, the soil's pH value or how acidic or basic your soil is, and it also will make recommendations for the amount and type of fertilizer you will need to add for optimum plant growth.

I recommend organic fertilizers since they naturally improve the health and productivity of the soil, which in turn benefits the plants on multiple levels. Moore Life Enhanced Compost Tea is a highly concentrated microbial liquid fertilizer produced by extracting beneficial microbes from compost. This specially blended tea uses a high-quality, microbial rich compost along with liquid molasses and fish hydrolysis. These additives assist in feeding the diverse population of both bacteria and fungi in our soils needed for healthy plants.

Lastly but certainly not least, mulch provides a blanket for your garden: keeping the soil temperatures more even, conserving moisture, providing a healthy environment for critters (earthworms, bacteria and microbes) and eventually decomposing into the soil to provide much needed organic nutrients. Shredded hardwood mulches decompose naturally, improving the soil's structure and its fertility. A layer of 2 inches to 3 inches applied twice a year is important. In areas where it could be washed or worn away, it might be necessary to apply more often. With the late spring rains we received, now would be a good time to access the mulch depth throughout your gardens.

One note of caution, too deep a layer of mulch can be detrimental. As in planting, when mulching, it is paramount to ensure the root flare of the plant is properly exposed. Making certain the root flare is uncovered is often the most proactive care that can be provided for a plant. This condition is often seen as a problem in trees, although other plantings are affected as well. In larger plant materials, lack of a root flare reduces oxygen to aerial trunk tissue, ultimately suffocating the plant; increased moisture causing swelling and a gradual decay of trunk tissue; stunted growth of the trunk tissue by hiding or covering potential injuries or problems that could possibly be treated; and hidden girdling or encircling roots that will choke or restrict development. Limiting the depth of mulch based on the plant size will guarantee the root flare receives adequate circulation while still benefiting from the layer of natural protection.

Our summers can be brutal, but with a little legwork now, your garden will be able to survive and thrive in the future. By applying a moderate covering of mulch, tailoring a fertilization program to your soil's requirements and adhering to appropriate watering practices, your garden will weather our Texas summers.



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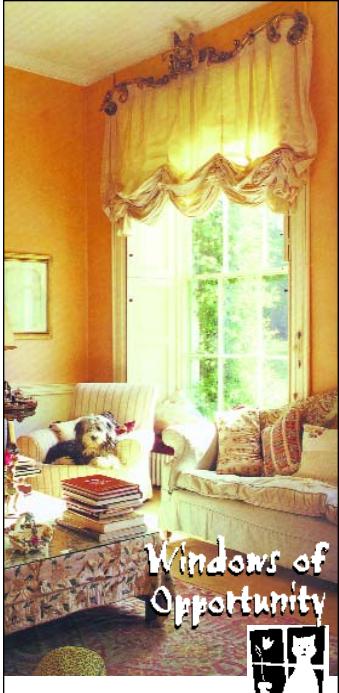
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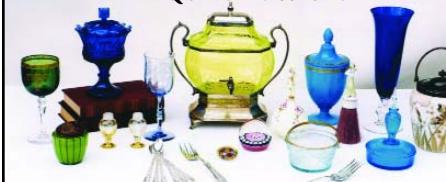
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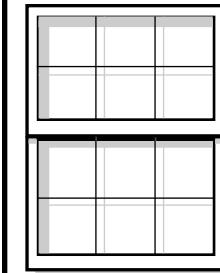
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ABOVE: Mauricio Klabin's "Eclipse" for Design Within Reach can be opened or closed to varying degrees. Stands 10 1/2 inches tall. About \$110



ABOVE: The Aqua Cil table lamp's shade is molded in mirror-treated aluminum and mounted on polished chrome. By Ross Lovegrove for Artemide, about \$997 special order through Lighting Unlimited

ABOVE LEFT: Cloaked in rich leather, the Piccola lamps' organically shaped bases bring plenty of warmth to a room, even before you switch the light on. 14 inches tall. About \$125 each at The Lighting Gallery

LEFT: The graceful "Dressmaker's Lamp" by Barbara Barry for Baker Furniture is handcrafted to create an hourglass form. About 30 inches tall; \$2,184 in bronze and \$2,300 in silver through Baker Houston and Meredith O'Donnell Fine Furniture.



LEFT: Designer and glass artist Tracy Glover brings vibrant color to her lamps. For this lamp base, the fused glass rods are cut and arranged in a dance of heat, urgency and vision. 28 inches tall and about \$325 from www.mainecottage.com

ABOVE: From the Bill Sofield Collection for Baker Furniture, the "Museum Lamp" is a hand-carved wood block on a black display base. About 15 1/2 inches tall. Suggested retail: \$1,250. Shop for Baker Furniture at Baker Houston and Meredith O'Donnell Fine Furniture.

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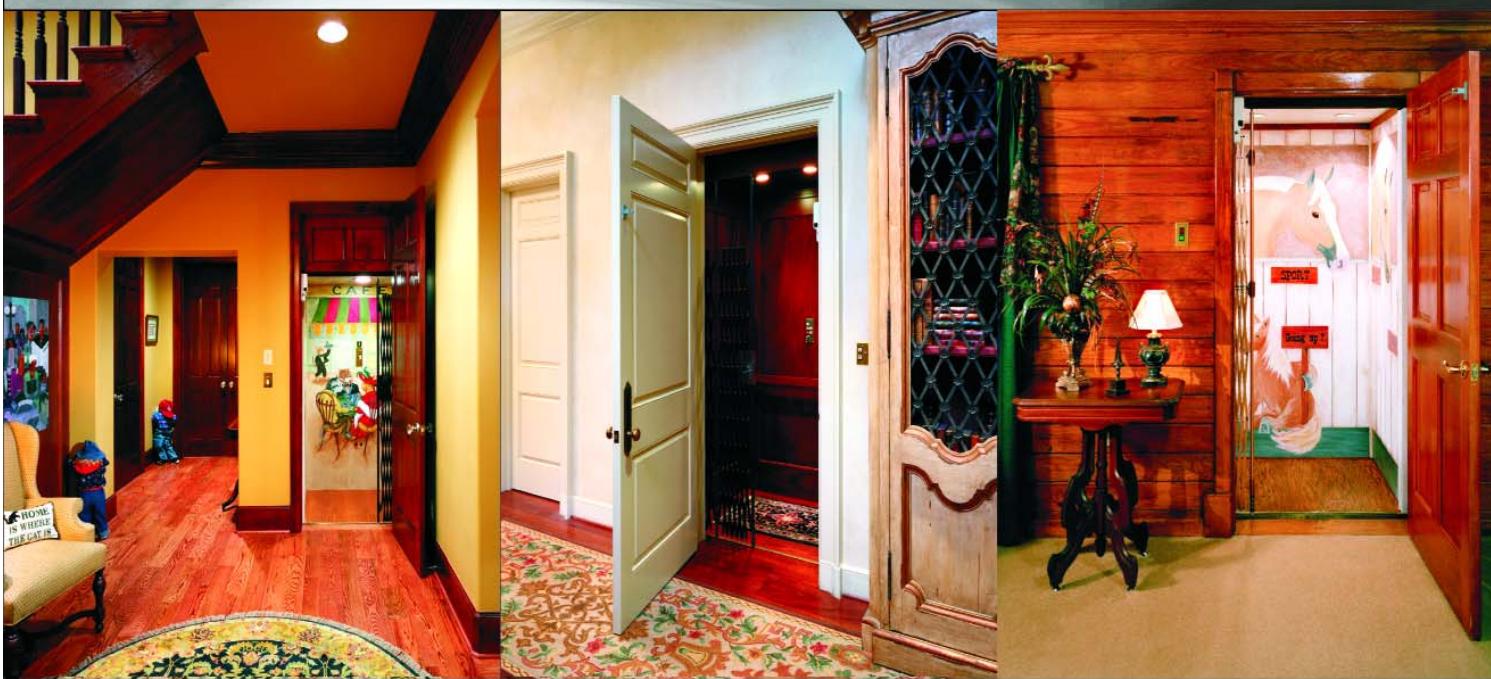
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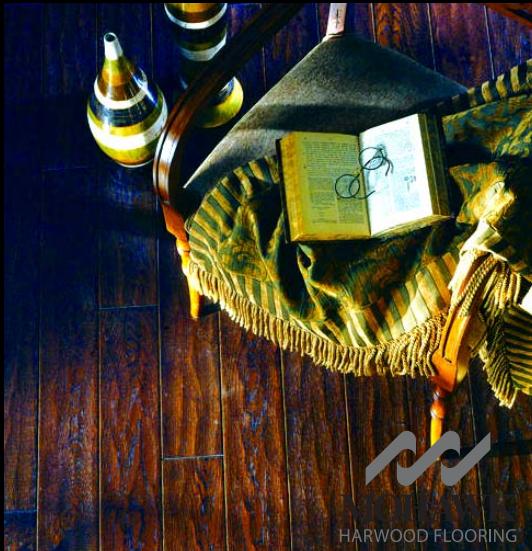
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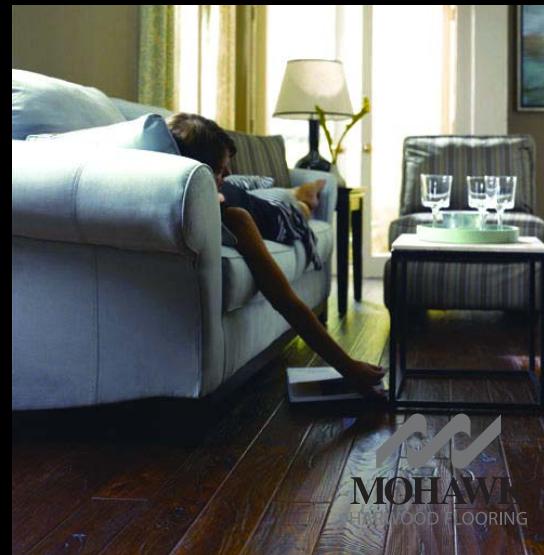
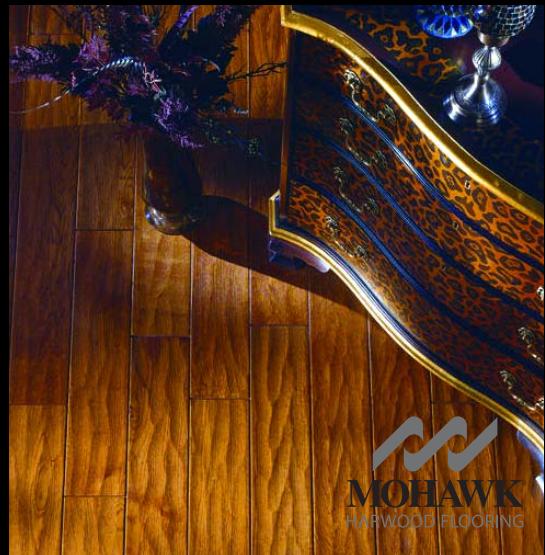
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