



Modern Touches Wake Up A Rustic Home

By **DANA W. TODD** | Photography by **TRE DUNHAM**



A NEW TAKE ON **TRANSITIONAL**





Moving next door qualifies as the shortest move in history, but the Sherriff family decided it was worth packing up the household and moving next door into a newly built Rustic Contemporary house in a waterfront community in northwest Austin. The Sherriff's had previously built their home on the shores of Lake Austin, while the odd-shaped lot beside them languished on the market. Karen Sherriff says she and her husband, Jim, decided to purchase the lot and build a spec home there. As an experienced real estate agent and having built several homes with her spouse, Sherriff knew they had the vision needed to turn the quirky lot into a home someone would love. They just didn't realize at the time that someone would be themselves.

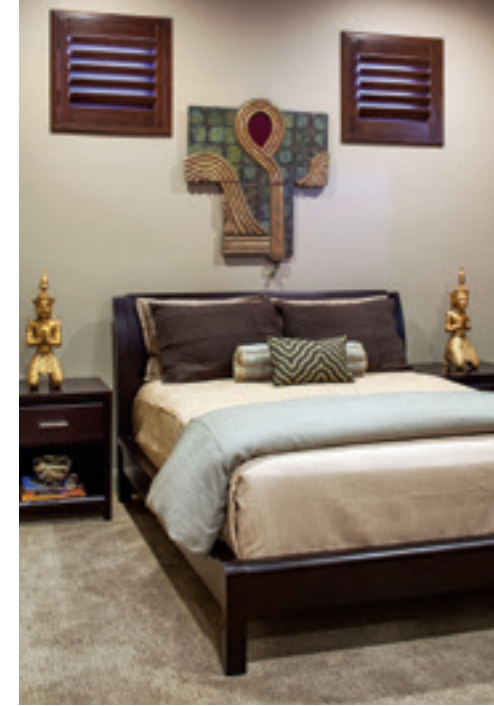
Sherriff is the first to admit they move a lot, but the original intent for the lot next door was not as a keeper but to build a spec house as an investment. She says they spent long hours working with the City of Austin, who annexed the neighborhood after the Sherriff's purchased the property, to address unexpected limitations. They were forced to build the house around an existing pecan tree which they were not allowed to cut down. Land sloping issues also limited the location of the pool and house, which Sherriff insisted had to maintain waterfront views.

One-third of the way through the building process, the Sherriff's decided this spec house should become their new home. They were already working with Dawn Hearn of Dawn Hearn Interior Design because they were pleased with her work

on their current home, so together they changed the focus to a more custom design project.

"Since the home began as a spec home, and the Sherriff's indicated they may still sell it in the future, we chose a subdued neutral color palette throughout the house, which does not interfere with waterfront views," Hearn says. "The design walks the line between contemporary and rustic."

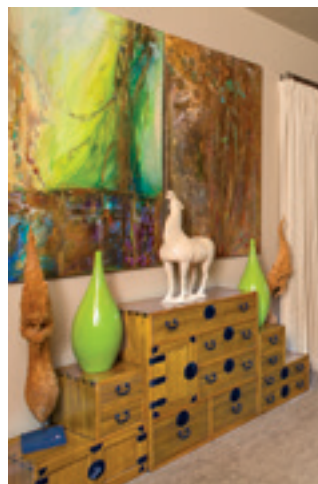
The key to infusing an entire house with a neutral palette is layering textures and patterns, incorporating materials of various cuts, and working in interesting artwork and furnishings. Hearn achieved the look using a wide range of patterns and textures on granite, textiles, stone, glass tile, travertine, aged wood and metal materials.



BLENDING MODERN WITH RUSTIC

Hearn incorporated and coordinated both rugged, rustic materials and modern hardware and details to convey a clean, rustic feel in the five bedrooms and five-and-a-half bathrooms. The 180-degree material combinations showcase a clever new take on transitional design. Up front, the entryway immediately shows visitors how timeworn and modern materials will be combined throughout the house, with a mesquite stairway accented with straight wrought iron balusters. Soaring 25-foot ceilings are “cozied up” by the wood’s warmth, providing a lodge feel, says Sherriff.

The bathrooms are another way Hearn brings out the union of contrasting materials. She takes liberties with bumping together several tile and stone choices in each room, keeping the colors in the warm brown and cream categories but adding modern-styled faucets and hardware. Warm wood cabinets in most bathrooms and even a bamboo vessel sink in the powder room balance out the more severe elements, such as frameless glass shower doors and the smooth surfaces of wall-to-wall and wall-to-ceiling mirrors and backsplash-to-ceiling tile. In the master bathroom, a free-standing Victoria + Albert® tub floats in front of a tiled ledge which hides the plumbing of the deck-mounted faucet, preserving modern sensibilities.



In the main living areas of the home, pecan floors, Oklahoma stone columns, walls and fireplace, travertine flooring, and textured slate warm up the spaces. In the butler’s pantry, which doubles as a bar, and an uncorking station, Fontenay wood flooring made from reclaimed wine barrels makes its new home as a cozy backsplash in both areas.

The same design approach in the kitchen combines cool, shiny stainless appliances and a to-the-ceiling backsplash mosaic of stone and glass tile. Large, open metal drum light fixtures from Lightspann® and a stainless, wall-mounted range hood play off the rough-hewn, curved stone island topped with Bordeaux River granite. Despite the assortment of materials, the kitchen is neutral so the color design can be changed as often as the homeowners are inspired. Future owners, too, can make it their own.

MAKING IT MULTI-FAMILY FRIENDLY

In the spirit of making the home friendly for entertaining, Sherriff eschewed a kitchen table, opting for a conversation area comprised of four low leather chairs and side tables. While the chairs face each other for an easy tête-à-tête, they also offer lake views.

Sherriff envisions the home as a place for multiple families to share a relaxing weekend. Since so many of the neighborhood’s homes are second residences for other families, Sherriff believes

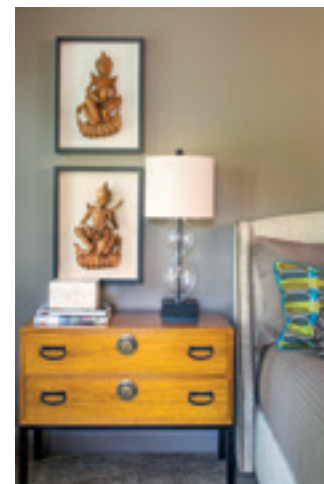
one day this home may serve as a family’s retreat to share with others, so she incorporated touches important for hosting. An open plan features a great room, kitchen and covered porch fashioned as a collective gathering place joined by glass doors opening onto the patio. The patio is part of an outdoor living space surrounding the pool and overlooking Lake Austin that expands the entertainment space. Although there’s no formal dining room, a large dining table custom designed by eco-conscious furniture maker Thomas Bina is family friendly.

Moving throughout the house to ensure all parts of it are entertainment friendly, Sherriff insisted each bedroom have its own bathroom and that “hiding places” be designed where individual families can retreat for a break.

“When they walk in the front door, I wanted visitors’ shoulders to go down and think, ‘We’re home,’” Sherriff says.

ADDING A SPECIAL HOMEOWNER’S TOUCH

As if the integration of rusticity and contemporary aesthetic were not enough, Hearn upped the eclecticism by working in the



homeowner’s favorite Asian collectibles and furnishings. Living seven years in Asia, the Sherriff family amassed a large collection of artwork and furnishings they brought back to Austin. Hearn used them to great advantage as a way to introduce modern touches in the decor. The rustic wooden living room bookcase, for example, holds Asian sculptures and vases. A tansu chest, paired with contemporary paintings hanging above it, displays additional vases and sculptures in the master

bedroom. Hearn transformed two Asian chests into nightstands by adding an iron base to them. She also mounted four Asian sculptures in open shadow boxes for the bedroom walls to ensure they would appear dramatically striking over the nightstands. Global-themed rugs and pillows add the pops of color — eggplant, lime green, turquoise, and red — that personalize the house’s neutral background.

The combination of rustic, reclaimed heritage pieces with modern and Asian influences seems like a disparate design concept. The resulting transitional feel of this beauty, however, is both clean-lined and cozy — perfect enough for a family retreat. ❖

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