



artful composition

THOUGHTFUL MATERIAL SELECTIONS AND SWEEPING PANORAMIC LAKE VIEWS ALLOW THIS AUSTIN ABODE TO EFFORTLESSLY CONNECT WITH THE LUSH OUTDOORS.

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ARCHITECTURE James LaRue and Emily Marks, LaRue Architects | **INTERIOR DESIGN** Paula Ables, Paula Ables Interiors
HOME BUILDER Matt Sitra, Matt Sitra Custom Homes, Inc. | **LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE** Tim Benton and Ramon Suarez, Land Restoration
BEDROOMS 4 | **BATHROOMS** 6 | **SQUARE FEET** 4,377



Light bathes this Austin home that architect James LaRue and project manager Emily Marks linked together using windows from Portella Steel Doors & Windows. The foyer floors are sheathed in ivory travertine from AG&M next to white-oak flooring from Kristynik Hardwood Flooring, which leads to the dining room.



When the owners of this Austin residence discovered a colorful weaving while on a family adventure in the Galápagos Islands, they knew it had to have pride of place in their new home. “I love orange,” says the wife, “plus the piece represents a moment in time when our whole family was together.” And so, the owners enlisted their design team—including architect James LaRue, project manager Emily Marks and interior designer Paula Ables—to make the artwork a focal point.

Before the interior palette could be considered, LaRue and Marks needed to confirm that the house would fit on the lot: The long and narrow property overlooks Lake Austin with a ravine on the northwest side. The duo determined that the home could be designed along an extended axis connecting the road and the lake. “We grouped together a suite of simple geometric stone-built rooms aligned along the axis,” says LaRue. Adds Marks, “We also pulled them apart a little bit, too.”

Gentle hip roofs and volume-expanding sheds cap off different sections of the house. The exterior walls are made of antique Lueders limestone, which was installed by GH Masonry & Stone, while the stucco from Waterloo Plastering was finished in a putty color. To the left is the garage and to the right is the guest suite.

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Metal roofs and exterior walls, made mostly of Texas Lueders limestone, further connect the home to its site. To create an entry gate with character, LaRue and Marks designed a wall of Cor-Ten steel, which purposefully rusts into a warm reddish orange. “Getting the Cor-Ten steel to rust quickly was the toughest part of this project,” says builder Matt Sitra, who had someone come to the house every other day to spray it with water.

Since the owners have many interests—hunting, fishing, sewing, swimming, and entertaining—the house also had to accommodate multiple functions. To this end, LaRue and Marks created a series of masses and voids, which became different rooms and courtyards. They then arranged the most used spaces—screened-in porch, living room, dining room, and master suite—closest to the lake and the lesser-used rooms—garage and guest rooms—closer to the road. “Now, instead of looking toward the neighbors or the road, the rooms face onto either landscaped or furnished courtyards,” LaRue says. Expansive windows in thin steel frames capture views across the lake to the oak-forested bluff beyond. “The windows and views really were the driving factor in the design,” says Marks.



In the living room, a custom American Leather sofa, wearing a bison pumpkin-colored material, from Room & Board snuggles up to the stone-clad fireplace featuring slate from Stone Solutions. The Four Hands coffee table is made of recycled pine; the rug is by Stanton Carpet Corporation. Pendants by Kichler Lighting hang from above.



Interior designer Paula Ables conceived the dining room to accommodate guests. A wool rug by Radici USA and a table by Lyndon Furniture from Room & Board delineate the dining area, where McCreary Modern chairs, also from Room & Board, surround. Artwork by Su Allen adds color to the walls, while pendants by Hubbardton Forge light the space.



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The landscaped courtyards are thought of as being extensions of the rooms they neighbor. For example, landscape designers Tim Benton and Ramon Suarez placed the infinity-edge pool between the living room seating area and its view of the lake, thus connecting indoors, outdoors and wilderness. “That view seems to pull the lake right up to the living room,” Benton says, who used drought-resistant plants that pack a punch, such as Natchez crape myrtle, Whale’s Tongue agave and Blackfoot daisies. In addition, Knock Out roses provide interest and a dash of color.

The lively tones can be found throughout the interiors, as well. The couple had actually ended up mailing the weaving to Ables so she could use it as the inspiration for the design. But instead of coating the entire

Landscape designers Tim Benton and Ramon Suarez created a layered vista with a swath of grass near an infinity-edge pool by Austin Water Designs, set against a foliage-embraced bluff. LaRue and Marks crafted the boat dock to reflect the elements of the home. It ended up being a focal point for passersby on the water’s edge.



Loungers by Tropitone, purchased at Exteriors Designer Showroom, line the pool and invite relaxation. The outdoor area seamlessly connects to the living room via floor-to-ceiling windows. To the right, connected by an adjoining roof, the screened-in porch is faced with Spanish cedar siding.

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home in coordinating orange paint, the designer took a more subtle approach. "This is an architecturally driven house," she says. "We wanted the interior selections to blend in as seamlessly as possible and for the colors to complement the surrounding property and views." Because Ables didn't want to overpower the carefully calibrated volumes, she mounted the piece in the center of the living room fireplace, which she had covered in slate, a neutral color that complements the hues in the tapestry. The rest of the house is sheathed in white walls made of Texas Lueders limestone, as well as white-oak plank and ivory travertine flooring. These elements created the perfect neutral backdrop for Ables to place the occasional pop of color, such as in a custom sofa in a vibrant orange and a pair of green chairs, both in the living room. "We were going for a slightly more modern feel for the furnishings in the house with a hint of soft contemporary and industrial mixed in," notes the designer.

In the end, LaRue says the house "has cohesion and unity. This is a family home with visiting grown kids, dogs and friends. The owners needed something clean and simple, but at the same time beautiful and warm." **L**