

Décor

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Timeless architectural elements coupled with antique furnishings and a dare-to-be-spare approach to accessorizing produce a modern classic in Houston.

Symmetrical arrangements, such as the grid of antique botanicals above the living room mantel, capture attention and soothe the eye throughout Katherine and Brian Thompson's home.



Creativity takes many forms.

Some people love to paint, others to cook or garden, but Brian Thompson lets his imagination run wild on a slightly larger scale. He's passionate about houses. A builder by trade, he's overseen the remodeling or construction of four of his family's homes in the Houston area. Each home has boasted traditional bones and interiors, but with his most recent project, he created a new English country-style home and challenged his wife, Katherine, to create streamlined interiors to match.

"Our last house was more eclectic and layered," Katherine says. "It had richer, darker colors. This house is definitely a different look for us. It's larger but with a lot less stuff."

Designer Kevin Spearman of Bellacasa Designs, a firm Brian has admired and worked with for years, helped guide Katherine through the less-is-more transition. In signature Spearman style, the interiors have few patterns and limited fabrics, but the eye is still entertained, thanks to statuesque furniture shapes and textural walls, floors, and fabrics. Accessories are kept to a minimum to allow the shapes and textures to shine. The few pieces that did

make the cut from the couple's existing collection of treasures offer pops of color and personality. "The home has timeless appeal and a humble presence," Spearman says.

The dining room is the pared-down style's pièce de résistance. The space features a simple yet detailed framework of paneling painted an earthy green and vintage oak flooring with a raw, weathered finish. A casual trestle table complements the architecture's relaxed look while adding a warm patina. French dining chairs introduce shapely curves and a touch of formality, but all eyes gravitate upward to a spectacular, white-painted branch chandelier. "The piece throws the room in a more artistic direction without sacrificing comfort or approachability," Spearman says.

The kitchen relies on a checkerboard floor of honed black granite and Carrara marble to impart drama; creamy cabinets add an established feel befitting the floor. In the living room, the casual placement of a pair of salvaged columns on either side of a grand carved-stone fireplace gives the space a modern edge, despite the age of the supports. Upstairs, the master bedroom is equally minimalist, but it's more "ahh" than "wow." The focal point is a custom monogrammed headboard upholstered in fine linen. The foot of the high bed has its own unique mark—an antique writing table replaces the ubiquitous bench.

"In the beginning, I kept putting a few more things out while Brian was at work," Katherine says with a laugh. "But he would just come home and shake his head. It took some getting used to, but I love this style now."

Katherine appreciates that fewer layers means more room for entertaining, which is ideal for encouraging the Thompsons' three children to spend more time at home with their friends. As for Brian, he's already envisioning the family's next abode—a residence in the plantation style of famed Louisiana architect A. Hays Town. After all, for the Thompsons, reimagining home is all in a day's work.



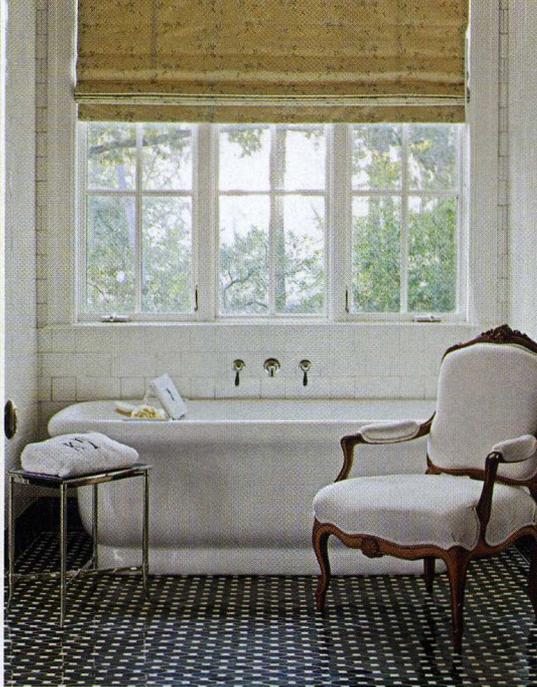


This photo: A mirror found at a Paris flea market reflects the dining room's sculptural chandelier while balancing the lofty ceiling height. **Opposite:** A stone facade, pointed roof peaks, and rounded shutters imbue the exterior with English country-style charm.

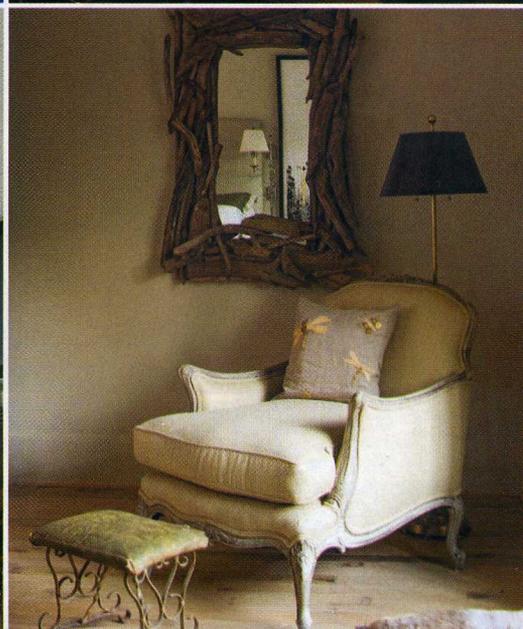


Vintage oak floorboards and a beamed, planked vaulted ceiling relax the formality of a pair of Swedish-style sofas and a large tufted ottoman in the great-room. Designer Kevin Spearman divided the room into multiple seating areas to create a sense of coziness within the large space.





Clockwise from top left: Stone arches create a graceful transition between a covered alfresco dining area and a sunny patio. Dark green floor tiles anchor the master bath, which is otherwise covered from floor to ceiling in white tiles. Rattan blinds, a copper light fixture, and a maple island countertop add rustic flavor to the kitchen. Boasting views of the pool and outfitted with a fireplace and a comfortable teal sectional sofa, the stone-walled loggia is a favorite family hangout. A driftwood-framed mirror introduces an organic element to a quiet seating area in the master bedroom. Horizontal-planked walls warm the sunroom, as do the layered floor coverings—an antique rug over a sea-grass rug. White ceramic vases and the shiny metal legs on a petite side table add a hint of modern panache to the living room.





Above: The master bedroom exudes the home's calm, cool, and collected style. It starts with quality, found here in fine linen bedding and fabrics. Add a few choice antiques, such as the writing table and ottomans, and the style is enriched by the past. Comfort and light are also pivotal players, as evidenced by how the sofa basks in the glow of the simply treated windows.