

Sometimes you know what you want when you see it. Scouring online for local design inspiration, Houstonite Gabrielle Sitomer quickly realized that every house she loved had been built by Brian Thompson. So when she and her husband, Jason Koy, were ready to build their dream dwelling, Thompson was the first and only builder they called. After helping the couple find a lot in Bunker Hill Village, he introduced them to interior designer Alex Elam and architectural designer Ryan Gordon.

With the dream team in place, the owners laid out their direction. They wanted to feel like they had a retreat from the rest of the world, drawing inspiration from old-world architecture while still embodying a highly functional family home for their three teenagers and two dogs. “Creating a balance between functionality, durability and style was important to them,” Elam says.

Gordon gave the couple the Normandy-inspired design that they craved, while tailoring the rooms to suit the needs of a modern family—think mudroom, two offices for working parents, and a game den complete with a pool table and shuffleboard. Outside, Gordon didn’t merely re-create a Norman building, he took the slurried brick, sweeping rooflines and dormer windows and gave the owners deep-set doorways, trellises and covered outdoor spaces to provide much-needed shade in the Houston heat.

“We carried those same exterior qualities inside by layering warm woods, mixed metals and natural textures, so the transition between indoors and outdoors feels seamless,” Elam describes. The vaulted ceilings with rustic beams in the family room and the plastered walls in the dining room harken back to the Old World, but also to the rustic woods and earthen materials of Texas ranches.

For Elam, finding equilibrium between old and new felt intuitive once she got a feeling for the home. “Gabrielle loves antiques, but she didn’t want her house to be full of them,” the designer notes. Elam found that reclaimed doors provided the character her client craved without relying on too much delicate furniture. “We looked far and wide for things like the doors, specialty hardware, antique lighting fixtures and architectural details,” Elam recalls. To match

the old, any newly purchased wood was wire-brushed, then oiled and stained. “We didn’t want anything to look brand-new,” she says.

True antiques make appearances throughout the abode, including a candelabra chandelier in the primary bedroom and a reupholstered bench in the breakfast room, but many of the furnishings are fresh additions. “Blending antique furniture with new pieces has become our trademark, making spaces feel timeless and grounded,” Elam reflects. For the new upholstered items and rugs, she opted for transitional elements in performance materials. In the children’s rooms, the designer skipped the plaster and specified durable shiplap paneling, noting, “It’s an easy way to give a room more character without wallpaper or plaster.”

Another major source of inspiration was Gabrielle’s passion for horseback riding. Elam tapped into that British equestrian vibe through materials like brass and leather as well as color—earth tones, greens and blues, as seen in the study’s navy-saturated walls. Elam and Gordon also made space for trophies and gear. “Alex did a great job incorporating that equestrian feel without it seeming gimmicky,” says Gabrielle, who ended up with bespoke storage for her saddles, equipment and show outfits.

The design team paid careful attention to storage elsewhere, including a hardworking scullery off the cook space. “The millwork in the kitchen was completely custom, with every drawer and cabinet tailored to fit their organizational needs—from the island to the spice drawers,” Elam adds.

The finished residence has great a flow, timelessness and family-friendliness—everything Gabrielle and Jason desired. “It’s a modern home with big windows, steel doors and lots of light streaming in, but then you have these old patina woods and metals on the chandeliers that balance it out,” the designer observes. It’s the perfect mix of old and new. ■

Architecture: Ryan Gordon, Gordon Partners Design
Interior Design: Alex Elam, Alex Interiors
Home Builder: Brian Thompson, Thompson Custom Homes

NEW AGE

OLD-WORLD ARCHITECTURE WITH A LAYERED BLEND OF ANTIQUES AND FRESH TOUCHES GUIDE THE VISION FOR A HOUSTON RESIDENCE.

WRITTEN BY LAURA FENTON | PHOTOGRAPHY BY JULIE SOEFER | STYLING BY JESSICA HOLTAM



Custom seating, fabricated by Houston-based New Vision Furniture Upholstery, anchors the family room atop a floor covering from Turkish Rug Co. The Isokern fireplace is faced in pewter limestone purchased from Alamo Stone.

The kitchen's white oak cabinetry was wire-brushed for character, and the reclaimed oak floors were sourced through Floor Designs of Houston. Counter stools from Denver Modern nestle up to the quartzite-topped island. The Wolf and Sub-Zero appliances hail from K&N Appliance Gallery.





Above: In the kitchen, Sherwin-Williams' Rosemary enriches the lower perimeter cabinets punctuated by hardware from Schaub & Company. The pair of antique pendants were found at The Original Round Top Antiques Fair.

Opposite: The breakfast room features a custom dining table, vintage chairs from Box Road and an antique bench reupholstered in a Romo textile. A chandelier from Currey & Company is backdropped by drapery fabric from Rose Cumming.





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Above: Painted Sherwin-Williams' Grizzle Gray, the bar channels the past through circa-1800 restoration glass from Hollander Specialty Glass. Antique brass mesh from Kent Design & Manufacturing and Frank Allart hardware imbue historical glamour.

Opposite: The custom dining table came from Vieux Interiors, while the chairs are from Hooker Furniture. A Visual Comfort & Co. chandelier and Regina Andrew Detroit buffet lamps illuminate the scene.



Drenched in Benjamin Moore's Newburyport Blue, the study is home to the family's grand piano and a pendant from Visual Comfort & Co. A Loloi Rugs carpet runs beneath deer-hide chairs and a leather Arhaus sofa.



Above: A chandelier from Memorial Antiques & Interiors hangs over the primary bedroom's seating area. Designer Alex Elam paired a bespoke sofa with an upholstered bergère chair found at The Original Round Top Antiques Fair and a coffee table from Uttermost.



Opposite: In the same room, a chest from Furniture Classics joins the four-poster bed. The Fabricut textile on the Roman shade and the Surya carpet lend a subtle layer of pattern.



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Above: Taking center stage in the primary bathroom, a nickel Penhaglion tub sets a luxurious tone. Visual Comfort & Co. wall lights and a Hollywood Hardware faucet elevate the space.

Opposite: A tufted bed from RH rests on a Surya rug in the daughter’s serene bedroom, accented by a bubble chandelier from The Light Factory. The nightstand comes from Worlds Away, and the drapery is by Topstitch.

