



# Comfort and Class

A thoughtful design with punches of soft color makes this house sing



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Sometimes it's worth the wait. It didn't bother this homeowner that her living room was vacant for months before its overhaul. It was by choice.

"I needed to live with it that way, no rush. Every time I passed it I thought about how I wanted it to be and I didn't want to start it until I knew, top to bottom, what I wanted it to look like," she explains. "You kind of have to live with a space for a while before you know how to approach it."

And then there were the jokes from the husband. "He'd say, 'Are we going to do ballroom dancing in there or what?'" she recalls, laughing. "It was time to get moving on things."

She had just the designer to do it. She entrusted her home to the care of friend and designer Melanie King of Melanie King Designs, who worked magic on the home's main spaces after the couple purchased the dwelling. The plan? Bring the house back to a neutral palette, removing, for example, the mustard yellow paint that



The terraced landscaping caught this couple's attention when they first saw their future home. They've added to its beauty over the years. | This paneled wall is a showstopper in the home's updated living room. The custom wall treatment was created by MKD. A soft furniture palette with hints of citrine and metallics makes for a sophisticated space. | The couple especially cherishes this antique sideboard that they purchased early in their marriage. The silver chest atop the piece is a family heirloom.



**THESE PAGES:** An inviting entry leads to the home's updated formal living space. | The homeowner's mother painted this soft abstract pastel piece that hangs above a vintage medical cabinet in the dining room. | An eclectic mix of old and new kicks things up a notch in the dining room including an antique sideboard and a vintage medical drawer.

dominated the downstairs. Then introduce soft pops of color to add interest.

It's a plan that worked beautifully for this couple. "We love it. The overall look of the house is exactly what we wanted," says the homeowner who enjoys the space with her busy husband, who is president and CEO of a retailer, and their 17-year-old baseball-playing son.

It's a perk that the house is located a short distance from the baseball field where her son routinely practices and plays games as a member of The Woodlands High School baseball team. And its location provides easy access to the interstate for her husband's daily commute to Houston.

"We wanted to be more centrally located to things in The Woodlands and having access to the interstate really does make things easier," she says. "And while we had visions of our son being closer to the baseball field, we couldn't have imagined how wonderful that would be. It's like a little peace of heaven."

The main motivator in looking for a different house was simple. They wanted a place with more downstairs living space for entertaining family and friends and a dwelling that could accommodate all their needs as soon-to-be empty nesters.

They found the house while driving through one of their favorite areas in The Woodlands, a neighborhood that boasts elevation changes. "It actually has little hills," she recalls of their drive that fateful day. And there it was, a house sitting up from the street, its lush landscaping calling to them from terraced walls.

"It's the first thing that caught our eye," says the homeowner who has added to the yard's beauty since living there. "I like roses and color. It's a great yard." They are extending the roofline in the back to add on a summer kitchen. It will embellish the home's already inviting ambiance.

The house sets the tone from the first step inside. A



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**THESE PAGES:** The couple really enjoys the oversized sofas. "We have lots of seating in this room for entertaining," the homeowner says. While she enjoys the overall neutral tones, soft punches of color add interest and just the right amount of diversion in the space. | A spacious breakfast room looks into the remodeled kitchen, replete with new wine rack. | Fresh green and white wallpaper in a tree theme adds pizzazz to the pool bath. Wallpaper is by Thibaut. The stone countertop complements the rectangular undermount sink. | The master bathroom was treated to a transformation with this beautiful marble-blend backdrop accenting the stand-alone bathtub. | A backsplash of hexagon Carrera marble makes a simple, yet fresh statement that stands the test of time. New marble countertops, fresh paint and lighting from Hinkley make this space pop.

roomy foyer with a beautiful staircase redone in wood greets from the outset. Beyond that, the eye centers on the once-vacant living room that has been transformed.

"It's amazing," says the homeowner who quickly gives credit to King for its overall look. "We have this amazingly high ceiling in that room and art can just disappear on a wall," she says, pointing out the designer's clever solution – a fresh, white, grid-paneled wall that solves that design dilemma.

"It just makes the room," says the homeowner, who also loves the soft citrine and metallic colors that sing against the neutrals. James Craig Furnishings was a partner in creating this updated look. "One of my favorite rooms for sure."

"The overall theme is restrained elegance with a focus on neutral elements that are detailed and fresh," explains King of the design philosophy.

Indeed, it is elegant, but comfortable, the kind of home that welcomes friends and family with open arms. "My husband and I both work and are busy," says the homeowner who does business development for St. Luke's Hospital, "so it's important that we have down time and we love entertaining at home. This floorplan has a good kind of flow for that and the transformation of the place makes it that much more special."

The dining room is especially inviting and harbors family trea-



sures. A vintage sideboard the couple purchased when first married is a cherished piece here, topped with a family heirloom, a chest for silver. “And my mother has become a wonderful painter during her retirement,” says the homeowner, proudly showing off a soft pastel abstract that hangs on the wall.

The den is nothing if not comfortable with two long, streamlined sofas making up much of the seating. “Wonderful sofas! We love the length and they provide so much seating when you have company,” she says. They share space with two upholstered chairs that add just the right amount of color here. Millwork on either side of the fireplace is now painted a gray-brown for a current look.

This space is located in the back of the house, just off the breakfast room and kitchen. And speaking of the kitchen, it boasts quite the re-do with Carrera marble countertops and a hexagonal backsplash that has the timeless appeal of, say, subway tile. “I just thought it was something a little different and loved it,” she says.

A wine rack was built at the end of the island. The island is painted the same gray-brown as cabinets in the den for a cohesive look. The paint choices draw from colors in the slate floors in the back of the house. Wood floors in the front rooms were stripped and refinished for a fresh look, the perfect underfoot surface for new streamlined furnishings.

The pool bathroom is especially striking with vibrant green and white tree wallpaper, stone countertop and new rectangular undermount sink.



**THESE PAGES:** Talent runs in the family. This elegantly rustic piece was fashioned by one of the homeowner’s stepdaughters. | Their son’s bedroom reflects his talent and interest – baseball. | Lush landscaping within terraced walls adds to the home’s curb appeal. | The backyard captures that resort feel with a stone waterfall feature accenting the pool. | Even the walkway up to the home is eye-catching with a bench with comfy pillows providing visual interest on a front terrace.



But the bathroom to beat all bathrooms belongs to the master suite. The master bathroom was transformed from a dated, tiled and granite space to one gleaming in Carrera marble, a stand-alone tub, a newly built expansive shower and coffee bar.

"I love my bathroom," says the homeowner. "The space where the coffee bar is just used to be counters and cabinets, a lot of wasted space. This was such a good use of space. We love having it in here."

This house is extremely functional with two staircases, front and back. "Great for when our son has friends over. They're always going up and down the stairs from inside to out or to the kitchen and back."

The 4,900-square-foot house boasts a large, newly recarpeted upstairs as well with gameroom, three bedrooms with baths and a small media room. But when the couple becomes empty nesters, they'll likely only need that upstairs space when family or friends visit.

"It's nice to have all this space but I think we did well in finding a place where we could make the downstairs what we need for our main living and entertaining. We needed a place that functions well for our everyday living. This house does that." ●

