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HOME**

DESIGN

OCTOBER 2004 \$3.95

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OCTOBER 2004



DESIGNS WITH DEEP ROOTS

STORY BY CYNTHIA RERKO | PHOTOGRAPHY BY JOHN SMITH

The man who designed the house, architect Richard Drummond Davis, calls its style "Texas Contemporary Vernacular." According to Davis, the "house is Rustic Modern with a basis in Texas Regionalism." But the home's owners, genealogy buffs Tom and Susan Doell, know that the house is in their blood. Tom's ancestors emigrated from Germany in the 1840s and were among the first settlers in Fredericksburg. Mason County land granted to Tom's ancestors has remained in the family and is where the Doells spend as much time as possible at the ranch house they built there eight years ago. When designing their new home, the couple's goal was to find balance between Tom's desire for a contemporary house and Susan's comfort with the more traditional homes the couple had previously built, remodeled and lived in during their 29 years of marriage. The number-one item on the Doells' design list was keeping every single tree on the large, three-quarters-of-an-acre lot. Susan had very specific room-size requirements. Tom wanted, "a house with horizontal lines, large overhanging eaves and a metal roof." The Doells interviewed a number of architects, but chose Richard Drummond Davis because of his laid-back style, his ability to listen, his willingness to work within a budget and the fact that he made them feel that the house they wanted to build was about them, rather than his ego.

Davis takes pride in his emphasis on communicating with his clients at every phase of the collaboration as he brings their dreams to life. He calls himself "a romantic and an eclectic with a reverence for the work of the past." Davis' diverse portfolio includes well-appointed residences all over the country, but most of his work is here in Dallas, his hometown. The house is in Dallas' Bluffview neighborhood. Bluffview is only minutes away from downtown Dallas and some of the city's toniest shopping and dining, yet feels a world away, insulated by hills, trees and the limestone bluff overlooking Bachman Creek. Tom observes that when he turns off Northwest Highway onto Shadywood Drive, he relaxes immediately. He also notices that, according to his car's thermometer, the outside temperature quickly drops five degrees. Since Tom is in the business of heating and cooling airplanes, his attention to temperature is understandable. Tom is a pilot, as is the couple's younger daughter, who earned her license to fly when she was just 17.





THIS PAGE: THE MAIN LIVING ROOM BOASTS A VAULTED CEILING WITH DARK CEDAR BEAMS THAT FRAME THE ROOM. THIS MAGNIFICENT ROOM OVERLOOKS THE DOELLS' TREE-FILLED LOT. THE ARCHITECT AND HOMEOWNERS WORKED DILIGENTLY TO DESIGN THE HOUSE WHILE MAINTAINING THE SURROUNDING TREES ON THE LOT. THE SCORED STONE FROM AN OKLAHOMA QUARRY IS USED ALL OVER THE HOUSE. THE STONE FIREPLACE IS A MASSIVE FOCAL POINT FROM MANY VIEWS IN THE HOUSE. **NEXT PAGE:** SOFT, NATURAL ALDER KITCHEN CABINETS EVOKE A FARMHOUSE FEEL. THE DOELLS SAY THAT EVERYONE IS DRAWN TO THEIR SPACIOUS KITCHEN. ENTERTAINING IS ENJOYABLE IN THE OPEN, WARM EATING AREAS. **LAST PAGE:** THE ARCHITECT WANTED THE INTERIORS TO BLEND WITH THE NATURAL EXTERIOR OF THIS HOME. THE MASTER BATH IS A FINE EXAMPLE OF HIS FREE-FLOWING USE OF NATURE IN THE DESIGN. EVERY HILL COUNTRY-ESQUE HOME SHOULD HAVE A BACK PORCH AND THIS ONE IN BLUFFVIEW IS NO EXCEPTION. THE OWNERS USE THEIR COVERED PORCH AS OFTEN AS THEY CAN.

Consistent with its designer's moniker, the house is contemporary while deferring to the Texas regional vernacular. For Davis, the courtyard entry leading to the two-story covered entry porch and the creation of outdoor space were starting points for design. The cedar lintel over the two-story entry porch is set into the battered, natural stone column. Cedar corbels support the extra-wide span of the metal roof over the entry porch.

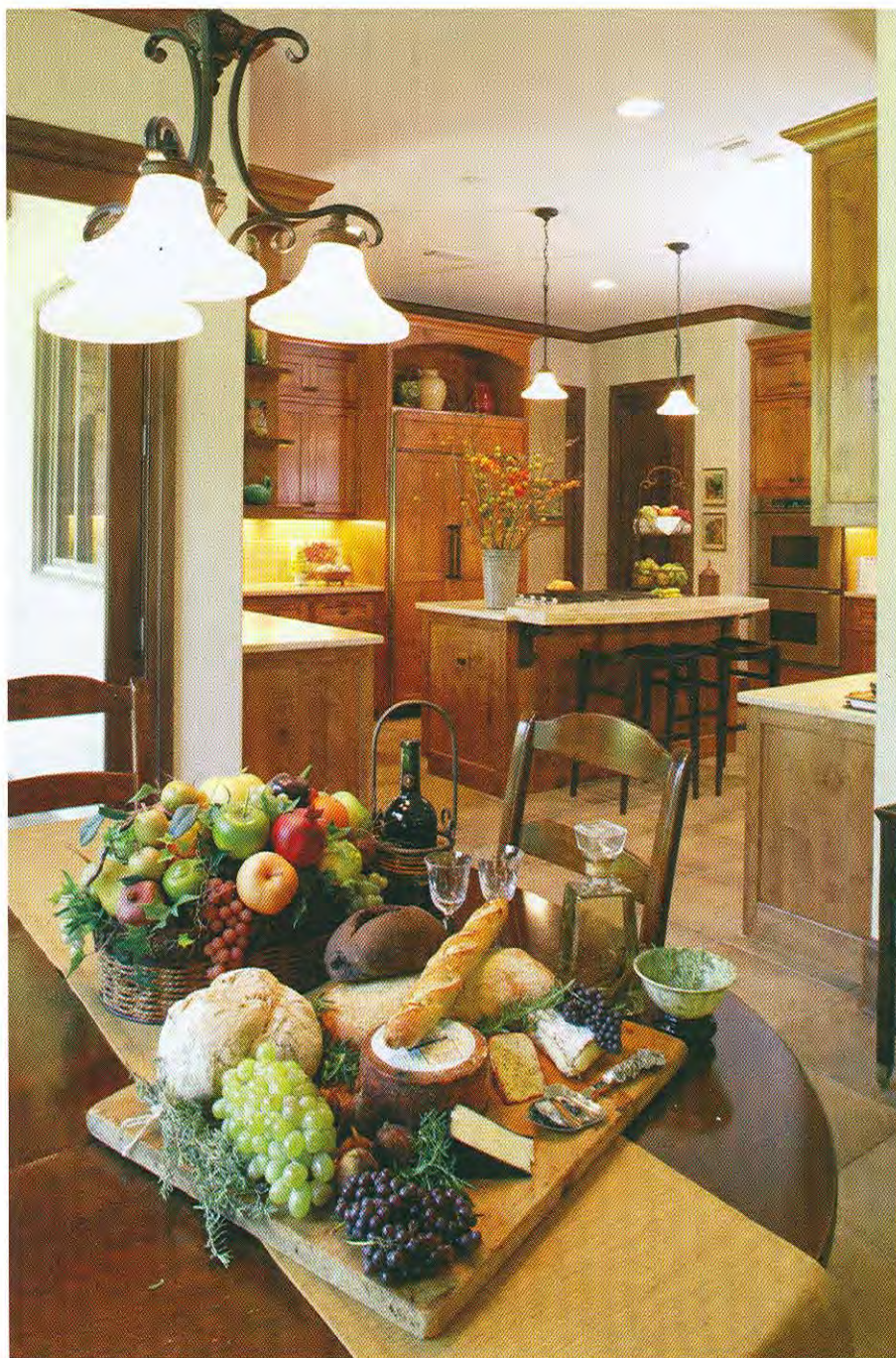
The great room is the focal point of the house. Immediately upon entering through the tall double doors, the first thing you see is the great green expanse outside the back of the house. Inside, the great room's high cathedral cedar beamed ceiling continues outside to cover the natural stone paved patio. All that separates the inside from the outside is a wall of glass divided into six panes framed by maple trim. The centerpiece of the great room is the

scored stone fireplace that took six months to build. The stone comes from a quarry near MacAlister Oklahoma.

Many trips were made to Oklahoma before the fireplace was finally complete. As a result of the Doells' desire to defer to the wooded setting, the layout of the house was dictated primarily by the location of those many trees. As you walk through the house, you are not sure where the next corner's turn will take you, but know that sweeping informal vistas of lush, green grass and clusters of live oaks, red oaks, pecans and cedar elm will greet you at every turn. In keeping with his desire to maintain house's clean lines, the architect used big pieces of glass with a minimum of dividers.

Because of the way the house is situated on the lot, none of the windows that face the backyard need to be covered. This level of privacy heightens the sense of rural isolation. As a result, the master bathroom, Susan's favorite room in the house, can take full advantage of the expansive view without the need for a single curtain. The bathroom is the kind you would hope to find at an Austin spa, with warm colors and beautiful wood trim. A picture window view of the outside serves as a backdrop for the jetted tub. A glass door at the foot of the tub opens to another stone patio.

"I think that the artwork in your house is the house itself," states Susan. She continues, "It's about the woodwork, the texture and the surfaces." And what a work of art it is. Susan used a beautiful variety of wood in her artist's' palette to great effect. Much of the wood is in its natural state, but for a sealant or some tongue oil. Susan claims it is to keep the surfaces "low maintenance," but as she goes through and tells you about each wood, the sparkle in her eyes and the warmth in her voice betray her. She loves wood. Different types of wood are



used together in a complementary fashion. The tall double doors in the entry are of a rough, knotty alder. The wide-planked oak floors are golden. The trim around the doors and the baseboards is custom-milled maple stained a warm, medium-dark finish that brings out the darker colors of the oak floors. In the kitchen, a more finished alder the color of honey was used for the kitchen cabinets that evoke the feeling of being in a farmhouse. The southwestern-style built-in cabinets and entertainment center in the great room are of tan cypress. The beams in the great room ceiling are of a dark cedar. Because Susan wanted to leave the beams in their natural state, a number of candidates had to be brought in before Susan was satisfied that they were to her liking and that each of the five beams worked well together.

Like those cedar beams, each unique element of this house comes together to form a home of contemporary lines and ageless warmth.

