

HAS ANYONE EVER ASKED IF YOU'VE BEEN LIVING UNDER A rock or in a cave? Well, if you had a secluded, private Hill Country man-made wine cave, on the side of a hill on a 3,000-acre ranch spanning across the Blanco River, you'd probably say, "YES." Architect Brian Korte tells us it's like creating a ship inside a bottle.

The cave houses 4,000 bottles of wine, a wooden bar and a comfortable lounge that's only a five-minute walk from the main house. The space is modern, inviting and literally underground — blending perfectly into the landscape.

"It's kind of romantic, in a way, to store your wine underground, kind of like a hobbit," Korte says.

In addition to Clayton Korte, this month's February issue features interiors from several Austin architectural firms such as 9 Square Studio, Moontower Design Build, Studio Steinbomer and Winn Wittman. We also spotlight projects from interior designers including Heather Scott Home, Kelle Contine, Breathe Design Studio and Martha O'Hara Interiors.

One project, in particular, is guaranteed to grab your attention. Atomic Ranch is a mid-century modern home with an aesthetic that's both whimsical and dramatic. The floor to ceiling windows gently guide your eye from the outside to the inside, where you'll admire design elements that showcase elegant curves, clean angles and stunning geometry.

"On a certain level, this house is something you walk through and experience, and that's also what you do at an art museum," says Christine Turknett.

We visit with local feng shui expert, Susan Domelsmith Cabral, who describes her practice as the "acupuncture of your home." She explains how water, wood, fire, earth and metal form the basis of everything that exists, and she guides us through the steps to keep the chi flowing through our home.

This issue also highlights ornamental fixtures from LWSN, including crystal antlers — made by squeezing, pulling, tugging and cutting a solid blob of 2,000-degree molten glass. You could say that their creations are the "cherry on top."

Carrie Crowe
Executive Editor

PHOTO BY BRIAN FITZSIMMONS

Tarrytown with a Twist

A WEST AUSTIN FAMILY'S REBUILD INCORPORATES INTERNATIONAL FLOURISHES AMID CLASSIC DESIGN

By Bryan C. Parker
Photos by Avery Nicole Photography

FOR YEARS, JOE AND AUDREY LOPEZ TRAVELED to Mexico and adored the country's architecture and design, particularly the hallmark arches and vibrant pops of color in San Miguel de Allende, a serene mountain town about 150 miles northwest of Mexico City. Upon realizing they needed more living space shortly after welcoming their second child, the couple decided to tear down their Tarrytown bungalow and build their dream home in the chic Austin neighborhood they didn't want to leave. Architect Steve Zagorski and builder Bryan Beckworth delivered a stunning and spacious residence the team lovingly dubbed the "classic casa."

The completed project transformed the Lopez family home from 1,500 square feet to nearly 5,000 square feet, providing a sprawling canvas for Raquel Skrobarczyk, the owner and principal designer for Heather Scott Home & Design. While Scott and Heather Harkoviches founded the firm in 2006 and still manage some of the company's projects in Arizona, Skrobarczyk joined the company in 2014 and has been one of the firm's owners and principal designers for the past several years.

For the Lopez family residence, Skrobarczyk turned to timeless design elements to create a space as refined as the luxury hotels to which the family loves to escape, while ensuring that the home is capable of meeting the everyday living needs of a growing family. By using light, neutral shades on larger elements like upholstery, she was able to embrace bold decisions for paint colors and accent walls.







"The entry wallpaper is really a showstopper," says Skrobarczyk, who chose to make an immediate statement with a bold Phillip Jeffries vinyl paper. Featuring flourishes of bright blue blossoms unfolding on vine-like branches, the deep black wallpaper contrasts with white lamps, brass accents and a pale stone floor laid in a herringbone pattern.

For the duration of the rebuild and redesign of their home, the Lopez family moved to San Miguel de Allende (where else?), creating a slight communication hurdle. Luckily, Audrey and Skrobarczyk have been friends for a decade, which provided the comfort and openness required for such an enormous design project to be executed remotely. Skrobarczyk, who was on maternity leave for several months during the project, put all of her other clients on hold, but found joy in continuing her work on the Lopez residence.

While Audrey preferred classic elements, Joe was excited about emphasizing the twist of Mexican design aesthetics, and Skrobarczyk's close relationship with the family helped satisfy the tastes of both interests while showcasing dramatic choices.





"That level of trust and friendship was really helpful," Skrobarczyk says. "I made selections that were a lot more bold, because she was willing to take risks." In the master bathroom, separate vanities sit on either side of a large open archway that reveals a freestanding Kohler tub positioned in front of a large window, through which daylight cascades beautifully. An antique brass and glass bead chandelier by Visual Comfort hangs elegantly from above. The floors are inlaid with a square pattern using black and white Thassos and Carrara marble.

Skrobarczyk calls Audrey her "most fabulous friend," and says that she wanted to strive for an interior that would reflect her client's chic sensibilities. She adds that Audrey has an impeccable wardrobe and always includes a striking accent, a fashionable earring or lipstick shade, that provokes conversation.

With an immense new space to fill, the pair poured over options for furniture and fixtures. "We source from over 200 different trades throughout the world," says Skrobarczyk. "We can procure items from anywhere, and they're one-of-a-kind." Ultimately, the Lopezes furnished not only the newly acquired 3,500 square feet, but also replaced almost all of their existing furniture — updating styles for a fresh look in all bedrooms, the living and family rooms, and the home office. Working with Skrobarczyk, they were able to customize everything to make it perfectly tailored, from the firmness of the cushion fill to the depth of seating pieces to accommodate their specific heights.

The family room, with its abundance of seating — a pair of luxuriously plush sofas and armchairs custom made from Hickory Chair Furniture in North Carolina and a pair of blue velvet swivel chairs — is Skrobarczyk's favorite space in the house. It operates as the heart of the residence, and from it, the Lopezes can see the courtyard where a large, old oak tree stands. The builders went to great lengths to preserve that beloved tree — a reminder that although they have rebuilt their house, the shared history that made it a home remains unchanged.

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