

HEART SOUL

NATIVE MATERIALS SET
AN ORGANIC BASE FOR
A CASUALLY ELEGANT
NEW HOME THAT
CONNECTS WITH THE
TEXAS COUNTRYSIDE

WRITTEN BY
SALLY FINDER WEEPIE
PHOTOGRAPHY BY
AIMÉE MAZZENGA





■ **Great-room** Natural light streams through the wall of steel-framed windows balanced by a black fireplace and a pair of sofas. White ceramics pop against blond wood. A black abstract greets at the staircase. **Preceding pages** The quiet and elegant dining room doesn't disrupt the view to the backyard.

Rising from the Texas soil like the 100-year-old live oak trees that shade it, this home west of Houston embodies the Lone Star State at its most elemental.

"The story of this house is a materials story," designer Paloma Contreras says. "Inside and out, the materials have an organic hand in keeping with the locale."

Texas limestone launches the amalgam of native materials, appearing first on the exterior and then repeating on walls

inside. There it's joined by local wood species: hefty reclaimed beams and swaths of Texas post oak and white oak.

The materials provide a warm, inviting envelope for rooms that intrigue with texture rather than color, that express movement with wood grain and marble.

"The client loves clean lines, a minimalist palette, and organic materials," Contreras says. "We took the modern farmhouse aesthetic and elevated it to an organic modern style."

The pleasing mix of rugged and refined begins at the front entry. Just a step through the steel-and-glass door, the foyer welcomes with abstract art juxtaposed against a slurried limestone wall.

Once inside, an expansive great-room, encompassing both a living area and the kitchen, invites family and friends to gather, relax, cook, and chatter. "The kitchen is really the heart of the house—and the jumping-off point for the design of the whole home," Contreras says. "You



Kitchen Warm white embraces glamorous touches on lighting, cabinet hardware, and plumbing fixtures. Tones of gray fluctuate in the tile backsplash. The pantry is appointed with stylish storage for all things necessary to entertain.



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HAVE AN ORGANIC

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—designer Paloma Contreras*



see it the moment you walk in, so it needed to be pretty as well as functional.”

Reclaimed oak beams define the ceiling and warm up the neutral space abounding with storage-rich, white flat-front cabinetry. A wood island base mimics the ceiling and jibes with Texas post oak floors. Sleek stone interjects modernity in the form of a waterfall countertop on the island and a slab backsplash behind the range. “The marble has a lot of movement,” Contreras

says, “so it adds a great textural and graphic touch to the neutral kitchen.”

Unlacquered brass on lighting, hardware, faucets, and framed art introduces an element of timeless glamour and a living finish that promises patina in the years ahead. The botanical art serves as decoration: “Even a utilitarian space should feel decorated,” Contreras says.

And it adds a splash of black that grounds the airy space as it meshes with black-framed windows.



■ **Study** Steel blue sneaks in color that blends with the outdoors. **Powder room** Black marble on the vanity is full of movement. **Primary bathroom** Framed architectural drawings provide interest and scale without overwhelming. The primary bath continues the warm light wood.



WE EMBRACED MATERIALS

that would be special for the family.
 —Paloma Contreras

■ **Primary bedroom** Black accents the room with points of graphic pattern on a pair of X-base benches, a pillow, and the border on the drapery panels.





Bar Built-in-marble ledges create display perches for modern abstract black-and-white artwork. **Exterior** The exterior of the Texas house blends ivory and charcoal for a modern pop among nature's lush green. An expansive pool stretches across the backyard.



"I like the hint of gravitas black brings," Contreras says.

In the adjoining living room, black repeats on the clean-lined silhouette of the fireplace, crafted from Nero Marquina marble, and the midcentury-style chandelier. Sprawling 7-foot sofas in a charcoal hue, paired with nubby armchairs, invite lounging.

White oak bookcases set flush into Venetian plaster walls cradle special objects and art from the homeowner's

collection. "I wanted to design beautiful bookcases to give a sense of architecture," Contreras says. "We worked with Segreto Finishes in Houston to give the wood a cerused finish that seals and protects the wood while keeping its beautiful raw look."

Windows and doors by local steelworks design firm Atelier Domingue beckon the outdoors in. Slim mullions ensure views of the pool and grounds remain unimpeded.

In the dining room, a delicate crystal chandelier follows suit, matching the

room's volume while preserving sight lines in a space where the designer wanted a feeling of a room enveloped in windows. A reclaimed-wood table grounds the space, while Louis XVI side chairs and host chairs with traditional tape trim bring the classicism appropriate to a formal room.

Like the home's public spaces, the primary suite offers a tightly curated palette of black, white, wood, and stone.

An upholstered headboard and graceful Louis XVI-style commodes emphasize the

drama of charcoal gray in the bedroom. In the bath, cerused white oak reappears with sleekly refined white marble.

"Throughout the house, we embraced materials that would make it feel special for this family," Contreras says. "The homeowner has such a great sense of style, which made it very fun to do this project with her. It's very different from much of my work. I got to flex my creative muscle to give her the home she wanted." ■