

# WHEN SLEEK MARKS THE SPOT

THIRTY HOUSES, THREE CONTINENTS, COUNTLESS ROOMS. A GLOBETROTTERING COUPLE RETURNS TO TEXAS — PLANTING NEW ROOTS IN A GLAMOROUS BLUFFVIEW RESIDENCE.



BY REBECCA SHERMAN, INTERIOR DESIGN: JAN SHOWERS, ARCHITECTURE: SVEND FRITZ, BOBROW + FRUIT, INTERIOR PHOTOGRAPHY: LISA PETROVIC, FOR SISTER BROTHER MANAGEMENT, PORTRAIT: ANA HOJ



The Bluffview home is almost hidden from the street in a park-like setting.

**S**ome couples golf together, others play tennis. For this Dallas CEO and his wife, bonding comes in the form of putting down roots — however temporary — and feathering a beautiful nest. “Our hobby is doing houses,” the wife says. “We move a lot, and we’ve had as many houses as years we’ve been married.” The husband’s job has relocated the traveling duo to London, Egypt, New York, Seattle, and a few cities in between. Together, they have restored old houses, redecorated modern spaces, and shared a glamorous leased apartment in Manhattan, dubbed the Milo-Rohd. Their styles are disparate: She prefers layered and transitional, he goes for clean and contemporary. Their mutual love of travel helps to everything together. “If you buy things you love and know what you like, you are going to be able to figure out how to make it all work,” she says.

He is originally from Dallas. She is from Houston. Five years ago, they moved to Dallas and, in 2010, bought a 1920s Mediterranean in Highland Park. After spending a year renovating, they enlisted the help of interior designer Jan Showers, whose work the wife had long admired.

Then, midway through the decorating process, the husband suggested they step back and reassess. “He said, ‘This is a family home, but we are empty nesters,’” the wife recalls. “We had bought a house for our previous stage of life — and he was right.” The couple’s two married sons already had homes of their own, and the 6,000-square-foot house felt too big. They reimagined their dilemma to a real estate agent, who fit a house run with the first house he showed them.

The contemporary Bluffview house was built in 2014 by architect Svend Fritz of Bobrow + Fruit, and is almost hidden from the street, surrounded by trees and lush, park-like landscaping. Floor-to-ceiling windows in every room allow for stunning views. “It’s a serene oasis in the middle of the city,” the wife says. “We fell in love with it.” At 5,000 square feet, the house was half the size of their previous one, with combined kitchen, dining, and living areas. Still, as much as they loved it, the couple couldn’t envision making the smaller space work. They looked at other possibilities, and eventually the Bluffview house went off the market. Nine months later, their agent called. “The house is on the market again,” he said. “Are you sure you don’t want it?” By then, they had had a change of heart. “We’re definitely interested now!” she told him.

**D**ownsize turned out to be the right move. “The thing we were most concerned about has become one of our favorite things about the house,” the wife says. The combined living, dining, and kitchen spaces were beautifully conceived by Bobrow + Fruit in oak, walnut, and marble, and allow for tremendous flexibility. “In other houses, we only used the formal dining room when guests came over, and there were other rooms we never used,” she says.

“Here, we have a table large enough for a dinner party, but my husband and I can also sit there and still be in the main space as our granddaughter plays. We use every bit of this house.” With careful curation, all of the couple’s favorite furniture and art fit perfectly. “Our kids’ son has fully furnished residences,” the wife says laughing. “We gave away a lot, but some things were absolute — we were not moving without them. Jan was fantastic in knowing how to incorporate them.”

“My client has a sophisticated eye,” Showers says. “The key was finding a balance between what she already had and new pieces.” Showers designed the Italian-style dining table specifically for the new space, and chose golden-edges and comfortable furnishings to make the combined living and dining areas inviting. “The house is already contemporary and sleek, and they wanted it a little warmer,” says Showers, who set the tone with an amber-hued Murano glass chandelier and accessories in the dining room. In the living area, artist Gela Roggy’s large Golden Gleam photograph plays off a pair of vintage 1960s Italian armchairs, upholstered in yellow-gold velvet. Throughout the house, furnishings in warm materials such as brass, bronze, and wood juxtapose with sleek glass, marble, and lacquer.

Showers is known for creating glamorous and sophisticated interiors with his Italian and French mid-century furnishings, and this house is no exception. In the entry, a French 1940s cabinet with curved Maitre designs was discovered in Paris, along with a 1950s-brass coffee table by Maison Jansen, now in the living area. Vintage Murano glass lamps, some with original bases, illuminate every room. A nickel-and-lacquer hair cut, from the Jan Showers Collection, displays beautiful bottles and decanters in the dining area. And a recent excursion to Paris produced a number of new finds, including a pair of French 1940s eckel-beuse tables.



In the living room, a Marilyn jobe from San Stewart's Collection. Bronze vase on coffee table, circa 2000, by Mahan Jensen. Yellow velvet chair, circa 1960.



Master bath with a view.



At dining room, a dining table, circa 1960, over a marble dining table by San Stewart & Associates, and Boone Florence dining chairs.

From the clients' own collection is a prized 1900s Handburg Steinway piano, which is now in the living area. In the entryway is an antique Greek chest, acquired from James Powell Antiques in Austin, which once belonged to London art critic David Sylvester, the father of contemporary artist Greville Brown. Other family favorites include African antiques such as a large Swahili dry-thorn pououde, and a ball sculpture by Charles Lindal, which was a gift from

the sons to their father. "My husband and I love how this house turned out," the wife says. Still, we have to ask: Will the style to move and relocate her house return? Thirtieth time's a charm, it appears. "This was finally the right modern house," she says. "It was beautifully constructed, and we had an exceptional designer. Jan and I clicked immediately. I'd done a pretty good job doing our homes myself, but a talented homeowner is never as good as a talented interior designer."



In the living room, a pair of Gio Ponti-style Italian bergamas in patterned Pirella Göttsche fabric, circa 1950. Golden Globe photograph by Colin Rogers. Apple Bunting table rug by Jan Showers. French brass and glass table, circa 1960.



Designer Jan Showers.



In the wife's office, a rug by Jan Showers for Moustaj. Jan Showers chair for Knoll, upholstered in Nancy Garcia fabric. French velvet lounge table, circa 1960. Brass and raffia magazine rack, circa 1950.

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—Jan Showers