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THE CONTEMPORARY SPIRIT OF FRISCO

By CYNTHIA HOWE

CONTEMPORARY ARCHITECTURE is known for its elegant and dramatic styles. It ignites the imagination with its unique use of light, texture, the flow of planes and the discourse between mass and void. It is somewhat rare to find this style locally within the residential communities; however some commercial architects have utilized it, attracting a roar of approval.

Holzman Moss Architecture brought to life the creative vision the city of Frisco aspired to through its extensive plans for the new Frisco City Hall and Library. The city desired to evoke the image of a classic Texas town by re-defining “period architecture” with a contemporary style. The result is incredible. City Hall, with its simple lines and flow of planes and space, is indicative of contemporary architecture. The uncluttered elements allow for the continuous flow between

spaces within the building. Likewise, the symmetry of uniform materials, such as mesquite wood flooring and concrete pillars, throughout the building provides an essential backdrop to the colorful accents and artwork the city is so proud of. This unique building also serves to welcome others to dream, explore and be courageous in a vibrant and young community. A number of residential architects have set their sails along a similar course, albeit at times against the waves of old European architecture, with fantastic results.

PERSONAL DESIGN ELEMENTS

David and Patty Seizer contracted with Axxium Custom Homes to build their home in Frisco while they were still living in Los Angeles. The long distance put a greater burden on the relationship as trust was essential. The Seizers were

delightfully surprised to find Mr. Ali Manteghi, owner of Axxium, so creative and professional, while being easy to work with. Mr. and Mrs. Seizer often times heard, “Let’s try this and if you don’t like it, we’ll do something different.” Every time Mr. Manteghi pushed his creativity, the Seizer’s were delightfully surprised by the effect.

While being so far away brought some challenges, the Seizer’s were in good hands. Mr. Manteghi handled every detail: he designed, built and wired the home, designed the pool to match the style of the home, and designed the landscaping as well as the prominent built-in wall art throughout. Furthermore, he introduced the Seizer’s to Debe Cabeza-Booker of Cantoni, the premier modern furniture store in Dallas. While Mr. Manteghi remains the creative mastermind, he respects the invaluable trust placed in

*Sunken bar at
Seizer's
photo by Chris Johnson*



him by his clients. "I take all the credit, but I take all the blame too." When things go wrong, as they sometimes do, Mr. Manteghi finds it easy to remedy, acquiescing to the clients' desires.

Symmetry draws you in and through each room in the Seizer's house. This is not a home you will get lost in, but you could lose yourself in it all the same. It begins before you enter the front glass doors, monogrammed with David and Patty's

initials. To each side of the front porch, staked out with a dramatic, angled structure, sits the two garages. The doors to these garages are visually hidden by layers of stucco that have been painted to match the rest of the home. The architectural lines that run horizontally around the home also run across the garage doors making the doors virtually disappear.

Visitors learn quite a bit about the owners as the home design reflects their personalities. They've stripped their California, IBM suits and corporate high heels in exchange for a colorful, vibrant lifestyle in Texas. As soon as you meet the Seizers, you realize that their motto could easily be "life is an adventure." The overall personality of the home is funky and fun, creative and bold. The monochromatic grays, whites and blacks serve as a canvas for the vibrant primary colors that serve as accents. Red, blue, yellow and purple daringly dance throughout the home. Each room is cohesively joined to the balance of the home through color and style. The color palette came from the first piece of

furniture they bought for the home, the couch. From there, the rest of the colors were selected and utilized.

Between the bar and the living room is a carved wall displaying large circles and sharp lines...like a gigantic paper cutout.

Upon entering the home the eye is drawn to the vibrant sunken bar, with its checkerboard tiling and purple cabinetry. It is open to the kitchen and living room without the confinement of solid walls, albeit an allusion of wall remains due to another of Mr. Manteghi's creations. Between the bar and the living room is a carved wall displaying large circles and sharp lines. It is very much like a gigantic geometric paper cutout. It is quite unique, and the Seizers were quite pleased with

the result. "When Ali said he was going to do this wall, we said 'sure, why not.' We had no idea it would turn out like this. We love it."

Another unique aspect of the bar is the window that opens to the outdoor pool. With the room being sunken, and the pool at ground level, swimmers can literally swim right up to the window and request their favorite beverage. The pool is unique to the home and includes an unbelievable martini glass-shaped hot tub. The setting creates a serene oasis with a view of the golf course below and downtown city lights in the distance.

Beyond the bar is the open kitchen with multi-dimensional cabinetry monopolizing one wall. To visually break up the wall, Mr. Manteghi set each cabinet at a slight angle across the room, as well as down the wall. He accented between the gray, flat cupboards with an aquamarine blue to accentuate each dimension. The overall affect creates pattern and texture where there otherwise would be monotony.

The master bedroom has a beautiful view through a curved wall of glass.





photo by Chris Johnson



photo by Chris Fritchie

The windows allow for the seamless integration of the interior design with the exterior scenery. The artwork accents the walls and niches. It is a relaxing room with a welcoming chaise awaiting the visit of the noonday sun: an ideal place for Mrs. Seizer to curl up with her most recent novel and bask in the warmth. Across the wall, above the bed, stretches one of Mr. Manteghi's unique touches, art in drywall.

The walls themselves become tangible artistic pieces where Mr. Manteghi combines his creativity with the wallboards themselves. Various shapes are formed straight into the wall using wallboard and stucco. Mr. Manteghi explains that he walks through the home prior to wall boarding and feels where each wall element should go, the shape, the pattern. He also feels where his wall niches should go, where the ceiling should recess, or where some other element should be combined with the flow within the framework of the room itself. He is an artist of rare form.

The guest bathroom has a unique hand-blown glass sink bowl imbedded with little goldfish. It is a little touch of whimsy so apropos against the backdrop

of contemporary style. The master bathroom is even more elaborately adorned. The large soaking bathtub is in the center of the room, with the glass-walled shower behind it. Across from the tub is one of Mrs. Seizer's favorite touches, a large television set above a beautiful fireplace. On the other two walls, facing each other, are large mirrors accented with black glass geometrical shapes. The mirrors visually expand the room in both directions creating an exaggerated depth to the space.

Axxium is also known nationwide for its design and implementation of home theaters and entertainment centers. The media room is one of the Seizers favorite rooms in the house. Its tiered seating, dimming lights, superior sound system and style is as close to a real theater as you can get. "When the lights go out, the walls, doors and all the décor disappear in the darkness," Mr. Manteghi explained. "The sound and sight experience is the most important element of a media room." In addition to the obvious uses of technology in the media room, every Axxium home is wired for sound, security, surveillance, technology and media throughout the



Night view of Hidell home and pool

photo provided by Linn Hidell

house. So when Mr. Seizer puts on his country music, you'll never miss a beat as you roam around the house.

Each room has distinct touches placed there by the artist, right down to the garages. Can you imagine an architect/builder worried about where to put the garbage can? Mr. Manteghi created a box to hide the garbage container, as well as sheltering the built-in vacuum mechanisms in the garage. Along the back garage wall is another of Mr. Manteghi's art pieces in drywall, a sporty car reminiscent of the adventurous heart of the owners. And parked in that garage? A gorgeous, yellow Lamborghini Murcielago roadster to take the Seizers on their next adventure.

Ali Manteghi has been building homes since 1986. He is above all else an artist. Creating architectural masterpieces that reflect the owners' personalities and lifestyles is his joy in life. He works 24/7 to develop and maintain the relationships

he has worked so hard to create with his clients, and if he so happens to build another house for that client, all the better. "I am very grateful for my clients. They are the reason for my success."

We knew we wanted every room to have a wall of glass to take advantage of the terrific views, including the lake.

A LAKESIDE DREAM

Linn and Bill Hidell live on the lakeshore of Lake Lewisville, just west of Frisco. Mr. Hidell is an architect and founder of Hidell Associates Architects, designing

primarily schools, churches and libraries throughout the nation. When the Hidells decided to move from their Dallas home to the lake, they followed their artistic style and designed something quite contemporary.

They planned their home specifically for the lake itself. "We knew we wanted every room to have a wall of glass to take advantage of the terrific views, including the lake. With that in mind, we knew the overall style had to be very linear." At the time they wanted to build a treasure chest for the memories they were creating with their two children, so they wanted something that would benefit everything that entails. Hallways were an unnecessary waste of space, and an open, flowing floor plan would be beneficial for the demands of entertaining the young and the young at heart.

Upon entering the Hidell's home, your

eyes are immediately drawn to the view provided by the adjacent wall of glass. The natural setting, including water, earth and sky, is brought seamlessly into the room. It is breathtakingly similar to walking into a room in the Smithsonian. You feel alone with nature while it is vividly displayed before you.

With soaring ceilings, natural light and open space, the home is a palette that awaits the vibrancy and colors of life itself. While the Seizer's home is funky and fun, the Hidell's home is elegantly straight-forward without being austere. It reflects the effervescent and inviting spirit of its owners.

The Hidell's love of people is often expressed in their passion for entertaining. They are prominent members of their community and enjoy supporting a variety of charities and organizations by opening their home for

parties and gatherings. When planning their home they knew they wanted something comfortable and trouble-free.



Hidell patio

photo provided by Linn Hidell

The dining room is open to the entry and living room creating a very large living space suitable for large parties.

The color palette throughout the home includes grays and whites with bursts of colors communicated through artwork and accessories. The floor coverings create spaces within the room and add to the overall contemporary style. The gray tones extend to the concrete flooring and add to the easy feel of the home.

The busiest room in the house remains the cozy kitchen adjacent to the den, just off the dining room, where many congregate to watch the latest football game, chat and enjoy Mrs. Hidell's delicious cooking. She is known to make a fantastic chocolate, caramel, pecan pie as just one example of her culinary delights. The kitchen was designed for her love of

cooking while incorporating space for kitchen visitors. She has an instinctive gift of making sure everyone feels



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welcome and well cared for.

Mr. and Mrs. Hidell have always loved the simplicity of the contemporary style.

His childhood memories are centered around his family's contemporary home of yesteryear, while for Mrs. Hidell, contemporary architecture became an acquired taste she developed after falling in love with her husband. "She's an avid convert now – she loves it!" Mr. Hidell believes it takes courage to present yourself in an architectural style outside the customary track homes of the Dallas metroplex. "People like what they think people like rather than developing a concept of their own." The contemporary style takes boldness and a strong confidence to support.

It's a very tangible representation of individuality, not just of style, but personality as well.

THE CONTEMPORARY LOOK ON A BUDGET

For those creative homebuyers who



Powder room sink

photo provided by Linn Hidell

want the aesthetic benefits of the contemporary style but don't have the budget to secure a private architect,

look no further than Landstar Homes. Landstar Homes is a local small developer serving the greater Dallas metroplex and,

more specifically, growing neighborhoods in Frisco. They are currently building in Pearson Farms, Cypress Creek and Quail Run.

Landstar Homes has created a balance within the framework of community homebuilders by providing elements that allow for more flexibility of self-expression. They inspire and encourage the buyer to create and design in accordance with their personality and preferences. The aesthetic qualities of their options are more urban and contemporary and can lend themselves to a multitude of dreams.

While touring a model home one enters through fluted glass doors and is impressed with the originality of style among a sea of Nuevo, old-European construction. Most



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Hidell living room

photo provided by Linn Hidell

of the floor plans are open with soaring ceilings. It has an overall linear feel congruent to the contemporary style. Smooth grain woods such as bamboo are used. The wall textures are smooth creating and enhancing a matte finish to available light. Much of the architectural elements have an early Frank Lloyd Wright feel to them with groupings of square windows, symmetrical wood built-ins and wide exterior porches.

Many of the walls express personality and character through the use of natural stones, tiles, wood and steel. For example, one model had white walls with two-inch strips of wood stained green spaced approximately every two feet, creating a simple pattern of symmetry. To add to the symmetry of the entire home a palette of three complimentary colors were used against a flattering, albeit simple, backdrop of beige or white. A popular color combination is sage green, chocolate brown and powder

blue. When every room in the house carries the same color scheme it adds to the simplicity and easy feel of the home in its entirety.

The fireplaces Landstar has designed are functional, unique and correspond to the minimalist nature of the contemporary style. They are elevated, flush to the wall and appear to seemingly float within the wall. They have integrated a number of unique finishes for the fireplace surrounds. Buyers can choose what attracts them most. One option is to continue the wood flooring up the wall, all the way to the ceiling, creating drama and energy within the room. Another option is to build a wall of limestone that surrounds the fireplace and gives the room a sense of nature and warmth.

Options for the dining room are elegant and sophisticated while maintaining the simplicity of the urban style. The dining room in one of the

models includes a recessed ceiling that houses a wooden structure of beams that cross, creating squares, with light behind the configuration. It is reminiscent of Frank Lloyd Wright ceilings as is the ceiling in the adjacent living room with its finished open wood support beams that run across the ceiling. Dropped pewter lighting adds just the right lighting to augment the room.

The integration of fluted glass above the kitchen cupboard doors brings muted lighting to the gourmet kitchen. The beautiful wooden cupboard doors are flat with a rich stain creating uncomplicated warmth for the room. Stainless steel appliances are combined with stainless steel backsplashes, faucets and fixtures. Creative planners can accent with a variety of glass tiles, lighting fixtures and accent pieces. One model has a gorgeous hexagon island in the center of the kitchen with the balance of the kitchen surrounding it within its



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Stonework in media room

perimeter. There is seating available around the island, which makes it ideal for families who want to serve real meals in our modern, fast-paced lives. The kitchen styles are unique, clean and add a bit of the drama associated with the contemporary style.

The master bathroom is magnificent with stainless steel sink bowls and pewter faucets imbedded into the backsplash. Clear glass visually hovers over the granite creating a contrast between light and mass. The floors, flat stained cupboards and wall treatments are all linear, creating a clean and simple environment. Recessed mirrors create character while maintaining the simplicity of the room.

Innovative technology is woven throughout their floor plans, creating fantastic media rooms, security systems



photo provided by Landstar Homes

and television centers. The living rooms are wired for surround sound and flat screen televisions. Because they have a desire to provide for a variety of client wishes, a master bathroom could be wired just as easily for the same system as a living room, providing high-tech early risers the benefit of the morning market news.

Landstar provides terrific opportunities for the creative homebuyer. For the courageous, there is no end to the possibilities of creating an extremely contemporary look with the Landstar products. They are an enthusiastic group of professionals waiting to serve your home building needs. One suggestion offered is to keep the extraordinary design elements in the main traffic areas of the home and simplify the secondary areas. Also, keep

the color palette the same as much as possible. If your son is a Longhorn fan, the choice may be to include the distinctive burnt orange into the color scheme. Don't be frightened to let your familial personality be reflected in simple ways.

THE CONTEMPORARY HOME

Axxium is one of those architects that has set itself apart from the ordinary and ventured to create the extraordinary. Ali Manteghi has been designing and building homes for more than 35 years both here in the United States and abroad. Among other awards, he is much honored to have won "Best Kitchen" for his designs in the Parade of Homes in 1997. Mr. Manteghi believes in providing a creative outlet to his clients that expresses their

individuality and personal achievements via their home designs. "Successful people are finding that not only do they want to be recognized for their individual accomplishments, but that their continued success depends upon expressing their uniqueness, originality and creative spirit in a tangible way that is visible to others." The result is a home that is expressive, creative and magnificent.

Far from the norms of beige-land, Mr. Manteghi designs homes that are far from ordinary. While his contemporary designs may attract only a small portion of the high-end residential market, his clientele list is steadily growing, with many moving into the Dallas metroplex from all over the nation. He claims the three elements of his success have been diligence and artistic design.



Natural accents

photo provided by Landstar Homes

His style begins with the personalities and characters he meets in his clients. He has a depth and quality that reveals not only his architectural vision but also the value he places on the relationships he builds with the client. “You have to wear a lot of different hats in this business – I am called on to be a banker, economist, psychologist, even a marriage counselor.”

Far from the norms of beige-land, Mr. Manteghi designs homes that are far from ordinary.

“When I’m talking to someone, I pay attention to everything. While they’re talking about their home, I am listening to the tone of their voice, the expression on their face, their body language. It’s my responsibility to learn

about their tastes and desires, as well as their goals and reasons for building a home.” This intense attention to personal details and habits is eventually expressed throughout the home he is building for that client.

Mr. Manteghi is above all things an artist. He envisions what the buyers’ dream of, and sets to work upon the canvas of possibilities to create a tangible representation for the client. The most unique aspects of his homes are the attention to detail, overall symmetry of the home and the unique wall shapes and contours.

CONTINUING THE DESIGN THEME

For contemporary style dreamers, prior to settling into your own plans, a visit to Cantoni’s is a must. Their Dallas showroom provides an extensive array of possibilities and suggested combinations. While the Seizers decorated their entire home using Cantoni’s, it is also a superb place to buy anchor pieces to weave throughout your home.

For those on a smaller budget, a similar affect can be created with products from the Frisco IKEA store. Many items are functional, modern and are indicative of the contemporary style. There are a number of fun and funky pieces for the spirited decorator to choose from. Their kitchen cabinets, appliances, flooring and furniture pieces inspire creativity and functionality.

Frisco is an energetic, youthful city full of dreams and endless possibilities. The contemporary architecture we enjoy is reflective of our unique personality. Along with our architectural style, Frisco is also home to The Texas Sculpture Garden, which is recognized as the largest private collection of contemporary Texas sculpture ever provided to the public. We can be proud of our continued commitment to excellence in a wide spectrum of civil expressions.

Cynthia Howe is a freelance writer living in Little Elm.