

ARCHITECT / KEN NEWBERRY, NEWBERRY ARCHITECTURE  
INTERIOR DESIGN / KARA CHILDRESS, KARA CHILDRESS, INC.  
HOME BUILDER / STEVE GOODCHILD, GOODCHILD BUILDERS INC.



# Like New, Again

RENOVATING THEIR FAMILY RESIDENCE HELPS  
A HOUSTON COUPLE FEEL RIGHT AT HOME.

WRITTEN BY MAILE PINGEL / PHOTOGRAPHY BY JULIE SOEFER







—

In the great room, Lee armchairs from James Craig Furnishings flank an acrylic drink table from Interlude Home. Artful touches above the 18<sup>th</sup>-century reclaimed mantel from Chateau Domingue include a Carlos Cruz-Diez painting and Kelly Wearstler marble lip sculpture from Longoria Collection. The chandelier is Arteriors.

This house is very inviting,” says interior designer Kara Childress, referring not simply to the light-filled rooms and cozy corners. “There’s always something in the kitchen, from brownies and cookies to custom-colored M&Ms in candy jars.” And that’s just as it should be for a home bustling with teenagers and guests.

The homeowners purchased the residence some years ago with the idea of renovating, but only now does it truly reflect their vision. “They’ve lived in and loved this house, but it was finally time to focus on forever,” says Childress, who collaborated with architect Ken Newberry on the renovation. With the residents relocated to a nearby rental for the school year, the design team—joined by builder Steve Goodchild and his project manager, Gregg Catani—was able to line up permits and materials in advance, “allowing construction to move quickly and smoothly,” notes Childress.

Outside, Newberry removed decorative elements like pre-cast columns and quoining, rebuilding new details with limestone. Inside, the team followed the home’s original footprint and infused a more contemporary feel by removing trim and crown molding. “We edited it down to cleaner plasterwork,” says Childress, adding that they lightened the wood floors, replaced the stair railing with a refined iron design and installed new steel-and-glass front doors. “The dark foyer instantly became a light-filled space,” she notes. For privacy, Newberry designed his signature retractable sliding panels to close over the steel-and-glass entry doors. Painted to look timeworn, the panels mesh with the stone floors and wood beams.



The painting by Paul Chidlaw cued a soft palette for the dining room, where Formations chairs from Culp Associates surround a table from Le Louvre French Antiques fitted with a smoke-mirrored top. The demilune table is from Provenance Antiques in Atlanta, and the reclaimed doors are from Chateau Domingue. The Oushak rug is from Turkish Carpets.



Childress and Newberry also reconfigured the flow of the ground floor rooms, opening passages to relieve the bottleneck often forming during parties. “Circulation is extremely important,” notes Newberry, whose project manager was Laura Castillo. “I walked the clients through the first floor rooms and explained that each space needed a ‘people magnet;” he says, “such as height, light and air, a bar, television or reading nook—a reason to be there.” To his point, Childress devised captivating spaces, playing up the structure’s beautiful bones with monumental antique mantels that create a feeling of authenticity and cohesion.

Just off the foyer—which displays art by Donald Baechler and Bill Fenoglio—a dramatic dark blue lounge

and bar area offers a quiet retreat for the husband while doubling as a prime entertaining spot. The lounge vibe and full bar extend to an outdoor seating area “perfect for cigars and a nightcap,” says Childress. The moody space also created an opportunity to bring in sculptural moments like a BassamFellows leather sling chair, and to further build the couple’s art collection with works by Hunt Slonem and David Yarrow.

A new passageway and wine room now link the lounge to the great room, which serves as a main living space for the family and their dogs. Open to the kitchen, breakfast area and backyard, the space also now enjoys an ideal flow. “It didn’t seat enough people before but we

The dining room vestibule’s Phillippe Sheep sculpture from Interlude Home joins Doug Ohlson paintings selected with assistance from art consultant Janet Hobby. A sofa done in Mark Alexander mohair holds a Nobilis velvet pillow. An antique doorframe from Antica Collection was converted to a mirror.



Coco, one of the family's dogs, takes full advantage of the sun-filled breakfast area, which houses the owners' own dining table, chairs and chandelier. The flooring is by Custom Floors Unlimited.



modernized it and made it a place to gather,” Childress says, crediting her associate designer Ally Dougherty and project manager Thecla Lindemann. They kept furnishings plush and neutral, repurposing the owners’ antique armoire and bergères, while also introducing acrylic pieces to help bounce light—a trick Childress employed throughout the house using mirrors.

Artwork also plays a key role in the great room, including works by Gray Malin and Carlos Cruz-Diez. The couple’s approach to collecting, done in part with Janet Hobby of MKG Art Management, is driven “by pieces that move them,” says Childress, and she let that passion influence the palette. In the dining room, for example, a Paul Chidlaw abstraction in gray influenced the bright

and airy space, which was previously dark and traditional. Here, Childress brought in a few antiques—demilune tables and a set of 19<sup>th</sup>-century French doors—but edited them in a fresh way. The table, for example, received a smoke-mirrored top to reflect the unadorned plaster walls and pale fabrics.

Like the rest of the rooms, the master suite also became a people magnet. “The homeowners thought about bumping it out to create larger closets,” recalls Newberry, “but they had the square footage and simply needed a better layout.” Gutting and starting over was the answer, one which still allowed Childress to include a cozy fireside lounge where the couple can de-stress in the evenings—no doubt while enjoying a few of those bespoke M&Ms. ■

In the kitchen, Segreto Finishes added patina to cabinetry and plastered the vent hood, which features a vintage wood beam. Antique lanterns, reclaimed-stone counters and antique concrete tile for the backsplash, all sourced from Chateau Domingue, impart a sense of age.





**Opposite:** Backless Saladino barstools allow easy conversation between the lounge and bar areas featuring walls painted Benjamin Moore Blue Note. The BassamFellows sling club chair from Mode Maison in New York is a masculine addition below a chandelier from France & Son.

**Below:** Reclaimed Belgian Bluestone from Chateau Domingue tops custom-stained French oak bar cabinetry. The Hunt Slonem painting is from Exhibit by Aberson in Tulsa.







**Left:** The wife's bathroom features a Kallista sink, Rohl faucet and Rocky Mountain Hardware pulls from Acero Bella. A chair from Interlude Home done in Nobilis material lines custom cabinetry topped with Calacatta marble countertops from Pomogranit-ADR. Sconces from Skelton-Culver and mirrors from Art & Antique Hunter accent the space.

**Opposite:** A custom Fortuny pillow on the bed and Hermès cashmere pillow on the loveseat help create a luxurious master bedroom. An alabaster lamp from Area tops the Swedish bedside chest from Art & Antique Hunter. EC Dicken draperies and a rug from Turkish Carpets complete the cozy retreat.