



ARCHITECTURE / RICHARD LONG,
LONG & LONG DESIGN
INTERIOR DESIGN / RACHEL HALVORSON,
RACHEL HALVORSON DESIGNS
HOME BUILDER / NATHAN LYONS,
VINTAGE SOUTH DEVELOPMENT
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE / GAVIN DUKE,
PAGE DUKE LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS



MODERN HISTORY

A NASHVILLE HOMEOWNER HANDPICKS A DESIGN TEAM TO CREATE A NEW ABODE WITH ALL THE HALLMARKS OF A HISTORIC ONE.

WRITTEN BY JENNY BRADLEY PFEFFER / PHOTOGRAPHY BY PAIGE RUMORE



In the living room of this Nashville home, designer Rachel Halvorson paired Hickory Chair's Bistro banquette with a vintage club chair in green mohair from Illuminati Antiques in Houston. Flanked by a duo of midcentury brass lamps from Garden Variety Design, a mixed-media piece by Raleigh artist Jason Craighead joins a Bobby McAlpine-designed ottoman by Lee Industries and a walnut cocktail table from Atlanta's Holland MacRae.

If a general contractor's own home is any indication of the level of detail delivered to clients, Nathan Lyons' may be Nashville's best example. From the beginning, he and his wife, Keri, knew they didn't want their new residence to feel, well, new. Building in the traditional enclave of Belle Meade would mean responding to the neighborhood's classic touches, but, "when it came time to plan the house, we decided we wanted something a little different," Lyons says. "So, we looked for a team that would share our vision and help us push the envelope a bit."

That search led Lyons to residential designer Richard Long and designer Rachel Halvorson—talents he viewed as fellow risk-takers. In joining the project, Long says, he felt a similar sense of alignment: "Nathan was very open to trying new things and wanted to create something special that would honor the history of the neighborhood while looking forward at the same time."

As homeowner and general contractor, Lyons was naturally very involved in specification of materials and architectural elements, wanting each to feel storied and special. "I've always been drawn to revitalization, whether restoring a home or commercial project," he says, pointing to his penchants for classicism and quality. So, the hallmarks Long specified for the home transcend any single discipline, ranging from vaulted ceiling beams and Shaker-style millwork to Roman columns, leaded-glass windows and a Tudor-influenced front door that set the tone for the entire residence. "It looks like it could be 150 years old," Lyons says, "but set against stark white stucco and blackened steel windows, it takes on a more contemporary feel."

Residential designer Richard Long incorporated steel doors to establish a sense of flow between the home's interior and exterior realms. "The height and simplicity of the French doors bring a modern feel to the more traditional materials, like the reclaimed oak floors," he says. The framed painting is from homeowners Nathan and Keri Lyons' personal collection.



Just beyond that stately front door, antique Spanish marble tiles, laid in a checkerboard pattern, make a case for patina against a sweeping staircase with a wrought iron and unlacquered bronze railing. "The tile itself feels like a form of art," Lyons says. "Keri and I love reclaimed as much as we do sleek, modern touches, and when we saw this, we knew it was the right fit for this house."

Lyons' expertise also was instrumental when liaising with Long and landscape architect Gavin Duke—along with project manager Mamie Finch—on the home's private interior terrace and pool. Opening the doors permits seasonably mild breezes to pass all the way through, prompting Long's comparison of the home to a Bahamian retreat. The addition of casement windows underscores this resort-like quality.

"The pool is centered on our master bedroom and directly under the windows," Lyons says. "You could jump right in."

Balancing elegance with restraint, Halvorson was happy to let Long's architecture act as protagonist, selecting well-edited furnishings and art that are high impact yet never scene-stealing. Responding to the couple's love for historic, she chose pieces that would read as romantic and old world—but with modern twists. "The only way for a new house to feel old and timeless is for it to look collected over time," the designer says. "We pulled in layers—vintage elements for patina; art that appears to have been gathered over the years." Referencing an array of works culled across the Southeast, Lyons adds: "Rachel really opened our eyes to the whole art world; a majority of the pieces you see were selected by her."

Long describes the home's architectural style as a "Mediterranean manor befitting Belle Meade," noting that its scale feels welcoming, never imposing. Long teamed up with Lyons, who was the general contractor, and landscape architect Gavin Duke to design the interior terrace and pool. Come nightfall, gas lanterns by Bevolo Gas & Electric Lights lend an alluring glow.

Above Paris Grey limestone floors by François & Co., a Double Arm pendant by François & Co., a Double Arm pendant by The Urban Electric Co. brings a hint of color to the neutral-toned kitchen. The island's Calacatta Gold marble countertops feel especially classic in concert with an Italian-made Officine Gullo range from Ferguson and Dennis & Leen's Paul Revere lantern from Jerry Pair in Atlanta. The custom cabinetry is by Old Town Millwork.




Striated green silk by Dessin Fournir spans the dining room walls, lending a moody backdrop to collected artworks from Dixon Rye in Atlanta and Eneby Home. Two lacquered-top cerused-oak tables by MDM Design Studio join Kara Mann's cane side chairs for Baker beneath jewel-like Josef Hoffmann pendants, injecting a bit of vintage glamour. The bluestone floors are by François & Co.

In the den, an L-shaped Lee Industries sectional creates a cozy niche in front of Shaker-style paneling by Custom Cabinetworks. Plush pillows in a mix of motifs—among them, Zak+Fox's Cloudband cotton-linen and a Ralph Lauren for Kravet tartan—boost the room's cozy quotient while Kelly Wearstler's Alta table lamps for Visual Comfort & Co. enhance its masculine mood.



Supporting the art and softening the home's high-contrast bones is an unexpected palette. "I wanted rich, cozy, earthy colors to warm the cool, clean lines of the house," says Halvorson, describing how strokes of olive green, camel, cognac and rust meander throughout, punctuating the predominantly black and white background with painterly depth. "We pulled tobacco velvets, the color of the bottom of the ocean, the deepest bittersweet chocolate brown; I like colors that can't be summed up in one word."

Highly reflective surfaces mix with ones Halvorson describes as "tumbled and warm"—to the point that Lyons and Keri let their two young children ride their bikes around the kitchen's rustic limestone floors. "Keri and I appreciate that things will scratch and tarnish," Lyons explains. "We want our home to feel like it's aging naturally and has character." While homework might be tackled at the kitchen table, the cocooning dining room—with its radiated corners and cradling curved banquet—is tailor-made for the adults, who love to entertain. "We wanted it to feel like a Parisian café," he says of the speakeasy-like space.

If the master bedroom offers direct connection to the pool and terrace, then this lounge provides a front-row seat for another of Duke and Finch's elegant concepts: a pea gravel courtyard punctuated by plantings of Fastigiata European hornbeams and Green Velvet boxwoods. "Just imagine what this house would be without its landscaping," Long expresses, praising a team effort to realize the couple's dream retreat. "The tumbled stone, the perfectly aligned trees in the courtyard combine with a contrast of materials and colors for a home where the family can grow and entertain for years to come." 



A tiered Fortuny chandelier sets a romantic tone in the master bedroom, where a Louis XVI canopy bed from Tara Shaw in New Orleans is softened by a wall of Schumacher linen draperies and a coverlet made from a Gretchen Bellinger chenille with Rose Tarlow trim. A Tom Brydelsky diptych from Tinney Contemporary hangs above the limestone fireplace.

Complementing a rug from Hallamar Rugs, a mixed-media encaustic by Catherine Erb, through David Lusk Gallery, creates a dreamlike scene in the master bathroom. A Remains Lighting Sorenson pendant from Jim Thompson in Atlanta hangs above Laura Kirar's freestanding tub for Kallista, while custom cabinetry by Old Town Millwork, painted Sherwin-Williams' Repose Gray, keeps the look serene.

