

NEW ORLEANS

HOMIES

& LIFESTYLES

Renaissance Awards

5 *fabulous
renovations*

HOW TO SPOT
A FAKE ANTIQUE

FATHER'S DAY:
A FANCY
BREAKFAST

VINE SELECTION

Presorted Standard
U.S. Postage Paid
NEW ORLEANS, LA
Permit No. 2606



*****ECRLOT 0145A**C-040

Your Home Magazine!!

987654

Rebecca

Rebecca L. Bobo, Allied Member ASID

521 Conti St

New Orleans LA 70130-2232

P0002
02385

The New Look of the EMPTY NEST

Stylish and spacious, this Old Metairie home can accommodate both fine art and grandchildren.

By Paul A. Greenberg Photographed by Greg Miles



Forget everything you thought you knew about empty nesters who downsize their living spaces. The 5,500-square-foot house in Old Metairie with the adjacent 900-square-foot pool house belies the conventional wisdom that says smaller is better. Although the owners indeed moved from a 7,000-plus-square-foot house, their new house is as spacious as it is elegant.

"What I really wanted was a house that had fewer rooms but open spaces," the owner says. "My husband and I rode around town and stopped at houses, knocked on doors and asked people who designed their house. As it turns out, several of them were designed by George Hopkins."

Hopkins of The Hopkins Co. is well-known in this community for his stellar designs and quality construction and was the ideal choice for this couple. Those who have seen or inhabited a Hopkins home know his buildings often evoke a feeling of openness, space and light, which were the qualities these owners most desired.

"The owners wanted a classic exterior design of elegant simplicity but nothing pretentious," says Hopkins. "That was fundamental because at the time there were so many houses being constructed on a monumental scale, but these owners wanted something proportioned to the neighborhood."

Mission accomplished: The exterior is modest by design. In the course of building the house, the property next door became available, as well. "That was extraordinary," Hopkins says. "The owners acquired the next-door property, and we were able to convert the tiny World War II concrete-block house to a cabana guesthouse with a pool and gardens. This was a major embellishment that created a small family compound between the two houses."

Today, the finished product bears no hint of division between the properties. Instead, the main house flows easily toward the guesthouse by way of what Hopkins describes as a French Quarter-style garden area, easily visible from the breakfast room and dining room.

Another requirement in this house was an easy movement between and among rooms. This was accomplished by use of expansive cased openings. "We were going to build a house that was a carefully confected plan to allow for gracious flow between spaces without constructing a house that was overscaled," Hopkins says.

Through smart design and the use of oversize windows throughout the house, the structure feels much larger than it really is. The house was designed to suit the family situation — adult married children, grandchildren and places for all to feel comfortable. All of the major living areas on the first floor, including the sweeping great room, feature true lifestyle choices. "We really wanted the great room to be our center of entertainment," says the owner. "It had to hold my husband's audio equipment, a television for everyday watching, comfortable seating, a fireplace and the baby grand my husband plays for relaxation." Like much of the rest of the first floor, the floors are made of rich old pine, which was also selected for the main front hall stairway, reminiscent by design of a Garden District home.

Much of the first floor space, including the wide dining room, serves as the perfect backdrop for the couple's art collection. In the great room, works by Ida Kohlmeyer, Henry Casselli and Allison Stewart share space with strategically placed glass blocks by Gene Koss from the Arthur Roger Gallery in New Orleans. Even specific pieces of

OPPOSITE PAGE: Much of the first floor is filled with the couple's impressive art collection, including the Ida Kohlmeyer over the fireplace, the Allison Stewart behind the piano and the Gene Koss glass blocks. Their priorities while designing the home were light and space.



OPPOSITE PAGE: Upholstery and bed dressings by Ken Palmer Upholstery create a soothing atmosphere in the master bedroom. The master bathroom makes use of ample natural light.

ABOVE: The homeowners wanted the exterior of the home to be proportional to the neighborhood, and George Hopkins of The Hopkins Co. helped them get exactly what they had in mind.

furniture have an artistic bent — the handsome sideboard in the dining room is an original work by famed furniture designer Ruppert Kohlmaier Sr. In the spacious first floor master bedroom, pencil portraits by Henry Casselli and a soft watercolor by Allison Stewart, also represented by Arthur Roger Gallery, mingle with dozens of family photos. Upholstery and bed dressings by Ken Palmer Upholstery complement the design.

The true heart of this house is the massive kitchen, featuring 11-foot ceilings, creamy white raised-panel cabinetry and an oversize island that serves as buffet and family gathering spot. The owners' collection of Asian porcelain occupies a specially constructed cabinet space in the adjacent breakfast room, and the entire space rests over an Italian porcelain floor.

Although most of the main living spaces are downstairs, the upstairs holds a handsome study, a playroom for the grandchildren, a guest bedroom, two bathrooms and a richly appointed workout room that was designed by using the attic space over the garage.

A number of craftsmen and designers share credit for this exquisite structure. Chevalier Construction Co. served as contractor, while Nordic Kitchens and Baths Inc. takes responsibility for the kitchen, designed by Randall Shaw. Carefully selected pieces by Designer Metal Works and Elaine Gleason accent the first floor, including an imposing light fixture in the entrance hall, a vanity in the powder room and a metal side table in the dining room.

"The priority was light and space," says the owner. "We just wanted a home that was simple and elegant, understated and not garish. More than anything, we wanted a place for our family to be together." ♦