

CALM, COOL, COLLECTED

Former East Texan Mary Anne Smiley brings contemporary flair to a home paying homage to the frontier past

STORY BY DANNY MOGLE ★ INTERIOR
DESIGN BY MARY ANNE SMILEY ★
PHOTOGRAPHY BY DANNY PIASSICK

The billiard room doubles as an art gallery, with a collection of Western saddles and a contemporary, multicolored epoxy and resin sculpture by artist Markus Linnenbrink.



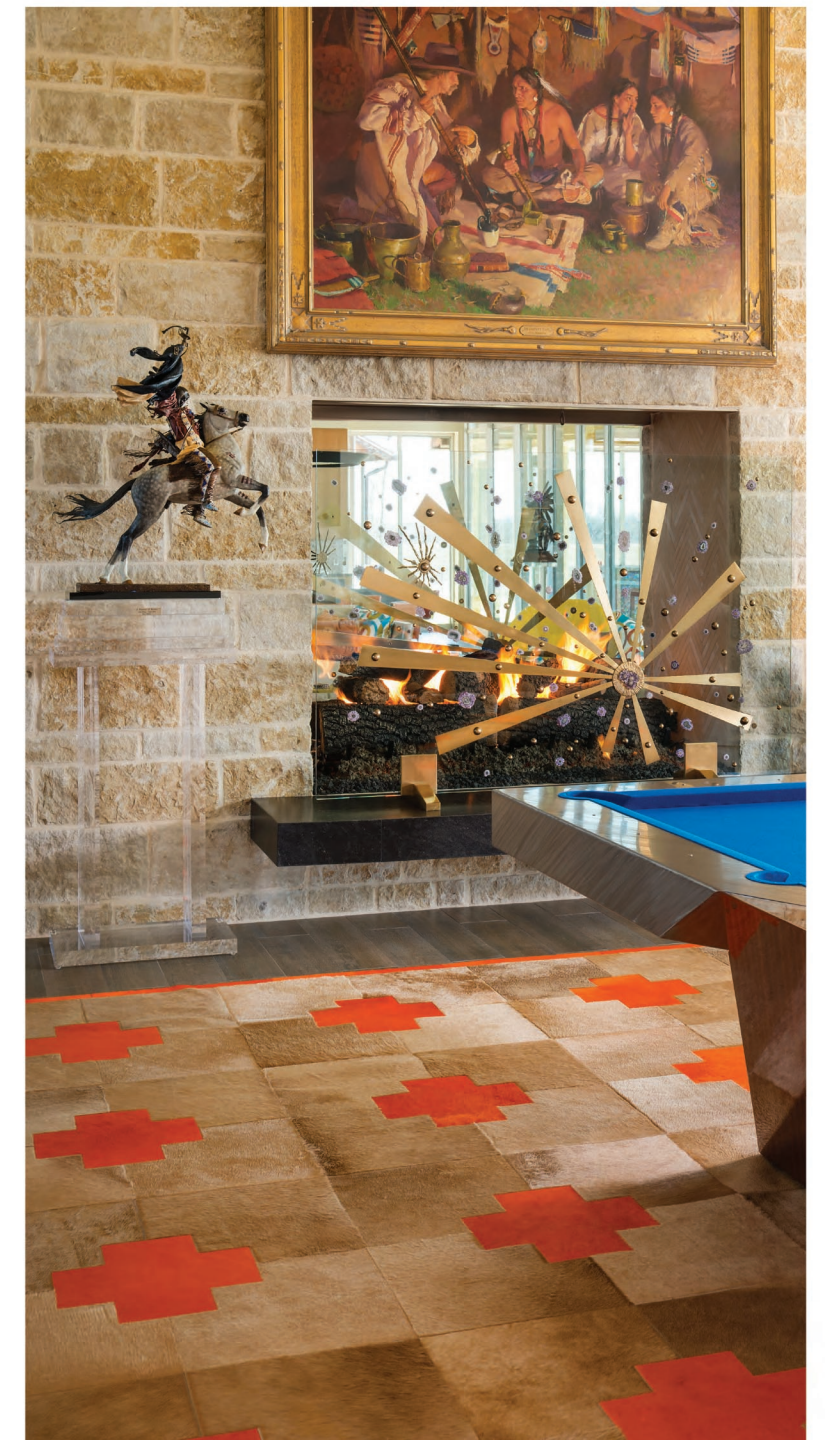


A 22,000-square-foot ranch house tucked away in the countryside near Gunter, Texas, is anything but ranch-like thanks to a contemporary interior by Mary Anne Smiley featuring custom furnishings.

Smiley, a native of Oklahoma and former 18-year resident of Athens, Texas, is known for her use of avant-garde art, bold colors and pearl finish backgrounds. She collaborates with furniture makers and artists to create pieces for her clients.

This project challenged Smiley to blend her trademark contemporary style with the homeowners' large collection paintings and bronze sculptures of cowboys, Native Americans and animals of the Western frontier. The homeowners also were passionate about displaying their beloved Western parade saddles and spurs.

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Four distinct areas were created to bring human scale to the home — a kitchen area, a dining area, seating in front of the fireplace and a bar. The owners are avid collectors of Western regalia. Two parade saddles flank the entry door.

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In collaboration with the architect Vernon Berry, Smiley created an "open design focused on the wonders of the outdoors, juxtaposing huge window walls with vast wall space for art display," she shares on her website.

The large amount of artwork and saddles, which function as eye-catching sculptures, influenced design decisions.

Smiley worked with the homeowners, who are longtime friends and clients, to supplement their art with paintings by artists from Texas, Berlin and New York.

Many of the pieces of art are showcased in a long hallway gallery that has the feel of a museum. Other pieces are on view in the billiard room which has a unique, custom-made table with deep blue felt.

The home's great room has a 20-foot high ceiling, skylight and floor-to-ceiling windows that let the sunlight pour in and frame views of fields and lakes.



The bar, designed by Mary Anne Smiley, features longhorn hides protected by a resin coating.



The dining tables are a combination of an amber-resin top paired with a stainless-steel-column base.

A lower breakfast bar contrasts to a higher bar topped with two-inch textured art glass that changes color via integrated LED lighting and provides additional dinner seating as needed. The Glass hanging sculpture is by Carlyn Ray and Emily Teng Yan.



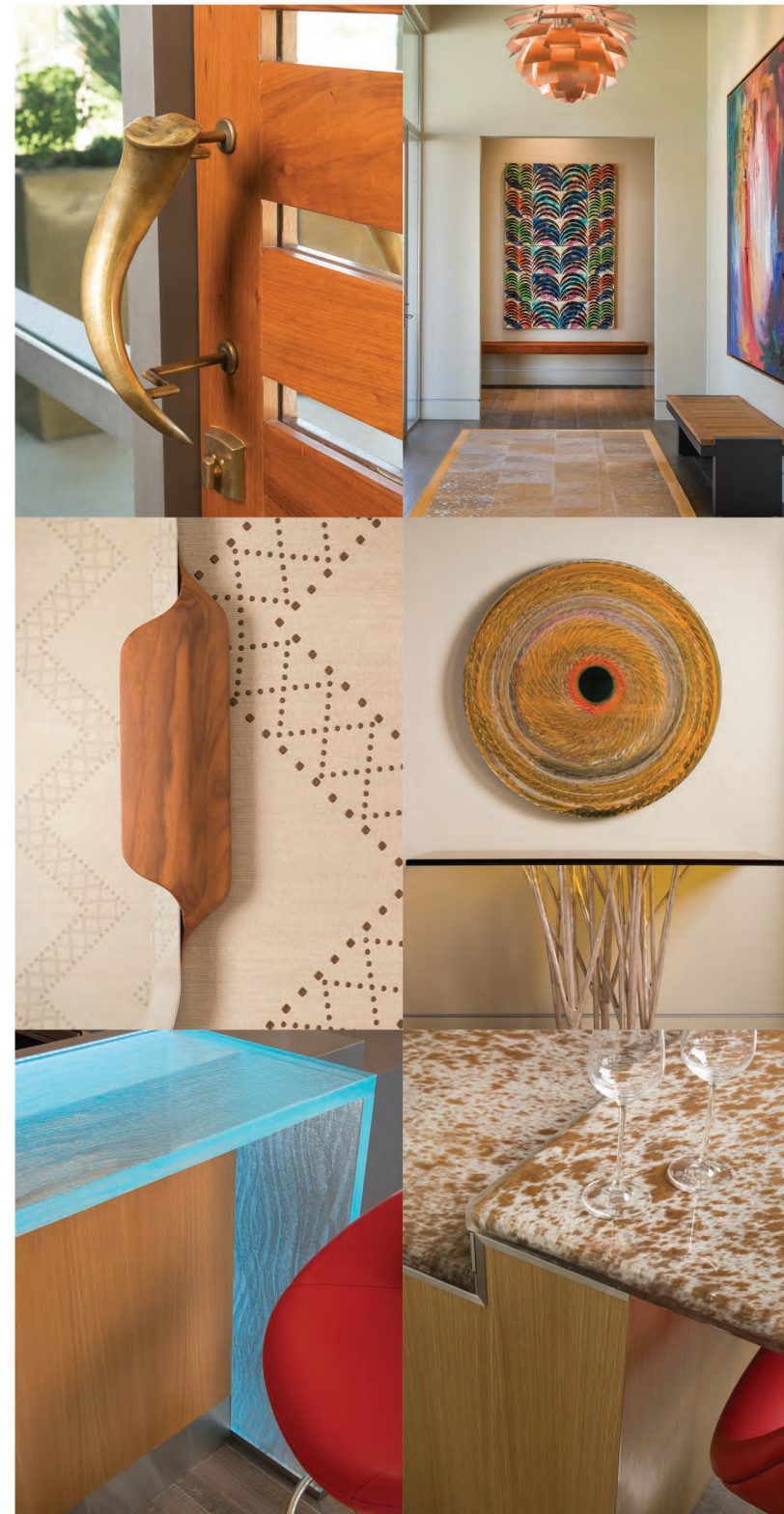
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The large open space seamlessly flows from living room, dining room, kitchen and bar.

A neutral palette provides a backdrop for chairs covered in vibrant reds, yellows and oranges, the colors of sunsets. A glass sculpture with cascading blue ribbons hangs high on the wall above cabinets in the kitchen. The counter of the bar is covered by longhorn hides protected by a coat of resin.

Smiley designed pillows and rugs throughout the home as well as the bed and its leather upholstered headboard in the master bedroom.

The result is a happily-ever-after marriage of Western and contemporary.





The kitchen is designed to be open to the dining area with a raised bar to hide preparation areas. The focal point of the kitchen is the hanging glass ceiling art of blown-glass plates and pulled-glass ribbons designed by Carlyn Ray and Emily Teng Yan. Interior design is by Mary Anne Smiley with photography by Danny Piassick.

functional freestyling

contemporary design is your interpretation of now

STORY BY PATRICIA WILSON

THE SPIRIT OF YOUR HOME begins with you and where you are in life right now. Contemporary interior design belongs to the now. It's your interpretation and expression of what is trending.

Much of today's contemporary style has deep roots in Modernism, a movement from the late 19th through the mid-20th century that encompassed the arts, architecture, design, literature, philosophies, culture and lifestyle.

Architect Louis Sullivan, who is credited with the axiom "form follows function," is considered to be the founder of the Modernist movement. Modernism is seen in Art Deco and the Bauhaus Movement.

Mies van der Rohe, the architect who popularized the design principal "less is more," along with his famous contemporaries Sullivan, Frank Lloyd Wright, Le Corbusier and Walter Gropius, were pioneers of the Modernist movement. Advances in industry, particularly the use of steel and glass, heavily influenced the design styles of that era. Sullivan, the original designer of the skyscraper, used steel as structure instead of masonry.

An example of using steel as craft is the classic Barcelona chair designed by van der Rohe in 1929. This stunning chair

style remains much loved and sought after.

Gropius founded the Bauhaus School in Germany. While under his direction from 1919 to 1928 the school was responsible for The Bauhaus Movement which made industrial design popular.

In contrast to Modernism, contemporary design is "of the moment." Because contemporary design evolves from new technologies and an ever expanding number of materials, it is fluid and easy to personalize.

Think of contemporary design as having three components: the experience, the feel and the look.

THE EXPERIENCE

Before you begin a decorating project, think about your life, long-term plans and bucket list. The "form follows function" mantra is the guiding consideration for design that reflects lifestyle.

Your priorities and values will guide decisions of what to put in your home. If you want to listen to music anywhere in your home, install a high-end sound system. Maybe your wish list includes having a pool to share with family and friends or splurging on a steam shower. If traveling is an essential part of your life, display art objects and furnishings collected during your adventures.

A multipurpose room is a good example of form following function. This room might need to serve, depending on changing needs, as a den, yoga studio, office or guest room.

Multipurpose furniture, an engineering marvel, also transforms to meet multiple and changing needs.

THE FEEL

Contemporary design embraces the "less is more" approach. Good interior design and composition, achieved through planning and attention to detail, gives the homeowner inner peace.

We are happiest when we have everything we need to create, thrive and flourish. Homes feel peaceful when everything has a designated place and there is no clutter. Art objects and family treasures are on view to bring pleasure. The absence of ornamentation is key. The inherent structure of cabinetry, furniture and windows is celebrated for its beauty. Well-curated accessories and good lighting enhance the feeling of luxury and comfort.

THE LOOK

Contemporary design is rooted in sustainability, energy efficiency, responsibly sourced products and lasting value. It makes good use of innovative materials and technologies.

Mix new materials with reclaimed objects, brass accents, marble, woven furnishings, faux fur and luxurious fabrics.

Trending colors are fiery reds, deep blues and greens, sunny yellows and regal violet. Floral fabrics or strong geometry make a statement. Subtle off-whites and barely-there pastels offer elegance.

The idea is to store away what needs to be kept and then get rid of the old to make room for the new. Don't allow the wires, gadgets and remote controls of electronic devices to become clutter. Store electronic essentials in cabinets. Hide your large television screen behind a stunning piece of art. Create a contemporary design that brings feelings of happiness and peace.

Patricia Wilson is an interior designer registered with the Texas Board of Architectural Examiners. Connect with her at www.PatriciaCWilson.com.