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# Art takes center stage in spacious Kingwood home

By Diane Cowen | September 2, 2016

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Photo: Miro Dvorscak

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## IMAGE 1 OF 23

The living room in the home of Randy and Shari Ziebarth of Kingwood fits their relaxed Southwest style.

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Shari Ziebarth relaxes in her sitting room in a zebra-print chair beneath a piece of folk art that looks amazingly like Johnny Depp in La Catrina makeup.

Her dachshund, Dooney, is curled up in her lap, and Trooper, a Catahoula, is snoozing on the floor at her feet. Wherever she is, they are not far behind.

"For us, this house is an oasis," Ziebarth says. "We feel like we're at a resort every day. We wake up every day grateful to be here."

The Ziebarths have collected a good deal of art in the 10 years they've been together. Every year, they look for great finds at the Bayou City Art Festival and visit the many art galleries in Santa Fe, N.M. A trip to Sundance, Utah, brought even more pieces that fit their relaxed Southwest style.

They use art wisely in their Kingwood home, placing the showstopper - the Depp doppelganger, "Sugar Skull Cowgirl" by artist Dolan Geiman - in the entryway.

When the couple bought this custom spec home, it was just a slab with framing underway. They'd been looking for a roomy one-story home but couldn't find what they wanted.

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#### **TRANSLATOR**

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Their Realtor lived down the street from this home under construction in the gated Kings River Estates and urged them to take a look. It had a spacious lot, and they liked the floor plan.

Then they discovered it came with something they hadn't expected: an interior designer.

The builder, Sugar Creek Premier Homes, had hired Pamela O'Brien to make surface choices - paint, countertops, light fixtures and kitchen and bath fixtures. The Ziebarths opted to hire her to help them finish out the entire interior. They'd been in a much smaller patio home, and most of their furniture wouldn't work in the sprawling, 5,000-square-foot house they moved into a year ago.

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## STYLE

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"When Pamela and I started working together, I said, 'I don't want this to be a museum home,'" Ziebarth says. "I want people to feel comfortable to sit on the furniture and bring

their kids over."

She also knew she wanted simple wall treatments - they used gray paint throughout the house - neutral furniture and pops of turquoise, Ziebarth's favorite color.

O'Brien taught her lessons about spatial relationships and the color palette. She learned about the importance of a well-chosen rug, the value of minor mistakes and why she should always carry a tape measure.

In their dining room, hardwood floors and carved limestone columns set the area apart from the wide-open space of the main living area.

They found a great buffet and a beautiful table and chairs. But when they found the perfect rug at Oriental Rug Gallery of Texas, it was about a foot too wide.

Because the rug's pattern was more abstract, they could slice off a vertical strip and not destroy the visual integrity of the rug. And the rug store sewed up new seams on the rug and on the strip cut off and urged them to use it as a table runner.

To get the right rugs, O'Brien and Ziebarth took pictures of the artwork and furniture that would be in each room.

The main living area includes a dining room, sitting room, breakfast nook, kitchen and family room. Rugs, lighting and tray ceilings help define each area.

"People want hard-surface flooring and not a lot of draperies or rugs because of allergies," O'Brien said of the home's travertine floors. "In a house this big, you need rugs or it's just not comfortable. And what they can do for design is just fantastic."

One example is the sitting room, where "Sugar Skull Cowgirl" reigns over a large fireplace. There's a large, brown leather sofa with seat cushions upholstered in burnt orange. Zebra-print wingback chairs hold burnt-orange pillows. The gray-beige rug underneath it all and the Currey & Company wooden chandelier centered above it declare it a "room," even if there's really just one wall and a row of picture windows.

"This would not be nearly as interesting or as warm and welcoming without a rug," O'Brien says. "The rug kind of says, 'OK, come here and sit.' It adds texture, it adds color, it helps with acoustics."

One little mistake that proved fortuitous happened when three pendant lights were hung over the wet bar. They were supposed to all be turquoise, but one brown light was sent in error. Both Ziebarth and O'Brien liked the brown one better, so they returned the others.

The master bedroom suite is another oasis. Gray/neutral bedding, tray ceiling and walls come alive with a bold velvet burnout footboard sofa and distressed turquoise nightstands with sparkly hardware, custom made at Barrio Antiquo in the Heights. Above it all is another painting, a dreamy vision of a woman with a flowing scarf - turquoise, of course.

"I love this room. It's very cozy and inviting to me," Ziebarth says. "I like ambient light; I've got to have dimmers on everything."

Her closet, a massive space with an island for jewelry and accessories, has custom racks for clothes and shelves for favorite family photos.

And where other homes may have spartan powder rooms for guests, the Ziebarths' is meant to impress. White/metallic wallpaper in a Baroque pattern provides another showstopper.

Though travertine constitutes much of the home's flooring, the media room - above the

garage, the only "upstairs" room in the house - is an exception. Its leopard-print carpet isn't just fun, it helps with acoustics, too. A giant TV, a row of recliners and a couple of beanbags make this a room to relax in.

One guest bedroom is dedicated to the family's VIP, their 2½-year-old granddaughter, Campbell. It's filled with toys, daybed and a crib. Another piece of artwork, "The Domesticated Daydreamer," holds court here.

Although the Ziebarths are empty-nesters, they host plenty of visitors. A blended family - he has two adult sons, and she has two grown daughters - the couple simply needed more space for family gatherings. And by going through the building process and selecting almost all new furnishings, it felt like a fresh start for the couple, who married three years ago.

"We wanted to create an atmosphere for our family where they could stay overnight if they want to, where we all have a place to sit down and eat," Ziebarth says. "We just liked the way this house flowed; it's very good for entertaining."

Part of that happens outdoors, too, in the covered seating area, summer kitchen, pool and hot tub.

"Friends have said they feel like they're at a resort. That's probably the biggest compliment anyone could give you," Ziebarth says. "There's something to be said for living in a house that feels like you."



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