



HAPPINESS IS HOMEMADE

BY TIFFANY HORTON, HORTON DESIGN STUDIOS
PHOTOS BY MATT CORNELIUS

Walking up to the front door of Joe and Dr. Cheryl Saul-Sehy's Mid-Century Modern house, you can see their taste is eclectic, inviting and curated. On the front stoop, you are greeted by a black woven fixture they call "The Giant Eyelash," it is a fixture that was acquired by mistake, but one they both now love. This is just one example of the Saul-Sehys' open approach to their remodel. They found a balance between asserting their own style while ultimately trusting the professionals around them.

Inside are rich, worn beams on either side of the front entry hall. These beams are old railroad timber with a dark finish and plenty of natural distressing. The placement of the beams draws the eye up

to a vaulted ceiling accentuated by more stunning wooden beams. The beams on the ceiling were artfully distressed to match the look of the railroad timbers. To the left, the dining area is made inviting through large open windows and interesting light fixtures. This room also hosts a beautiful wooden and metal trestle table with contemporary wooden side chairs and coordinating upholstered host and hostess chairs. Hanging on the wall at the end of the dining table is a wooden Southwest-style piece of art that feels like a skyline being tied together by a river. Walking from the dining room to the living room, sits a handsome bar area. The background of their bar was designed by their Vermont-based designer, Brenna Brochhausen of Brenna B. Interiors, and carried out by local contractor, Jason



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Eppinette. Together they created a custom wooden feature; the dimensional pieces of white oak were carefully cut and crafted by Kyle McKeever of East Texas Grain and Knot to look as though they were woven together. Eppinette used thoughtfully placed accent lighting to further enhance the dimension of the wooden backdrop.

Welcoming you into the living room, hangs another fantastic light fixture. The fixture is a rustic take on the current trend of sputnik fixtures but with slim, smooth branches radiating out from a central point. While the fixture is a showpiece, it is the fireplace wall that commands your attention. When the Saul-Sehys added

a mantel, they noticed the fireplace was off-centered on the wall, so they knew they would need an innovative design to camouflage its unusual placement. The idea then came about to replace the existing rock finish with authentic stucco. By adding stucco, they continued the Southwest feel of the house and added a series of niches to highlight some of the Saul-Sehys' art collection they have curated through their travels. According to Eppinette, "The fireplace was the most challenging part. We really had to work it out to make it look centered because there is a difference between drawing it on the computer and what really works." Cheryl added, "Jason



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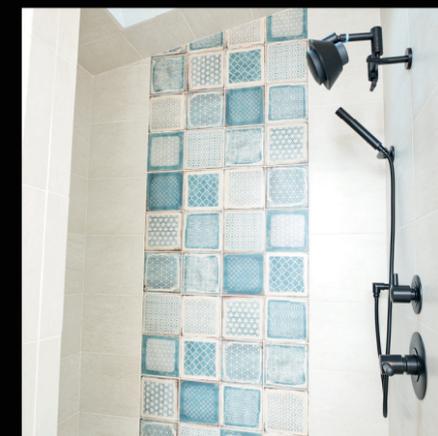
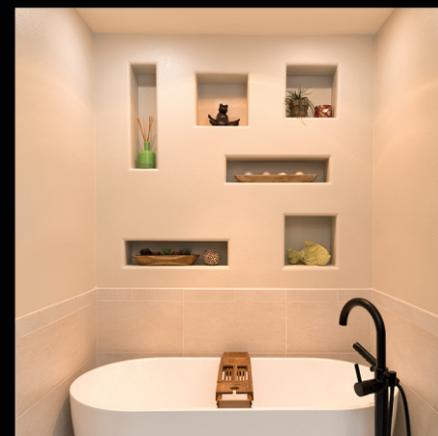
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worked really hard on this, doing a lot of drawings and going back and forth with Brenna.” But the hard work paid off and ultimately made for niches that gave an intentional and seamless feel to the offset fireplace which they completed by adding a distressed knotty alder mantel. Further detail was given to the mantel by crafting it to appear as though it had been pegged together by mortise and tenon.

In the far corner of the living room, a stunning wooden door with carved details and pops of blue leads you to the primary suite. In the bedroom and office area of the house, the Saul-Sehys did not have to undergo any major renovations. These areas were primarily just freshened up with paint, and Brochhausen helped them select interesting furnishings and creative lighting that would

continue the feel of the house. One fun change they made was adding a library ladder on the built-ins along the outside wall of their office. Inside of the office, Brochhausen found them a cool desk with built-in seating and storage. Joe explained, “When she first talked about this piece, I was like, ‘I don’t think so.’ And then, you know, believe in the people you work with. And then it got here, and I love it.” Now, both Saul-Sehys say that this is one of the spaces they enjoy the most.

Another area in the primary suite is the master bathroom, which got a complete makeover. Walking into the bathroom, it is so refreshing and full of light that you almost forget it is a completely interior space. With the interior location and narrow shape, it could

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easily feel congested and uninviting, but throughout the design process, the team worked together to offset the challenges of the space. They used floating cabinetry along with light neutral finishes to visually open it up. Then, they added two skylights to bring in plenty of warm natural light. One skylight is in the main area of the bathroom, and the second is above the shower, adding emphasis

to the tile feature wall inside. Their designer selected decorative tiles with blue tones to create the feeling of a waterfall inside the shower. It was another design decision where Joe expressed their initial hesitation, but "trust your people," he said, and the outcome will be worth it. A second feature of the shower is the showerhead. "A friend of mine is an engineer in Michigan, and he does a lot of bathroom stuff. That is his core fixture; it has a Bluetooth speaker right in the middle of the showerhead," said Joe. "There's a magnet that holds it in, and if I'm in the middle of a podcast, I'll just carry it with me until it's finished." On the opposite end of the bathroom is the tub area. To match their more contemporary look and for a continued illusion of space, they chose a freestanding tub. Behind the tub are niches for art, repeating the look of the niches in the living room.

You can tell every detail was carefully thought out and designed to give the home continuity. When I asked the Saul-Sheys for their favorite parts, they couldn't even decide. Cheryl laughingly said, "That's really hard for me. First, we finished the bar and thought that would be it; then we finished the fireplace, and I thought it was. Then, we finished the bathroom, but our favorite place to sit is in the study, so it could be there." Joe added, "It's a nice, calm space. I like how when I walk in here, I immediately feel my blood pressure go down. Plus, because I work from here, it's a great place to spend the day. It's a beautiful place to be." ①

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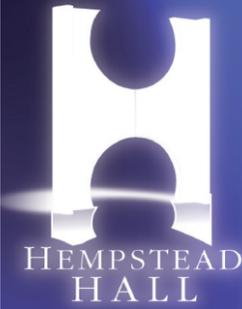
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