



PHOTOGRAPH BY PAUL FINKEL



family plan

A DESIGN TEAM CREATES A BRIGHT AND OPEN GETAWAY IN TEXAS HILL COUNTRY'S FRIO CAÑON COMMUNITY THAT CONNECTS TO THE SCENIC OUTDOORS.

WRITTEN BY **KIMBERLY OLSON** PHOTOGRAPHY BY **NICK JOHNSON**

architecture David Shiflet, Shiflet Group Architects

home builder David Dalglish, Dalglish Construction Company

interior design Blair Burton, Blair Burton Interiors | landscape architecture Rick Scheen, LandWest Design Group, Ltd.

bedrooms 4 | bathrooms 5 | square feet 4,650



Builder David Dalgleish helped conceive the stonework that surrounds the living room fireplace. Custom doors hide a television. *Opposite top:* With a lovely view of the property, the dining room features an antique table and chairs. *Opposite bottom:* Wildflowers look right at home atop the dining room's antique wooden buffet, found at the Marburger Farm Antique Show.



As an Austin couple searched for a spot to construct a vacation home, builder David Dalgleish invited them to explore Frio Cañon, a community along the Frio River in the heart of Texas Hill Country. “Quite frankly, I had no interest, because rivers are usually muddy and you can’t see what you’re jumping into,” the wife recalls. But upon seeing the Frio—a crystal clear river flanked by 300-year-old cypress trees—the couple began envisioning their weekend getaway. “The river was so clean, and the hills were so beautiful,” the wife says. “My husband wanted a place where he could feel connected to the wide open spaces.” But with three children, they didn’t want to be too isolated.

Conceived as a legacy community to be passed down from generation to generation, Frio Cañon, with its 100 acres of wildlife preserve, vibrant wildflower fields and a community space where families gather for cookouts or outdoor movies under the stars, fit the bill perfectly. “It’s a ranch that your kids want to go to because there are other kids around,” Dalgleish says. “The object is for the kids to grow up together, and when they have their own kids, they’ll take it over.”



A pocket window over the kitchen sink opens to create a handy pass-through to the screened porch. The custom cabinets by Kingwood Fine Cabinetry are outfitted with Restoration Hardware knobs. Ceramic subway tiles by Country Floors, purchased at Architectural Tile & Stone, create the backsplash, while Caesarstone countertops from Alpha Granite Austin add freshness.



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To help bring their vision to life, the couple hired architect David Shiftet, along with architect Archie Cox and project architect Sophie McGough, to design a weekend home that was “quietly beautiful,” says the wife. “I didn’t want this to be a giant house that screamed, ‘look at me.’ So we talked about breaking the space into smaller pieces—three structures instead of one large building.” That cottage-scale concept, which affords space for guests without creating imposing architecture, dovetails with the design philosophy throughout Frio Cañon, which is to preserve the area’s magnificent scenery and keep structures artistic and quaint. Shiftet and his team designed a main building—living room, dining space and kitchen—as well as a separate cottage with three bedrooms, three bathrooms and a kitchenette. A third building comprises a garage with guest quarters above. “The architect did a great job in the design,” the husband says. “It’s so connected with the environment.”

An open cooking space allows family and guests to chat and prepare meals together in the kitchen. The island, which was distressed and stained by Evco Painting, is paired with wooden stools by Theodore Alexander, purchased at Stockton Hicks Laffey. Two Hills Studio fabricated the pot hanger; its shades and pendants are from Northeast Lantern.



The kitchen is open to the living room, where designer Blair Burton incorporated custom sofas and wingback chairs, both by Lee Industries, purchased at Caffrey's Furniture. An ottoman fabricated by Briley's Upholstery Shop is covered in Holly Hunt Great Plains faux leather. A custom Paul Ferrante chandelier from George Cameron Nash keeps with the rustic theme.

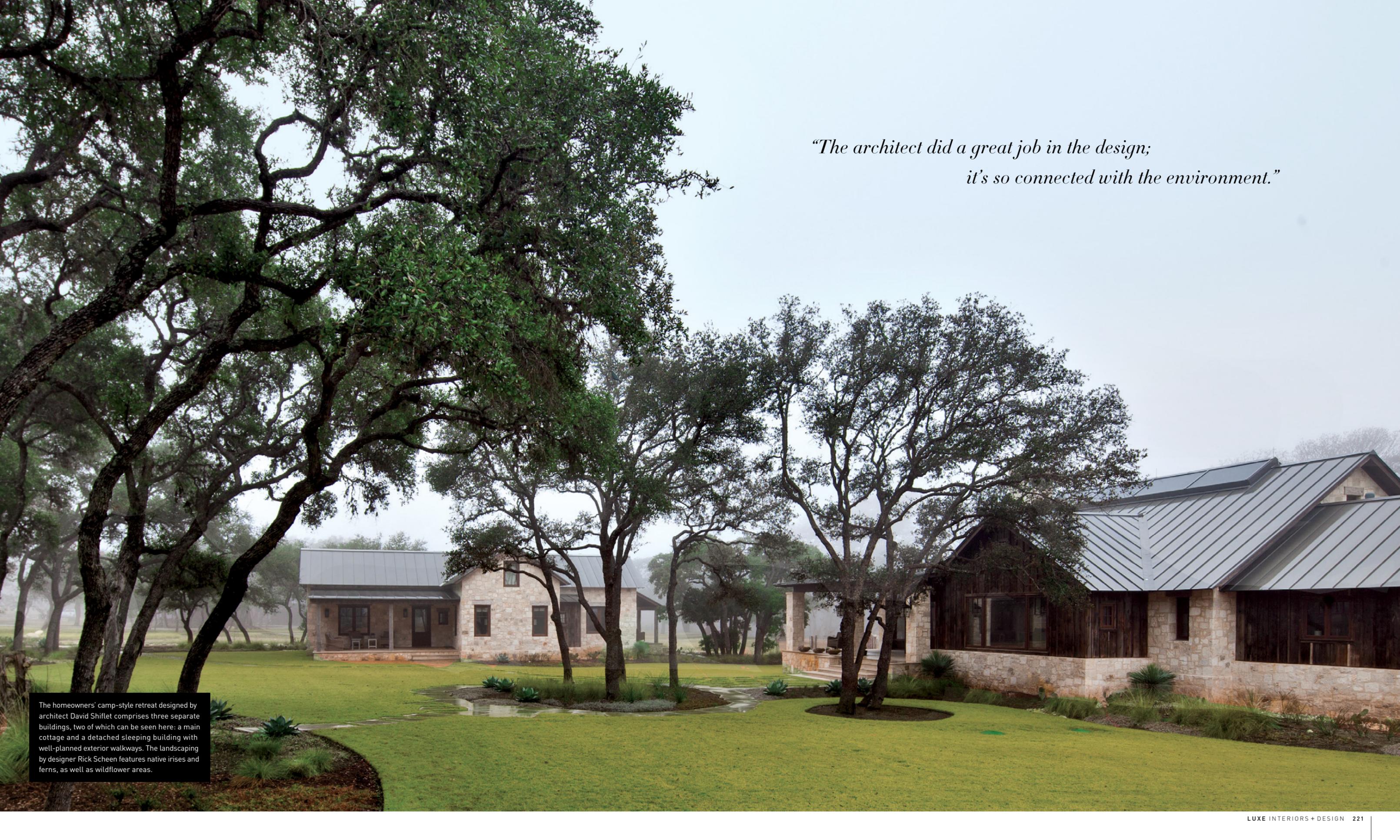


Stone porches supplied by Hill Country Stone offer dazzling views in every direction, and deep overhangs allow for shade and capture the cool river breeze. The family spends much of their time outdoors, relaxing on the porches, swimming in the river, and hiking the area's trails.

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In the main house, the spaces flow effortlessly with open alcoves. The porches are deep to protect the areas from the hot Texas sun yet the interior remains airy. "We added a ridge skylight in the center of the gathering area to let some light in," Shiffet explains. Rustic building materials give the home a camp-like feel. "The timbers are from an old Vermont barn," Dagleish says. "Some floors are made of local quarried stone, and in all the sleeping areas, the floors are reclaimed oak from nearly 100-year-old fencing found mainly in Kentucky and Tennessee."

Designer Blair Burton incorporated a peaceful palette to keep the rustic theme consistent throughout the home. "I wanted the colors to continue the feeling of being outside, so we used gray-blues and gray-greens," she says of the interior that was designed to be beautiful yet durable. As the



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The homeowners’ camp-style retreat designed by architect David Shiflet comprises three separate buildings, two of which can be seen here: a main cottage and a detached sleeping building with well-planned exterior walkways. The landscaping by designer Rick Scheen features native irises and ferns, as well as wildflower areas.



In the inviting master bedroom, the Pottery Barn bed is dressed in linens from Restoration Hardware; an antique grain sack pillow adds interest. Both the nightstand and lamp are antiques. Draperies are made from linen by Arabel Fabrics in North Miami. A loft above features twin beds to accommodate guests.



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wife explains, "I didn't want to think, 'Oh gosh, you can't sit on that in a wet bathing suit.' It had to handle the wear and tear of kids living on a river." Hence, all of the upholstery is custom and easy to maintain, and trips to The Original Round Top Antiques Fair and elsewhere turned up one-of-a-kind treasures that have stood the test of time. A two-year search, for example, ultimately led the couple to find the perfect dining table. "It was from a monastery in Normandy, France," the wife says. "My family had visited Normandy one summer, and my husband loves the area, so it was sort of a sweet end to a long hunt."

Outside, landscape designer Rick Scheen created cohesion between the architecture and the landscape and river. "We pulled inspiration from the architecture as well as 100-year-old estates in nearby Fredericksburg—old

The cottage master bath features a spacious vanity with a Caesarstone countertop in Lagos Blue. Both of the sinks, by Wells Sinkware, and the faucets, by Santec, were purchased at KIVA Kitchen & Bath. Biscuit-colored wainscoting from Travis Tile Sales complements the scene while adding dimension.



The home's indoor-outdoor living area includes a long wooden table and benches, both purchased at the Marburger Farm Antique Show, that create the perfect spot for a quick snack or casual meal. Chandeliers are from Chateau Domingue and the sectional in the background is from Anthony's Patio.



In a cozy corner of the living room, an antique French table from the Marburger Farm Antique Show provides a place for matching wits over a board game. The tufted antique stools from 2 Lucy's are topped with a neutral fabric.

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Texas with a bit of German influence," he says. "We added Lueders limestone patios for entertaining and, closer to the river, we used Brazilian hardwood ipe decking, bridging it over the root systems to protect the cypress trees."

Today, the family takes every opportunity to visit their idyllic getaway, just a 2 1/2-hour drive from their permanent Austin home. "My youngest daughter and I just had a mom-and-me weekend," the wife says. "We kayaked, watched a movie, and went on a big hike, and my husband gets plenty of father-and-son time as well. Our kids also look forward to the Fourth of July every year—the parade, the barbecues, the fireworks, and afternoons on the river. This year, we had 18 guests staying with us. As more and more people hear about it, they say, 'Can we come to the Frio?'" **L**