



OPPOSITE: Reclaimed stone surround and lamp post from Chateau Domingue.

# A NEW SENSE OF SCALE

A TEXAS HOME REIMAGINED



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SOMETIMES, IN SCOURING A CITY FOR A HOME TO BUY, YOU HAVE TO LOOK BEYOND THE OLD AND PERHAPS NEGLECTED INTERIOR TO SEE THE POTENTIAL

of the rooms, a way of orchestrating the elements into a fresh and pleasing composition. You also must be willing to take on the task. Antiques dealer and design consultant Linda Keenan found herself in precisely this position when she decided to create her home in San Antonio.

"I'm a violinist by profession and a perfectionist by nature," she says. "I decided to go to architecture school because, although I had already been renovating and decorating houses on the side, I wanted to understand structure and draw my own house plans. I also wanted to buy an intown home with character, and this turn-of-the-century stone structure in a very unlikely neighborhood caught my eye. The walls were covered with shiplap, and the only original window had been boarded up. But it was made of beautifully hewn limestone, and the rooms had great proportions. The house was small, but I sensed it wanted to be grand. I knew I would put grand things in it." She laughs good-naturedly, adding, "My husband soon found me in a dress and heels, wearing a mask with a crowbar in my hand, and standing on a ladder as I ripped shiplap wood off the interior walls."

She and husband Jack enlisted the help of local architect Don B. McDonald and local artisans to execute the reinvention. They stripped the house down to its bones. "I wanted to discover the house through its structure," Keenan says. They saw that the original plaster was crumbling and

decided the walls would be replastered, waxed and buffed. One original window was found and copied, and all the windows in the house were replaced with replicas. The existing wood floors were stripped, sanded, washed with mortar dust, sanded again and left raw.

"The floors have remained very quiet and uncelebrated," Keenan notes, adding that the intention was to give the emphasis to ceilings. Wood reclaimed from old barns and a schoolhouse was used to create interesting ceilings that have been coffered and painted.

As for furnishings, "I wanted them to complement the surrounding architecture and historical significance of the house," Keenan says. "Period fabrics were used on antique furniture to enhance warmth and to acknowledge the historic integrity of the house." The Keenans' love of antique tapestry is apparent in large wall hangings and in small fragments made into pillows and used for upholstery.

"Scale became important. I enhanced small spaces with oversized antique architectural pieces for dramatic effect," Keenan says. Such elements include a French stone fireplace and stone sinks, a stone door surround and thick oak doors. The furnishings from different periods and places retain a sense of old San Antonio's colonial European roots. "The result is a feeling of bigness and classicism in intimate spaces but simple in its sophistication." □

RIGHT: Dining room ceiling in barn wood by architect McDonald. Iron chandelier. Original floor. Welsh 18th-c. plate rack with 17th-c. and 18th-c. pewter. Antique French trestle table. Italian 18th-c. church benches. Antique Italian torchère. French 18th-c. candlesticks. Shutter panels from antique Spanish liturgical cupboard. FOLLOWING PAGES: Antique pewter on Queen Anne rack. In kitchen, 18th-c. butcher block. Flemish 17th-c. spice box and 18th-c. iron sconce. French street cobblestones on wall. Lacanche stove. All florals by Danny Cuellar's Trinity Flowers.



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BELOW: Reclaimed terracotta and butcher's table from Chateau Domingue.





Antique French Tressle Table (*ABOVE*) & reclaimed stone cheminée (*RIGHT*) from Chateau Domingue.



Original Saltillo tile floor. European limestone saint figure, 17th c. Leather 18th-c. chests. Ceiling and windows by architect McDonald. French 17th-c. sofa in 19th-c. linen. Spanish 18th-c. iron table. Sconce shade made of Spanish illuminated manuscript. Louis XIV fauteuil in tapestry. Italian 18th-c. desk. Iron lamp, 19th c. Delft vases. Italian 18th-c. chair in French 19th-c. linen.



