



CASA

del Fuego

By Angela Rabke Photography by Craig McMahon



Bulverde architect Jim Kissling never intended to design a brand-new home for his good friends, who had lived at the same address for over 20 years. After raising two kids on the deep, tree-lined lot, the couple knew they loved the area, but they also knew that their home needed an update. As they began putting together ideas with Kissling, misfortune struck in the form of an electrical fire. The fire completely destroyed their home, but left a foundation for their future.



possible due in large part to the involvement of the homeowners, who spent countless hours online sourcing the best deals to achieve their design goals. “It was so great to work with such involved clients,” says Kissling. “The process really grew our friendship in a positive way.” Appliances, light fixtures, plumbing and doors were carefully selected with the goal of meeting a strict budget while honoring the design aesthetic.

The home, although new, fits into the context of the older, established neighborhood. Framed by majestic oaks, the home has a welcoming stucco

exterior, a metal roof and generous windows. The striking grid-patterned double front door contributes to the architectural composition of the front elevation, and was one of the design elements that the client helped source. “She would hunt things down on the internet,” Kissling laughs. “We were really able to trust her instincts. She searched and searched to find the design elements that elevate the project architecturally, while keeping the cost minimal.”

The home was designed to create a direct connection to the outdoors, and facilitates easy entertaining. Inside, an open kitchen and living area includes 12-foot ceilings and a bay of glass doors leading to an expansive covered back porch, which

That existing foundation was extended to accommodate a contemporary single story 2,932-square-foot home that is designed for a lifetime. And by working with the existing foundation, they were able to shave a tidy sum off of the budget.

Understanding that the empty-nesters planned to live in the home well into their later years, Kissling and his brother John, who is a builder, put together a plan that can transition seamlessly from the couple’s current active lifestyle to a less mobile scenario. These thoughtful touches are not obvious or necessary at present, but ensure that the couple can easily transition into old age in their home.

Each doorway in the residence is three feet wide, there are no steps or elevation changes throughout the layout, and the 4 x 12-foot master shower is large enough to accommodate seating or even a wheelchair. The organization of the space is also critical. “There are no dead ends in the house,” says the architect. “Maintaining good flow is especially critical in smaller homes, and this house has both open circulation and areas to escape to.”

Another especially notable aspect of the three-bedroom, two-and-a-half-bath home is its impressively low cost per square foot. Achieving this was



includes an outdoor kitchen, fireplace and seating area. A separate outdoor area adjacent to the master suite includes an outdoor shower and courtyard. The stone fireplace structure is completely separated from the main house, but is positioned so that the couple can enjoy watching it from both the outside and inside living areas.

The thoughtful programming includes “his and her” side entrances, with one entrance creating a direct connection from grocery shelves to pantry shelves. A commercial refrigerator in the garage expedites the process of unloading groceries and supplies. This wing of the home includes a jealousy-inducing laundry room, a generous pantry and immediate kitchen access, as well as a home gym and the master suite. The couple enjoys traveling, so the floor plan connects the master closet directly to the utility room to keep things tidy while expediting the packing and unpacking process. The other entrance, which will eventually incorporate an exterior workshop and carport area, includes an elegant hallway bar and direct access to the outdoor cooking area.

The new house on Donella proves that a tasteful and architectural home can be constructed within the same budgetary confines as a custom-built home. “It is so important to keep things simple on the front end,” shares Jim. “Projects tend to become more complex as they go on, but by keeping it simple and well-organized, we were able to achieve something beautiful at a fraction of what it would usually cost.” ♦

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