

AUSTIN MONTHLY HOME

Great Fall Trends

KEEP IT FRESH
AND PERSONAL

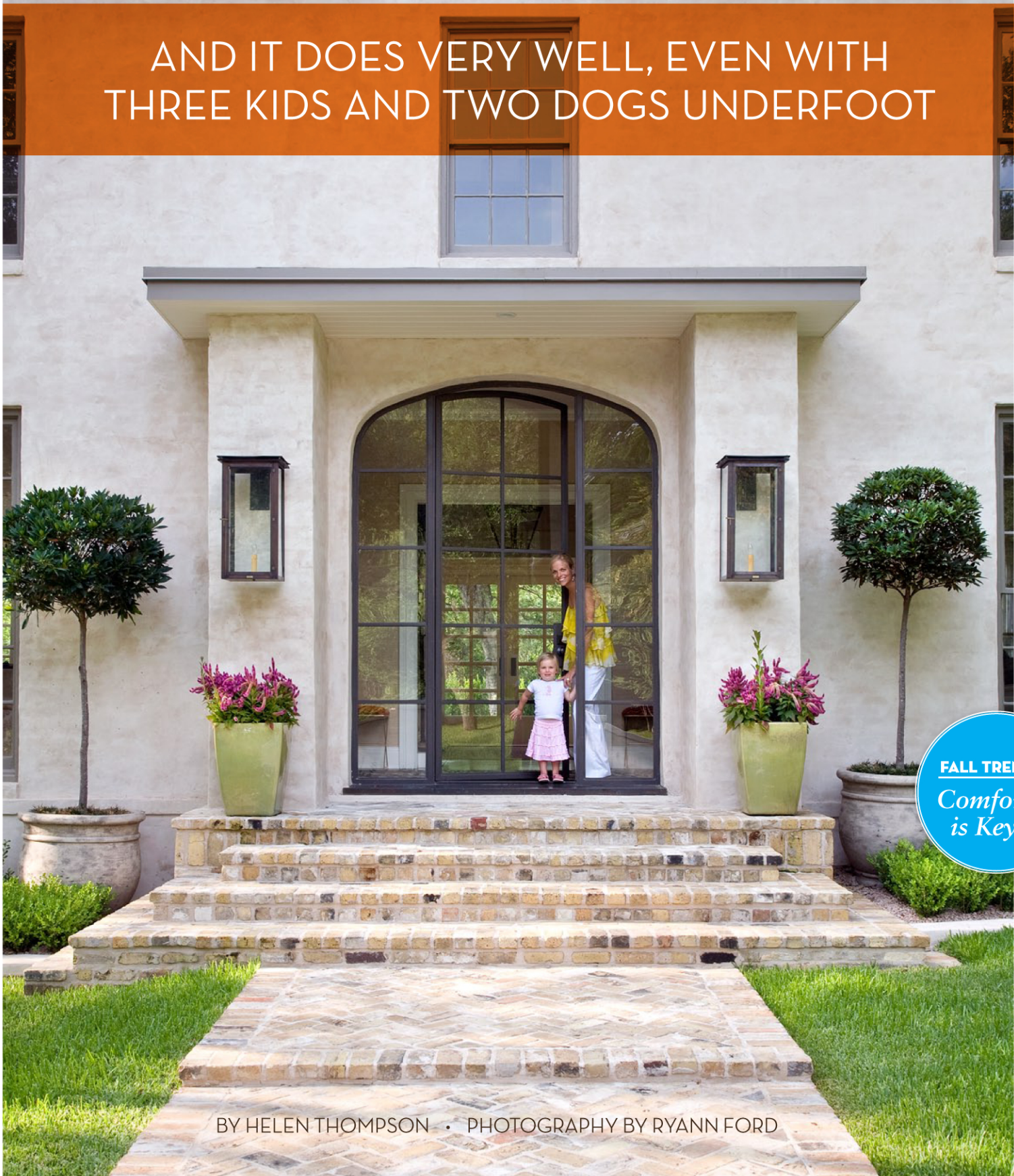
IT'S PERFECT!

THE FORMULA FOR WHAT
YOU NEED: 5 ROOMS,
5 DESIGNERS, 25 PRODUCTS

PRETTY *is as* PRETTY DOES



AND IT DOES VERY WELL, EVEN WITH
THREE KIDS AND TWO DOGS UNDERFOOT



FALL TREND

*Comfort
is Key*

BY HELEN THOMPSON • PHOTOGRAPHY BY RYANN FORD



WHEN

an Austin couple began looking for a new house, they knew it had to be inviting, not just for their own three children and their two dogs but for everyone else's, too. "I wanted kids to be able to run in, roller skate in or ride their bikes into the living room," says the homeowner. The obvious choice, then, was not the stately colonial Georgian that they made an offer on two days after viewing. "It wasn't even my style," she admits.

The house had languished on the market for nearly a year. "I don't think anyone could figure out what to do with it," the



homeowner explains. Decorous and forbidding, the two-story had had one owner, who built the house in the sixties and hadn't changed a thing since. But the red brick house with white trim had structural integrity that the couple couldn't resist. "I love finding potential in a home," explains the new homeowner, "and I thought I could make this place awesome for kids and dogs."

Hinting of future awesomeness: the floor plan. The downstairs is divided into two halves, separated by an entry hall that cuts the house down the middle, front to back. On the right, a formal living room and a formal dining room. On the left, a small kitchen, laundry room and breakfast room, as well as a

family room. Upstairs, three bedrooms are grandly spacious, with windows overlooking the cul-de-sac in front and Lake Austin in back.

The couple reassembled the team—interior decorator Margaret Ann McEver, architect Jay Corder and builder Royce Flournoy—that had helped them in a previous remodel. But even before a single fabric swatch was ordered or a CAD program was cranked up, the couple began

Interior designer Margaret Ann McEver used Benjamin Moore "Ivory Tusk" in all rooms except the dining room. The painting over the fireplace is by Meredith Pardue; the turquoise-and-black flower painting over the console is through MALI Design.



The dining room doubles as a library and is a peaceful getaway thanks to the mood set with ceiling and walls painted in Benjamin Moore "Kendall Charcoal." Oly chairs are upholstered in durable leather. The pendant light is by Moooi.

their own firsthand research. "I think you have to live in a house for six months," the wife notes, "before you really know what you'll need." So, the family of five moved into the outmoded dwelling, resolving to withstand the forty-year-old green shag-carpeted downstairs

as enthusiastically as possible. "I hated doing it," says the homeowner, "but I knew it would work."

Meanwhile, McEver, Corder and Flournoy were assessing positives and negatives, too. "The lot was great, the siting was great, and structurally the house was sound," says builder Royce Flournoy. But the house was stuck in another time and place, where cooking occurred behind closed doors, dining was a proper affair and the living room was reserved for special occasions. "The house was very compartmentalized," observes Flournoy. "It was easy to see that opening it up would make a huge difference."

The architect Jay Corder agreed. "One of the things that weighed this house down," he says, "were the finishes." Gold leaf, heavy crown molding and wallpaper took a toll and made the house seem loaded down with extraneous bulk. "We stripped away layers of ornamentation," notes Corder, "to reveal a more contemporary house underneath."

As for the interiors, designer Margaret Ann McEver had a special mission, one that was seemingly impossible but also one that she'd carried out before for her friend and childhood playmate. "My client and her husband were adamant that their house be livable and child-friendly," she says. That's not to say, though, that they wanted their house to look like a nursery school, decorated with materials that were blatantly child-proof and conspicuously indestructible. "They are adults who like to have people over," she explains, "so they wanted their house to be tuned in to both age groups."





What the Experts Say

Kitchen planner Keni Neff reworked every inch of this kitchen. "My biggest concern," she says, "is to locate things at point of use." She isn't a fan of the walk-in pantry because she considers it a waste of vertical space. Instead, Neff opts for pull-out drawers in cabinets (right), which allow you to see inside.









McEver's solution: "I didn't select anything for the house that had a lot of fluff." Unupholstered pieces such as consoles, dining table, coffee tables and occasional chairs make an authentic design statement that doesn't need pumping up with glamorous accessories, tassels and pillows. The original longleaf pine floors, stained dark, are a robust complement and withstand the beating they get from dogs, children, bikes and ladies in high heels at the occasional dressy party. All carpets were stain-treated ("The dogs do throw up on them," notes McEver), and all walls and surfaces are wipeable.

But, best of all, McEver and the homeowner chose Sunbrella fabrics for sofas and most of the chairs. "Donghia has a line of these stain-resistant fabrics that have taken the design world by storm," says McEver. As for other high-impact places where upholstery was called for, such as the banquette seating in

the kitchen, McEver chose Glant Liquid Leather, a high-tech fabric that looks like leather and is impervious to spills, ballpoint pen drawings and lipstick.

There was, however, one thing no one could deal with. "We ended up moving out after four months," says the homeowner. "I just couldn't look at that 40-year-old green shag carpet anymore." The building schedule accelerated accordingly, and that was fine with everybody involved. "We got in sooner," says the homeowner, "and we have a fantastic place to live. The kids and dogs are especially happy here."

Oly nightstands in the master bedroom (left) accompany the upholstered linen bed by MALL Design. In the master bath (above) tiled walls mean the kids can splash around in the tub and do no harm. The privacy curtain adds a touch of glamour.

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