

# color corrected



With bold art and jewel-toned furnishings, Martha Angus helps a young family transition to the suburbs in style.



by **bryan anthony** photography by **matthew millman** styling by **allegra hsiao**



### Summer Setting

The pool-scene prints by Isca Greenfield-Sanders in the family room were some of the first items purchased for the Axes' new home, and the summer vignettes inspired the room's color palette. The chairs are covered in an electric-blue cowhide, and the sofa is upholstered in a graphic outdoor fabric.





“Cindy and Brian were drawn to **bold** and **colorful** works, which informed the entire design.”



**Material Impressions**

The Portuguese limestone that is used as flooring also composes the living room's fireplace surround. "It's not too pale, so it doesn't show off dirt, but it's also not so dark that it overpowers a space," says Martha Angus. OPPOSITE: At the entry, visitors are greeted with a floor-to-ceiling backyard view.



**T**he Axe family has a familiar story: An urban-dwelling couple with young children can no longer resist the urge to flee the city for greener pastures (or simply a fabulous backyard). “We loved living in San Francisco, but with two kids and a third on the way, we knew it was time to move on and give ourselves some room to grow,” says Cindy Axe. She and her husband, Brian, found a nondescript 1960s ranch house set on a ridge in Portola Valley. Although the woodsy one-acre lot was beguiling, the house itself felt like an afterthought. “It was very dark and was rimmed with heavy eaves,

which obstructed the views,” says Cindy. A family friend recommended architect Thayer Hopkins, and the couple brought him in to see what could be done about letting in more light. After a few inspirational meetings, the scope of the project quickly grew from minor renovation to total teardown. “It’s our goal to save the existing structure when possible,” says Hopkins. “But due to the house’s poor orientation and cookie-cutter construction, there was really nothing worth saving.” The plan called for a series of linked pavilions, which maximized the views and emphasized the relationship between the house’s interiors and its pastoral setting.



### Celebrity Chandelier

The blue chandelier in the dining room once hung in Sarah Jessica Parker's home in the Hamptons. When it was decided that Crate & Barrel's Big Sur table wasn't going to be large enough for the space, an oversize reproduction was custom made to seat 10 comfortably.



With fresh blueprints drawn, the Axes felt it wise to bring in an interior designer before the wrecking ball was lowered. Hopkins recommended Martha Angus, having worked successfully with her in the past and knowing that her background in fine arts would be a perfect match for the planned space. The home's design called for walls of windows to bring in light and draw in the verdant surroundings, but it also planned for numerous gallery walls to display art. So before even a stitch of fabric was selected, Angus led the Axes on a tour of some of SF's top galleries. "Selecting

art is a wonderful way to start a project," says Angus. "Cindy and Brian were drawn to bold and colorful works, which informed the entire design." The summery shades of Isca Greenfield-Sanders' prints (selected for the family room) and the graphic pop of Andy Warhol's "Flowers" series (hung in the living room) were the inspiration for the jewel-toned fabrics that cover most of the home's furniture. But color wasn't limited to sofas and chairs, as proven by the kitchen island's blue lava-stone countertop and the dining room's turquoise chandelier,

a piece with some serious star power: While flipping through a design magazine featuring Sarah Jessica Parker's home in the Hamptons, Cindy discovered the fixture and decided she wanted one for herself. Coincidentally, Parker was in the midst of selling the home, and the chandelier was up for grabs—Angus' assistant was able to broker the sale. Dubbed "Sex in the Country" by its new owners, the light hangs above the Axes' custom dining table and is an unbeatable conversation starter.

Today, as Brian and Cindy watch their three children (Samson, 10, Ashton, 8 and





Stella Rose, 6) run around the property, feed chickens and cuddle around the outdoor fireplace, they know moving from the city to the suburbs was the right call. But it was another decision that made the transition a breeze. "Bringing Martha in from the get-go was the smartest decision we made," says Cindy. "She led us through every step of the process; without her, we would've been overwhelmed." The affection is mutual: "It might sound trite and doesn't make for a juicy story, but they were probably the nicest family I've ever worked with," says Angus.



#### Modern Mix

In the master bedroom, a contemporary Robert Rauschenberg lithograph and custom raffia-and-oak headboard are a counterpoint to the Gustavian daybed. Angus custom mixed the paint color to complement the exterior. The perfect hue was achieved after seven tries.

#### Atrium Bath

The master bath looks out to trees in the backyard. The beefy countertop is nine inches thick, with simple shelf storage beneath. Aqua-blue rugs by Madeline Weinrib provide a splash of cool color.





“With two kids and a third on the way, we knew it was time to move on and *give ourselves some room* to grow.”



**Down on the Farm**

The Axe family has a chicken coop on their wooded one-acre property, which currently holds five chickens who produce fresh eggs daily. Ashton and Stella Rose play with one of the chickens, whom they help raise in the backyard.





**Texas Pride**

Architect Thayer Hopkins designed the residence as a series of linked pavilions, allowing each section of the house a greater connection to the outdoors. The backyard seating area is a favorite gathering place. The longhorns are a memento from Texas, Cindy's home state.