



Architect Ryan Street sited the new house just as the original had been sited, set back from the street. Landscaping by LandInteractive.



LOST & FOUND

AN OLD HOUSE COULDN'T BE SAVED, BUT ITS SPIRIT LIVES ON IN A BETTER VERSION OF ITS FORMER SELF

By KK Young / Photography by Ryann Ford



The "Baroque" rug is by Suzanne Sharp; the vintage coffee table is Lucite and glass and is a good partner to the edgy wood-and-Lucite "Ghost" chair. Antique French glass sconces and a Louis Phillippe mirror animate the all-white palette.

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IVE YEARS AGO, Elizabeth Stanley was driving around Tarrytown, one of Central Austin's older neighborhoods. There, classic Georgian, midcentury modern, brand new and little post-World War II homes happily coexist. They are the

reason this tony neighborhood has allure—you just never know what might be right around the corner. And around one such corner, occupied by a distinctive if slightly dilapidated white stucco Spanish-style house, Elizabeth Stanley pulled up to a garage sale in full swing. Stanley is a designer whose trademark look is grounded in high-style modern furniture, flea market finds, fine antiques and contemporary art. So a garage sale in Tarrytown is nirvana for her.

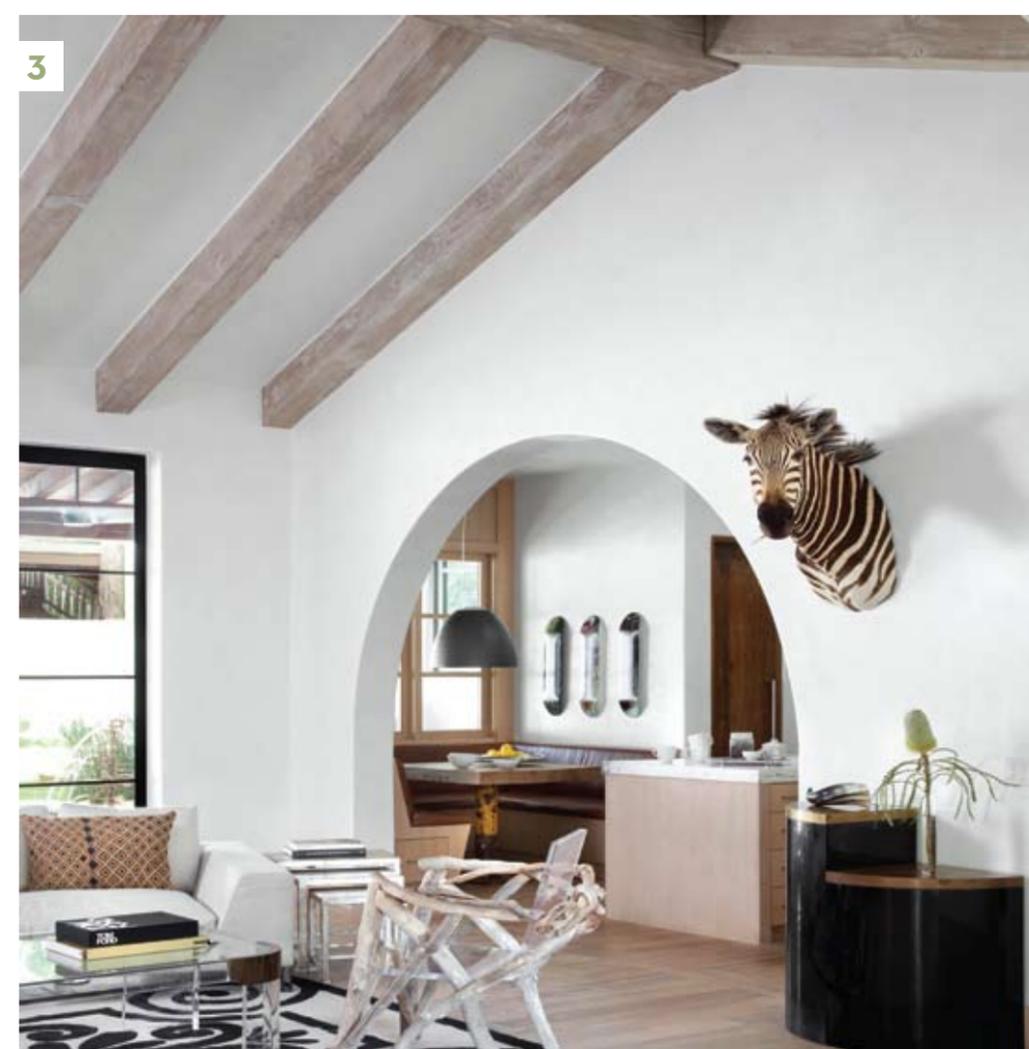
This time, though, she discovered something that later turned unexpectedly big. The designer struck up a friendship with the homeowner, who called her two years later to say she was putting her gem of a home on the market. Stanley knew the house would be the perfect renovation project for her then-boyfriend, Aaron, managing partner of an investment group.

The game room is a tour de force of contemporary art, antiques and traditional pieces. The photograph of Robert Duvall is from Bill Wittliff's "Lonesome Dove" series. The cowhide rug underneath a vintage French table is by Kyle Bunting.



And the designer was right. Aaron Stanley loved the lot and thought the California style worked well in the location. It reminded him of his father's Palo Alto, Calif., home. The leaky roof and the weirdly shaped rooms of the original floor plan were a concern, but Aaron considered the risks and made an offer that was accepted. Plans to renovate unfolded quickly but soon revealed that the house was in such dire shape that remodeling was out of the question. The gracefully sloped lot and the siting of the house were clues as to how to proceed, and Plan B emerged: Build on the old footprint and in the same spirit as the original structure.

It was a good plan, if for no other reason than that the house and lot were gaining a sentimental hold on the couple—Aaron had even proposed to Elizabeth there. Now officially engaged, the two enlisted the help of local architect Ryan Street. Coincidentally, Street had already noted the original house when he worked on a house down the street: "I had long dreamed of remodeling it," he says. He jumped at the chance to make a new and better version of the original. "I'd had a clear idea about what I wanted the house to be," recalls the architect, "and was very lucky that Aaron and Elizabeth had the same idea. It was an ideal situation."



Elizabeth Stanley's job was to reinvent the interiors. "For me," she says, "the big focus was modernizing the design." Instead of predictable heavy wood beams and gloomy rooms, Stanley wanted the openness usually associated with more modern houses: "I didn't want an old-world feel. I wanted a light and airy feel, and I wanted to make it our own."

For the next year and a half, the designer outfitted the home with an eclectic antique-meets-mod palette. Fortunately, she had plenty of inspiration: "I have been clipping pages from design magazines ever since I was very young," she says. "That, and my travels to France, Italy, California and Santa Fe, shaped my ideas." In addition, Elizabeth relied on a close friend, gallery owner Deborah Schneider, for artistic feedback. Schneider was

instrumental in finding art that suited the home and the Stanleys' wide-ranging tastes.

From the foyer and beyond it is clear that a spirit of adventure is at work. Stark white waxed Venetian plaster walls are luminous, capturing the light that streams in from huge steel-framed windows and doors overlooking the terraced front yard. In the living room, an acrylic and tangled-driftwood chair lends a functional aesthetic. That is not surprising, considering that the art aficionada has laced the rest of her home with striking pieces she has found around the world. A chandelier made of Japanese paper by Ingo Maurer gives a modern pop to the dining room, which is furnished with a resin table and antique chairs, recovered in a geometric-patterned plastic.

1 Island countertops are statuary marble; perimeter counters are part of a 16th-century Belgian castle floor.

2 In the dining room Luisa Cevese plastic covers a custom resin table; Ingo Maurer's Floation chandelier is above. Cathey Daley's Untitled #12 provides a kick.

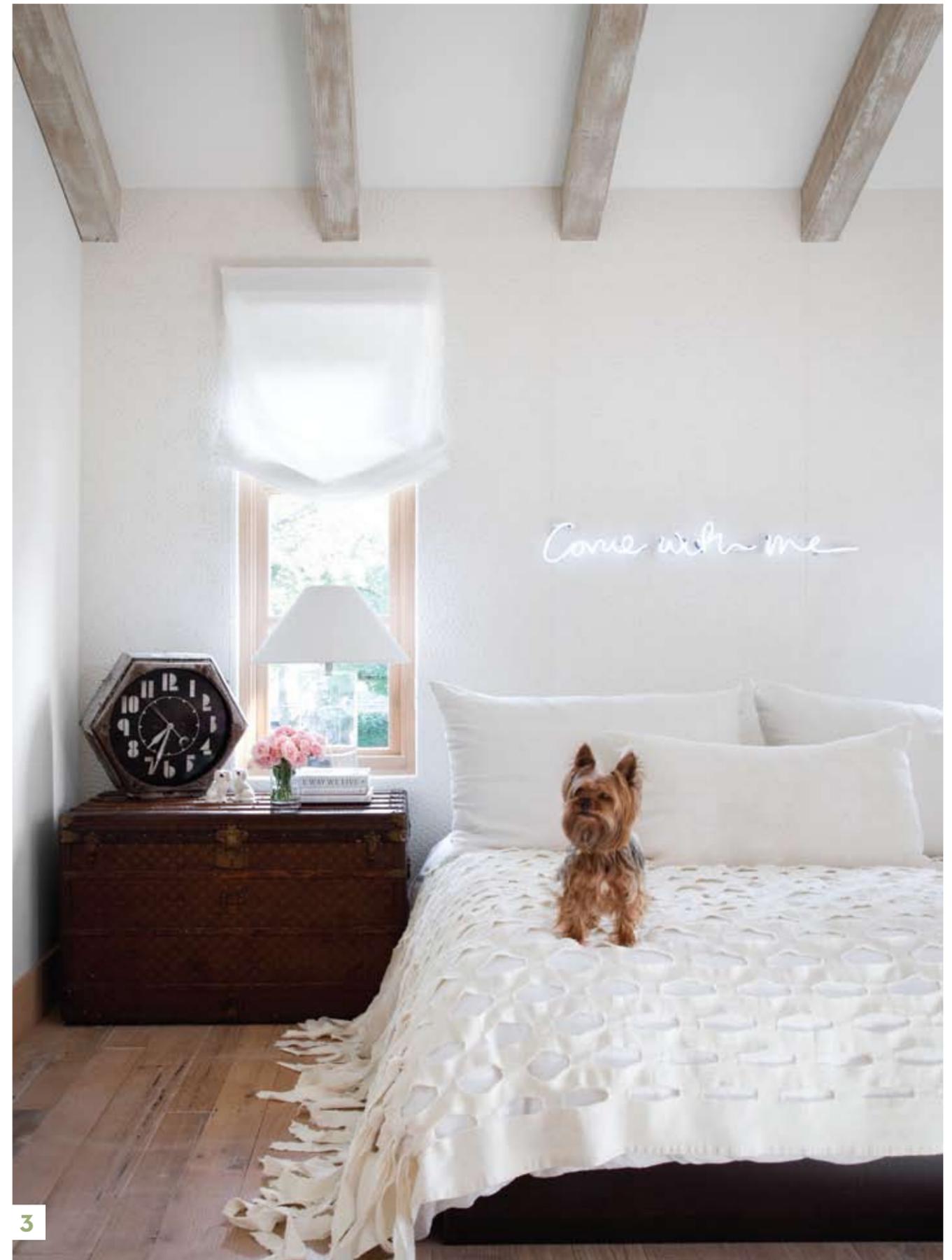
3 Living room and kitchen open onto each other, and are presided over by a stuffed zebra head with a cigarette in its mouth.



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1 The second-floor master suite is lit by an antique French chandelier. Above the mantel, "Oriental Lingerie" is by Austin artist Priscilla Robinson. **2** The galley-style master bath is tiled in Carrera marble; tub surround is statuary marble. Cabinetry is custom by Precision Craft Woodworks. **3** Two vintage Louis Vuitton steamer trunks make perfect bedside tables; Lobo likes the bedspread, custom through Elizabeth Stanley Design.

"Elizabeth has a penchant for the unexpected," says Aaron Stanley. Visitors to the house don't have to look far for proof: A classic Studebaker car door welcomes visitors in the entry. In the kitchen, Belgian bluestone countertops—reclaimed floors of a 16th-century castle—are a sharp contrast to a modern island made from honed statuary marble. Marilyn Minter skateboards add flair to a booth-style breakfast nook, and in the game room, it is hard to overlook the cow skull dripping with dried tar. The Mattia Biagi piece hangs in front of an antique mirror.

"Elizabeth has a rare eye for design," compliments Ryan Street. It is coupled with the ability to make a space livable, not just a set piece that announces a big statement about style and decoration. "I never wanted to feel like I was living in a museum," says Aaron. "I think Elizabeth and Street did a good job of making an artistic aesthetic seem livable and functional." It works because the designer understands how to merge art, furniture and space in a way that makes sense to the two people who would be living there. "To me, the entire house reflects our personalities," says her admiring husband. "It just feels like home." [am.h](#)