

DESIGN + DEVELOPMENT

# CREATING COLLABORATIVELY

WHEN BUILDER, ARCHITECT AND DESIGNERS ARE ALL ON THE SAME PAGE, A NEW HOME CAN BE PURE PERFECTION

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PHOTOGRAPHY BY REAGEN TAYLOR

JL Design collaborated with the homeowner on the furnishings and decor for this Temple Avenue home, beginning at about halfway through the construction process.





Covering a set of dining room chairs in different fabrics can be a hard sell, Jessica Davis of JL Design says, but the results are stunningly quirky.



When designers pay attention to seemingly minor details, as JL Design did in this Temple Avenue home project, the result can be eye-catching interplay among lines and patterns and shapes.

Sometimes a home doesn't have to be a custom build to have a custom feel. And a recent project on Temple Avenue by Build Nashville is a perfect example of that.

The Scandinavian-style home is quintessential Build Nashville — minimal and clean with lots of light wood, light-filled spaces and no clutter.

“We feel like we are on the leading edge of pushing this minimalist Scandinavian style,” Jamie Duncan says. “We like to call it Japandi (Japanese / Scandi). It is about bringing in natural elements and soft, organic textures. Modern doesn't mean harsh and cold details — we like the warmth to be felt when you enter our homes.”

Build Nashville's hallmark tends to be attention to detail in their homes, whether spec or custom, and in this case their in-house designer had a custom cabinet maker create gabled built-ins in the kitchen with a scalloped white wood backdrop that reflects the gables on the exterior of the home.

“Build Nashville is very intentional about the design elements that go into our homes, and this home was designed by us and the architect, August House Co., to bring in a lot of natural light and light wood elements to compliment the Scandinavian design,” Duncan says.

More and more, Duncan says, they have been building pools for their luxury homes. They have become very sought-after in Nashville — even though the terrain in Middle Tennessee doesn't always make it easy.

“The way we elevated the side yard for the pool to be on the same level as the back porch was important to us to create seamless transitions between indoor and outdoor spaces,” Duncan says of the Temple Avenue home. “We included an outdoor kitchen and gas line for a firepit table on the screened porch to top off the outdoor living vibe.”

Outdoor living is another feature that's crucial right now in Middle Tennessee real estate.

“On this particular build, a client purchased it after it was halfway completed, and he brought in Jessica Davis of JL Design,” Duncan says. “We already had the interior finishes selected by our designer, Elena DeSoto Interior Designs, so it allowed Jessica to focus on the furnishings and styling of the home with the client,” Duncan says. “I know it was helpful to Jessica to have access to construction drawings and be involved along the way so the furnishings could be designed to perfectly fit the space.”

### PASSING THE TORCH

The buyer, David Adams, made sure Duncan and Davis connected right away. “We got the vision boards at the same time,” Davis says.

Davis had done a lot of work with Duncan before Build Nashville hired an in-house designer, DeSoto, to accommodate and streamline their growing workload.

“We have a great personal and business relationship,” Davis says of Duncan. They both were excited to work together on another project.

Davis worked closely with Adams to choose the right furniture, art and paint for the space while the build team wrapped up construction. Her earlier working relationship with Duncan made things run more smoothly.

“Basically it was a tag team effort,” Davis says.

“Jessica and I have been friends for years, which made it even more fun to collaborate on this one with her,” Duncan says. “It is always so fun to see how our clients decorate and style their homes, and working with a professional designer makes the process so much easier and allows the homeowner to feel settled a lot quicker.”

Art, furniture and color are all ways to accomplish that settling-in goal.

“I definitely embrace color in a lot of my work,” Davis says. “He wanted me to pull that in in a way that it would still honor the overall Scandinavian design and the texture that had already been introduced in the design.”

She combined new art with photos and pieces Adams already had, like a limited-edition Picasso print. Bringing in homeowners’ collections is important in helping them relax and tap into their happy memories in their new space, she says, especially if they have a high-pressure job.

“For a lot of people, that means you have a spa-like feel at home. We run across that plenty. But for some people, myself included, I like to break that up in various areas of my house.”

Davis helped the homeowner pick out an arcade game for one space and a collection of photographs that reflect his childhood and hobbies (like surfing) for another. And there are plenty of spaces for his dog, Jolene, who goes everywhere with him.

August House Co. architects, Build Nashville construction with Elena DeSoto Interior Designs, and JL Design worked closely together on this Temple Avenue home to make it a place the owner could settle in and feel comfortable immediately.



“He just wanted it to feel like somewhere he could really unplug — where he could entertain and just feel fun and happy overall. I definitely think we achieved that,” Davis says.

Adams does a lot of entertaining — cooking and hosting dinner parties — so a kitchen conducive to entertaining family and friends was important. He kept his favorite bar stools, but Davis shook things up by covering his dining chairs with different fabrics.

“It’s always a hard sell,” she says of having a set of the same chairs in different colors, “but then when they see it, they’re like, ‘This is so awesome.’”



Jessica Davis is founder of JL Design, which the Watkins College of Art graduate started in 2005. From her beginnings in Nashville, Davis’ business has grown to include commissions up and down the East Coast.



JL Design worked with the homeowner to tuck his hobbies, like this arcade game, into surprising spaces.

The home incorporates a balanced mix of dark elements and light, pattern and texture, neutrals and brights — all working together to add depth and personality. And Davis studies how color can release hormones and chemicals that make you happy.

“I want everything to feel collected and unique,” she says, so she looks for special pieces that can’t be found anywhere else.

Sometimes that means pushing people beyond their comfort zone, which she says is the entire purpose of hiring a designer.

“I tell my clients that if I don’t make you uncomfortable at least one time in this process, then I’m not doing my job,” Davis says. “I want to take your personality, your lifestyle, and I want to create something that is totally unique to you.”

In the end it serves the homeowner to trust the process, and the professionals to work together to achieve a beautiful, unique space. Having the pros all on the same page avoids miscommunication and saves time and money.

“We are the experts in the room,” Davis says. “When they trust us, that’s when we can best do our job.” **NI**

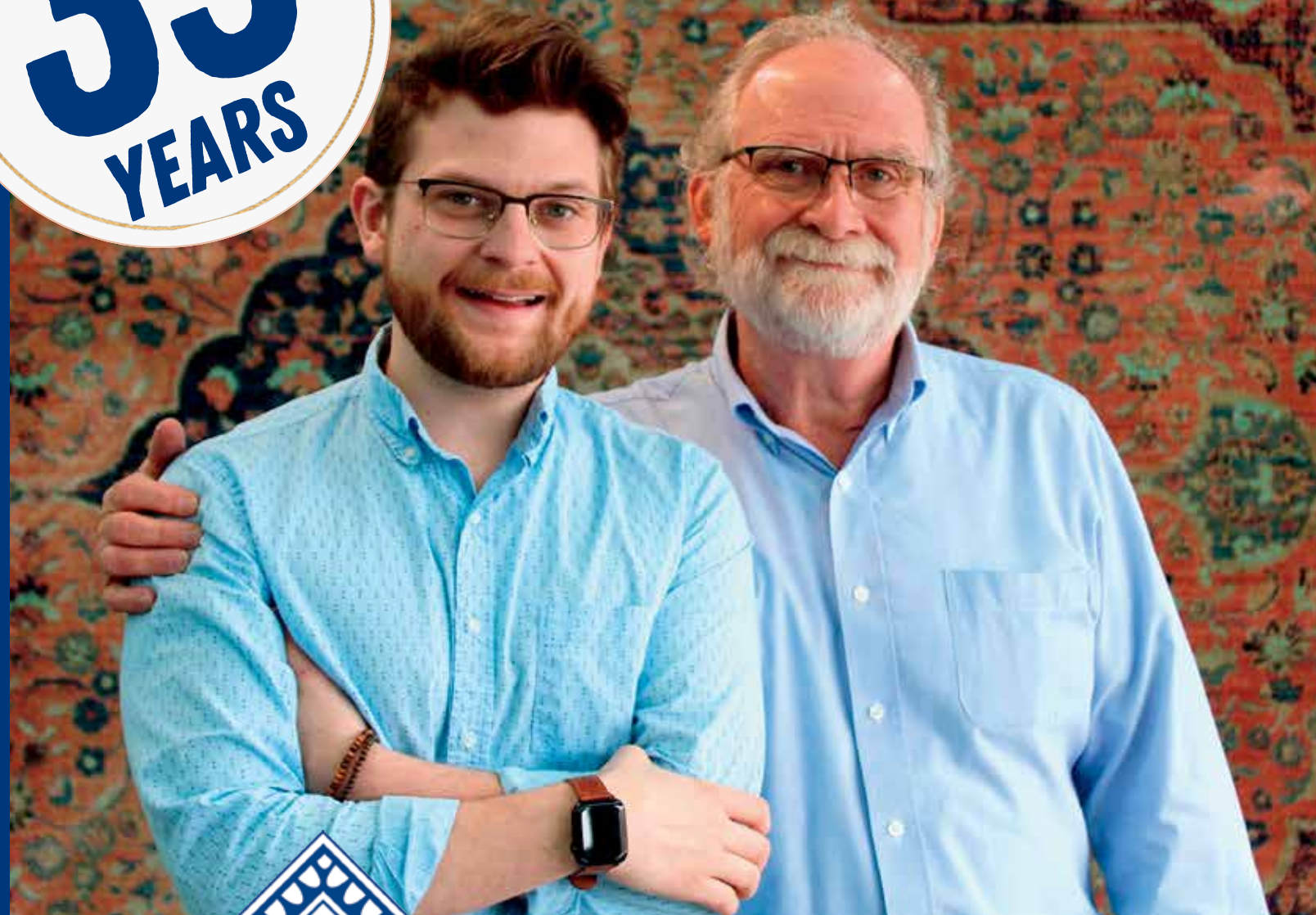


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