



Clockwise from top left: Homeowners David Liu and Michael Fountas with their French bulldog, Sammy, in their revamped master bedroom; the renovation included integrating the kitchen into the first-floor living and dining spaces; a view of the home's original sculptural staircase. The new white oak treads mirror the wood used in the custom kitchen cabinets.

INTO THE CURRENT

Thoughtful updates by design duo Mark Leveno and Amy Wynne Leveno usher a light-filled 1980s Bud Oglesby town house into the 21st century.

By Rhonda Reinhart // Interior photography by Robert Tsai Photography // Portrait by Jill Broussard

For 10 years, David Liu and Michael Fountas bounced from city to city, living in London, New York and Washington, D.C. Eventually, though, the couple decided they wanted a more permanent address, opting for Liu's hometown of Dallas as the place where they would put down roots. In 2017, after scouring the city's Oak Lawn and Uptown areas, Liu and Fountas—the former a co-owner of Leatherology and the latter the head of corporate events at JCPenney—found the ideal spot to call home: a two-story 1980s-era town house on Throckmorton Street originally designed by noted Dallas architect Bud Oglesby. At first, the couple thought the 1,600-square-foot space might be too small for them and their two dogs, but when they stepped inside, doubt immediately turned to

delight. “We walked into the space and there was so much natural light—and tall ceilings that are rare for a town house like this in the area,” says Fountas. “We fell in love with it just for that. It felt a lot larger than the square footage on paper.”

The '80s were a long time ago, however, and the dwelling needed some updates. But even though Liu and Fountas wanted to modernize the home, they also wanted to respect Oglesby's original architecture, which included skylights and a stunning curvaceous staircase that acts as the centerpiece of the downstairs area. “We thought it would be good to work with an architect to unlock the potential of the space,” says Liu. The couple found their perfect match in architect Amy Wynne Leveno and designer Mark Leveno, the husband-and-wife duo behind Dallas-based firm OFFICIAL



(official-design.com). “Mark and Amy understood our vision of what we wanted to accomplish,” Liu adds. “We were on the same page from the get-go, but they were also able to challenge us and bring some fresh ideas.”

The Levenos have a long history with residential renovations, but this was their first time working on an Oglesby project, and they relished the opportunity. “For us, it was an effort of restraint,” says Amy. “Identifying what was already beautiful and thoughtful about the house and then adjusting the parts that were a little bit awkward or just needed to be brought into the 21st century.” One of the main goals was transforming the original galley-style kitchen into an open-plan space. Now the kitchen—which is outfitted with custom white oak cabinets, Ann Sacks tile and durable Caesarstone countertops—flows into the living room, making it open, airy and conducive to entertaining. The curved wall they added just outside the kitchen nods to the original sculptural staircase while also concealing the laundry room, powder bath and garage corridor.

Upstairs, the master bathroom

underwent the most dramatic makeover. The Levenos moved the shower out of a dark corner and integrated it with the tub room, creating a spalike space reminiscent of a Japanese steam room. The ipe deck over the shower drain contrasts with the matte white penny tile that covers the tub enclosure and ascends the shower wall to the ceiling skylight. The revamped room feels much larger than the original version, even though the designers actually reduced its size to expand the adjacent master closet. “We made a number of the spaces smaller than what they originally were,” says Amy, “but we made them more efficient in the way they were organized and laid out.”

When it came to the decor and furnishings, the homeowners searched for signature pieces they plan to keep for a while and mixed them with online finds, art from local galleries and small items they picked up on their travels. “When we moved to Dallas, we didn’t come with a lot of stuff,” says Liu. “We had been pretty transient for a long time, so when we got here, it was kind of like a clean slate for us. It was exciting to be able to really make the space our own.” ■



From top: In the master bathroom, white Ann Sacks tile sets the backdrop for custom mirrors and a Caesarstone-topped custom walnut vanity; Liu and Fountas kept decor to a minimum in the living room. “Because it’s a smaller space, we didn’t feel like it was conducive to a lot of furniture or larger pieces,” says Liu.



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