

PATRON

ART / CULTURE / DESIGN

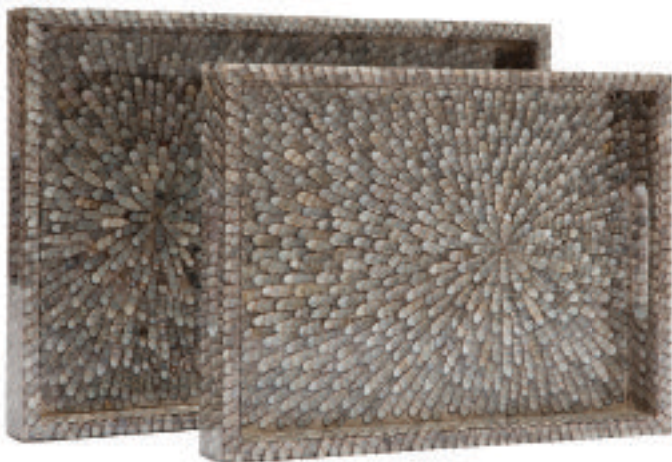


Home in Harmony

Dance Fever:
Texas Ballet Theater &
Dallas Black Dance Theatre

The Nasher's Composer-in-Residence

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PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAN PIASSICK

Taking inspiration from both the unforgettable house in Alfred Hitchcock's "North by Northwest" and the classic Blue Note album covers by Reid Miles, the modern house that Cliff Welch designed in 2008 has all the classic properties of a Welch-designed residence—his use of natural woods, stones, and finishes constructed in horizontal lines intersected by vertical rectangles with abundant light sources. David and Deborah Michel had chosen Welch to build and design a new home when the Chapel Hill house became available. Says David Michel, "Our plan was to design a home from scratch, but when we toured the Chapel Hill property, we absolutely fell in love and bought it from the original owner. Cliff has a knack for embedding warm, livable spaces with classic modern architecture. His use of natural woods—Ipe mahogany ceilings, Khaha mahogany cabinetry, and Sapele-trimmed windows—is stunning. Natural light from the clerestory windows throughout the main living area floods the terrazzo floors with gentle, indirect light. Every room is distinct and inviting."

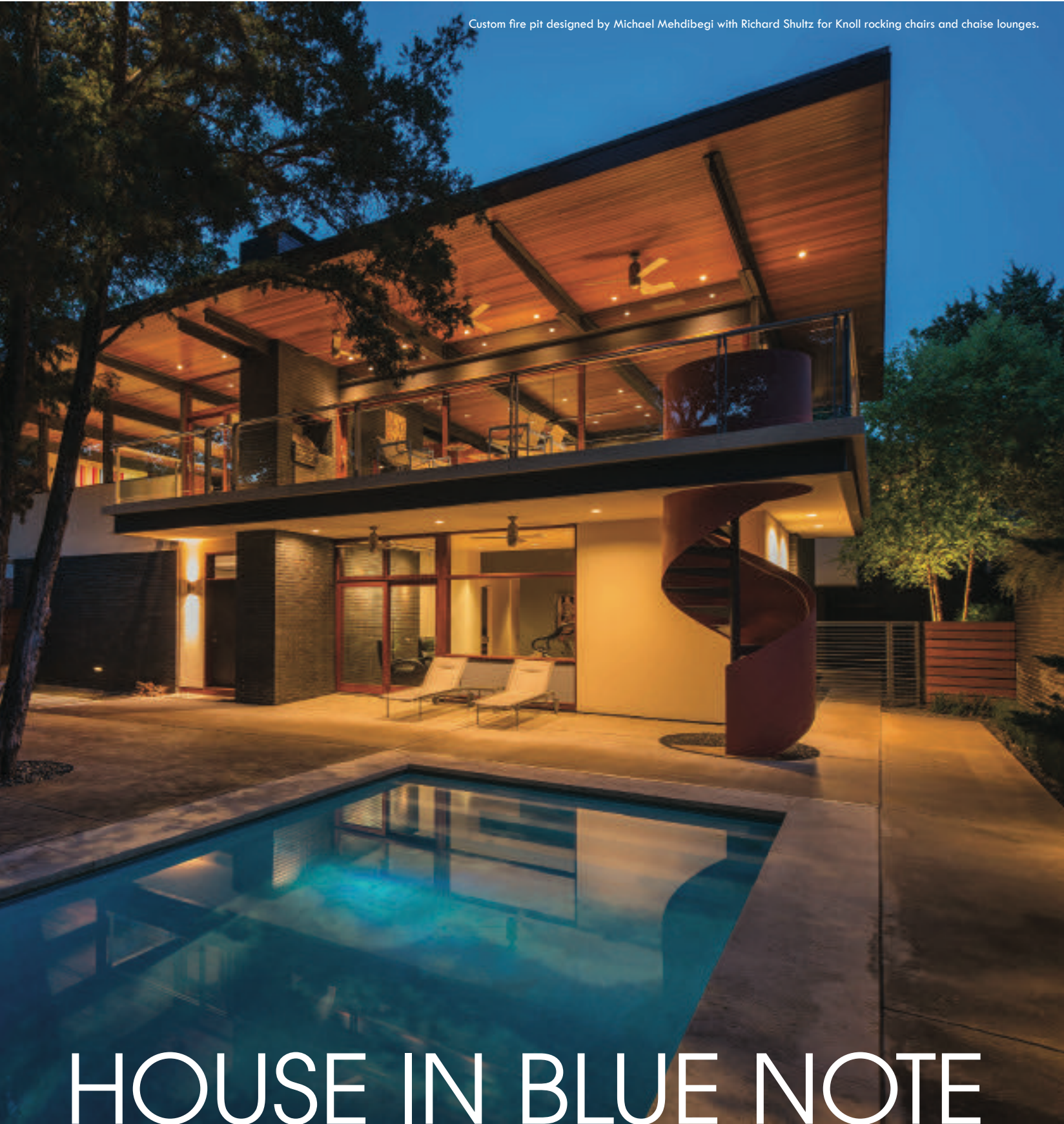
The Michels then began creating their own unique home with their insights, lifestyle, art, and furniture. Working with the talented team of Cliff Welch, designer Robyn Menter, art advisor John Runyon, and landscape architect Mark Mehdibegi, their collaboration is a measured study of light and space with focus on the Michel's private collection of established and emerging artists. Being relatively new to collecting modern art, the Michels turned to John Runyon to help them in their search.

"I was introduced to John Runyon by other modern art collectors who spoke highly of him. Our relationship began with him getting to know our tastes; I love sculptural art specifically, and am drawn to bold colors and tactile textures. We've sought out artists who have works in major museum collections, but who may also be early in their development. We've also searched for pieces that will be strikingly beautiful in the spaces where they will live. John narrows the field and presents us with many artists who reflect our sensibilities, and when we find a work we love, we know it."

Says Runyon, "Our art selections were a collaborative



Custom fire pit designed by Michael Mehdibegi with Richard Shultz for Knoll rocking chairs and chaise lounges.



HOUSE IN BLUE NOTE

THE MODERN ARCHITECTURE OF A CLIFF WELCH-DESIGNED RESIDENCE IS ENHANCED BY THOUGHTFUL INTERIORS AND A CURATED ART COLLECTION.



Toko wall vase in steel and bronze patina from David Sutherland.

journey. I merely channeled their taste and spirit. We selected artworks that responded to the Cliff Welch architecture and, most importantly, what turns them on as collectors. I knew they were serious and committed when accepting my first proposal—a major Liam Gillick wall installation. This is a serious museum-quality work in dialogue with serious architecture, a perfect fit. That first Gillick acquisition provided the momentum and trust to continue the journey.”

With visual notes from the graphic design of Blue Note album covers from the 1950s, Welch designed a house that is actually two structures connected by a bridge—one house for private quarters and the other for public spaces. The glass-walled bridge floats over a courtyard flanked by two matching river birches. Peter Alexander’s *Blue Cube* is the focal point and seems to reflect the blue of the sky in the rectangle above. The serene space deceptively

hides the extensive construction design of a foundation in bedrock with steel beams allowing the house to seemingly float in space. The ceiling beams align the two structures and cantilever out to allow the roof to provide shade and protection from brutal Texas heat and weather.

The public space is an open floor plan flooded with light accented by the perfect positioning of the Michels’s growing art collection. Laddie John Dill’s argon-tube sculpture, *Light Sentence*, is inset into the wall, creating multiple light refractions in the space above and around the main staircase. Runyon informs, “We toured the Dallas Art Fair. That resulted in deeper exploration and acquisition of artwork from the California Light and Space movement, dating back to the 1960s. Shortly following, we acquired (work by) Mary Corse, Laddie John Dill, and Peter Alexander, prominent members of Light and Space, some of whom the

Clockwise from top left: Master bedroom with Mary Corse, *Untitled*, acrylic and glass microbeads, 2000, 40 x 40 in. Above the fireplace: William Daniels, *Untitled*, oil on board, 2013, 39 x 32 in. Dining room features a marble table by Drainert from Scott + Cooner, Coco armchairs by Matteo Grassi.



Michels have visited and developed a personal relationship with.”

A wall of stack-back glass doors in the dining room creates a treehouse effect, with a mirrored wall on one end reflecting William Daniels’s *Untitled*. Daniels’s technique involves creating a sculpture of aluminum foil and reproducing it in oil, a painting of reflective light somewhere between abstract and figurative. Mai-Thu Perret’s *Everywhere Real* glazed ceramic rectangle gives nod to the Blue Note theme throughout the house. Says Runyon, “The Michels have acquired notable younger artists exhibited in and collected by important museums internationally, for example Mai-Thu Perret, Ricky Swallow, and William Daniels.”

A Brazilian quartzite table by Drainert from Scott + Cooner with Matteo Grassi chairs dominates the space, but floats on a stainless steel base. A dividing wall of dark, iron-spot brick separates the dining and living rooms. The living room has two seating areas divided by a floating cross-hatch, stainless steel bench designed by Menter. “That bench is probably how I got the design job with the Michels,” says Menter. “The previous owners had a floating wall that divided the room and views. When they asked me what I would change—I said I would remove the wall. Then I came up with the built-in bench idea to address the cutout in the travertine floor.” On the bench are assorted art books and a blue-painted, model airplane.

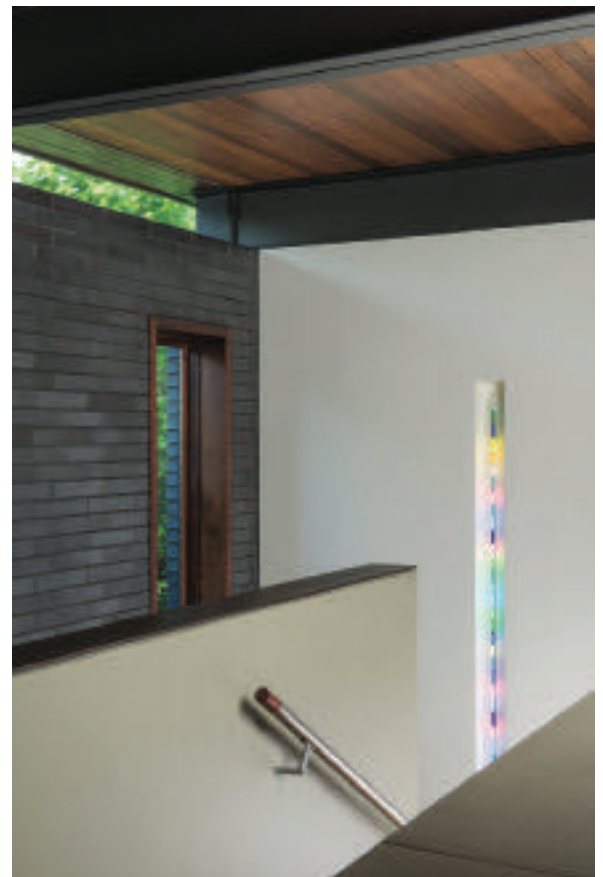
“That is the most important piece of art in the house,” says David Michel. It is the original model for the TV series “Jay Jay

the Jet Plane” that was created by the Michels in 1994, ran for several years on PBS, and is still in worldwide syndication. Ricky Swallow’s *Red Pipe with Smoke* provides a colorful juxtaposition to the blue airplane. The Japanese orange accent color on the fireplace wall complements the natural wood color of the Brazilian Ipe of the ceilings, the mahogany cabinets, and the rosewood frames of the classic Eames chairs facing the fireplace. Emil Lukas’s *Sound of Spinning #1360* is beside the fireplace. The Pennsylvania artist is noted for compositions that suspend the viewer between seeing and understanding—what looks like an overexposed photograph on texture is actually thread secured by nails over a painted wood frame. Likewise, the conceptual Liam Gillick work, *Divided Progressed* on the other end of the room, creates the same visual question. Seen from different angles, the powder-coated aluminum elements seem to shift shape and color.

A seamlessly integrated Bulthaup kitchen fronts the other seating area with Boss swivel chairs by Flexform and a comfortable sofa from the Bright Group, perfect for TV watching. But a television is nowhere to be seen. Dallas Extreme developed a fantastically inventive method to hide a television—a projector in the kitchen creates a 90-inch television by projecting on an automatically lowered window shade on the back-facing windows. The same chairs by Matteo Grassi as in the dining room surround the custom breakfast table, allowing for maximum dinner-party seating when entertaining.

Living room with a sofa from the Bright Group and Boss swivel chairs by Flexform from Scott + Cooner; Honda Syoryu, *Tango*, 2013, woven rattan; On the far wall: Liam Gillick, *Divided Progressed*, powder-coated aluminum, 2012, 71 x 68 in.





Clockwise from top, in the stairwell: Laddie John Dill, *Light Sentence*, 1971, argon, 70 x .5 in.; Mai-Thu Perret, *Everything Real*, glazed ceramic, 2013, 19 x 15 in. Laddie John Dill, *Light Sentence*, 1971, argon, 70 x 5 in. On the fireplace wall: Emil Lukas, *Sound of Spinning #1360*, 2014, thread over painted wood frame, 32 x 26 in.



Above: Glass-enclosed bridge features a pedestal with Peter Alexander's *Blue Cube*, in turquoise resin, 2015, 8 x 8 x 6.5 in., and a steel and walnut bench by Harris Rubín. Left: Cliff Welch's exterior features Brazilian Ipe wood and dark iron spot brick.



The front courtyard has matching river birches.

The white, concrete, terrazzo floors and natural wood throughout the public areas extend into the private quarters, creating a seamless transition. The master bedroom is calm and uncluttered, creating a serene atmosphere. An acrylic and glass micro-bead work by Mary Corse faces the built-in bedframe designed by Welch. Mary Corse is a member of the male-dominated Light and Space art movement of the 1960s. She is best known for her experimentation with radiant surfaces in minimalist painting, incorporating materials that reflect light, such as the glass microspheres seen here.

The outdoor living space blends seamlessly with the inside terrazzo floor, brick wall, and Ipe ceiling extending out over the upper deck, furnished with Richard Schultz's 1966 rocking chairs in a celestial-blue powder coat. Landscape architect Mark Mehdibegi crafted the outdoor spaces with its Ipe mahogany deck and bench, horsetail perimeter, and a two-million-year-old petrified-wood sculpture. An ethereal blue-tile water wall seems to connect the pool with the sky above, and White Rock Lake beyond—fully grounding the home into the natural setting all around. **P**