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DAY
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MODERN MEDITERRANEAN

Intimate indoor and outdoor spaces
distinguish Ratliff home

By Gretchen Eichenberg
Photographs by Cecy Ayala, photographybycecy.com

It might sound odd to say that Weldon and Margaret Ratliff's four bedroom, seven bath home tucked away on 4.5 beautiful wooded acres in Regency Park doesn't feel like a huge house. A grand circular driveway leading to a majestic Mediterranean style home flanked by stately palms gives the impression of large California luxury. And while luxurious it certainly is, the Ratliffs have created a warmth and functionality that makes their home a place anyone would feel comfortable kicking back and staying awhile.

"We live in every inch of this house," Margaret said. "There are no formal living areas or a dining room that no one uses." Part of the warmth is how the Ratliffs were personally involved in the design of their home — and how they did everything slowly and with purpose.

Weldon, who has a degree in architecture and owned Ratliff Ready-Mix, designed the house. Family friend and builder John Argubright was commissioned to build it. Sadly, Argubright became sick with cancer and died before the house was completed, so Weldon finished the job his friend had started. The 6,200-square-foot home took three years to build.

"Weldon designed every space to be functional," Margaret said. "It's a very family-oriented floor plan because we want to share it with our boys and their families. I want the kids to come home and to look forward to spending time here."

The Ratliffs have three sons: Jake and his wife, Taylor; Zach

and his fiancée, Kristen; and Luke, who just left for his freshman year at Texas A&M.

The floor plan centers around an atrium in the center of the home, which can be seen from most of the downstairs rooms. There are no long hallways or rooms that are set far away from the heart of the home — and that keeps the feeling of closeness.

The interior design is modern Mediterranean, which is classic and timeless, while sleek and clean. Waco designer Wendy Sharp was charged with creating the look.

The entryway offers a first look at the atrium — an open, yet cozy patio with a stucco fireplace, an overhead view of the sun and stars and a freestanding solid concrete spiral staircase that leads to the second floor. There's café seating suitable for morning coffee or dinner al fresco.

Back indoors, another staircase — this one made of richly stained oak and accented by a custom-designed runner made in India and Afghanistan — also leads to the second story. David Meyer designed the custom wrought iron handrails of both



Opening spread: The Ratliffs sought to create family-friendly spaces in their home to share when their three sons come to visit with their families. Above: After waiting for three years to finish construction, Weldon and Margaret Ratliff have lived in their new home for a year now. Opposite page from left to right, top to bottom: The roundels, with a dome of hand-painted clouds, leads out to the atrium at the center of the home. The dining room opens up to the kitchen and has views of both the atrium and the front lawn. The majestic home offers a warm and inviting atmosphere, in spite of its large size. Piper, the family dog, sits comfortably in the family den.





Above: The vaulted ceiling in the master bedroom houses an 86-inch ceiling fan and a recessed TV. Margaret enlisted the help of Wendy Sharp to design classic and timeless interiors with Mediterranean inspiration. Bottom right: The vanity area is located in the master bathroom, one of seven bathrooms throughout the house. Opposite page: The cast-iron bathtub in the master bathroom was imported from England.





staircases. “David Meyer’s designs are beautiful and one-of-a-kind,” Sharp said. To the right of the entryway — and with views of both the atrium and the front lawn — sits a massive kitchen and dining area with a separate beverage bar. An antique Italian workbench turned dining table is the gathering spot for family and friends. “Our table is long and seats 10, but it’s narrow, so it allows for good conversation,” Margaret said. Limestone accent walls fused with white sand mortar brought in from Kosse, Texas, add an earthiness to the kitchen, as well as the central atrium and a rotunda just down the hall. The kitchen is both a chef’s and an entertainer’s dream, brimming with top-tier appliances, some of them commercial grade. A crescent-shaped Gaggenau cooktop with four flush mount hibachi gas burners sets the stage for an impressive meal to be prepared for a crowd — Margaret said she’s had 50 people in her kitchen at a recent event she and Weldon hosted. Step onto the ceramic tile — with the look of hardwood — walkway outside the kitchen and you can’t help but notice the exquisite Venetian plaster walls that are featured throughout the home. “Segreto [Finishes] of Houston did all the interior walls, as



well as fine paint finishes, decorative cabinet finishes, hand-painted murals and hand-painted stenciling,” Sharp said. “They transformed sheetrock walls into works of art with plaster and wax, giving them depth. And to the touch they feel like glass but are extremely hard and durable.” The depth of Segreto’s craftsmanship can be seen in the hand-painted dome of a rotunda along the walkway. It’s painted with puffy white clouds and almost transports one to a sacred Italian chapel for the moment. The floor of the rotunda is inlaid with travertine, limestone and marble. A comfortable but elegant den is the family’s hangout space. The plaster walls are the backdrop for Weldon’s hunting trophies and family portraits alike. A stone fireplace adds to the warmth of the room. “We spend a ton of time in here,” Margaret said, “playing games, watching TV you name it.” Big French doors lead to the master suite, which is designed in soft, warm grays and silver. An intersecting barrel-vaulted ceiling gives the bedroom lots of dimension — and also houses Above: The master closet houses an island topped with marble imported from Brazil and offers plenty of room to display Margaret’s collection of shoes and handbags. Opposite page: The master bedroom leads directly to the inviting atrium.

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Above: The back patio is the perfect spot for large gatherings with plenty of comfortable seats. Below: A long dining table sits near the outdoor kitchen, which includes a hibachi grill, refrigerator and sink. Opposite page: The Ratliff's swimming pool is located on the second-story deck above the garage.



