

Habitat



IN LIVING COLOR

Peek inside a Tarrytown house
that is decorated in a vibrant
palette of blues, pinks and
yellows. **PAGE 124**



CENTRAL PERK

After living all over Austin, a family finally settles into their dream Tarrytown home—and adds lots of color

BY RAMONA FLUME
PHOTOGRAPHY BY HAYDEN SPEARS

It always stings when a long-awaited dream doesn't live up to its expectations. Which is why Katie and David Bartley made sure to do plenty of research ahead of time.

In 2012, after the couple put an offer on a four-bedroom Tarrytown home on a quiet street just off Exposition Boulevard and Windsor Road, Katie started driving to the neighborhood to take her daily walks and

jogs. "Living in a Central Austin neighborhood like this was something I had idealized for so long," she says. "And I needed to be positive it was what we actually wanted."

The Bartleys have lived in various parts of town over the past 12 years. The couple rented a Clarksville apartment as newlyweds during Katie's UT grad school days before moving to a cozy Rosedale bungalow where their two daughters were raised, followed by a large Northwest Hills house after their third child was born. Their desire to live in a family-friendly community in Central Austin, however, had come to a head.

Thankfully, their wistful dreams of a Mayberry-type atmosphere were confirmed for Katie, who spotted more than a dozen elementary-age children during her first treks through the community, with kids out riding bikes at dusk and parents talking in each other's yards. "All of a sudden, we were invited to dinner parties and getting our kids together for Halloween," says David, a vice president of sales at flooring company Shaw Industries. "Neighborhood was our main driving force, and this was exactly what we'd hoped for."

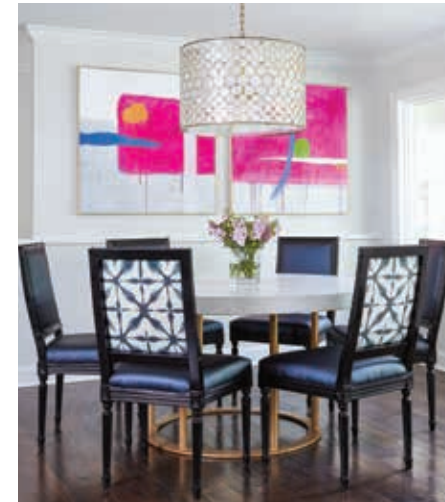
After confirming their initial intuition, they started the task of remodeling the single-story home. While they didn't want to change much of the exterior, which included a screened-in back porch, a vine-covered pergola and lovely old-growth landscaping, the 1970s-era interiors, complete with sunken floors and closed-off living areas, were in desperate need of updating.

Coming from their spacious Northwest Hills home, the couple wanted a more communal setting for their family of five, tearing down several walls to achieve more inclusive living, dining and kitchen areas. The resulting layout was sleek and modern, but ultimately served to enhance livability. "We actually lost a lot of square footage coming from our previous house," says Katie, a sleep consultant for children and infants. "But this home is far more comfortable and efficient."

The opened-up floor plan also made room for the couple's colorful tendencies. "We've never been 'neutral people,'" Katie says with a laugh. The home's vibrant color palette of pinks, yellows and royal blue, featured with bold graphic wallpaper, abstract modern art and a dynamic mix-and-match of modern and vintage statement pieces, speaks to their extroverted personalities and playful sense of style.

Their decor preferences seem fanciful and free-spirited, but their interior design approach was purposefully thought out. They hired a professional interior designer, Sarah Wittenbraker of Sarah Wittenbraker Interiors, because "that's what grown-ups do," David says. "And that's what we kept calling it—our grown-up house." Instead of old fraternity couches and worn-out matching sectional pieces they had inherited over the years, the couple wanted to create an informed, thoughtful space that could carry their family into a new chapter of their lives.

David likens Wittenbraker's role to Katie's approach as an infant sleep consultant: "She



OPPOSITE PAGE
The screened-in back porch is a little piece of Georgia for David, who hails from the Peach State.

THIS PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT
Bold art and furnishings adorn the dining room; the three Bartley kids, ages 9, 7 and 5, love spending time in the backyard; more pops of color in the living room.

"LIVING IN A CENTRAL AUSTIN NEIGHBORHOOD LIKE THIS WAS SOMETHING I HAD IDEALIZED FOR SO LONG."

—Katie Bartley

came in and told us gently what she thought we needed as a family to be comfortable in our environment, without forcing her style on us or taking away from our personalities."

The remodeling process took about a year, with the couple using a self-imposed goal of David's 40th birthday party as a deadline. Even though some integral pieces, including their dining room table, weren't delivered

until 24 hours before the party, the Bartleys still managed to pull off the birthday celebration that served dually as a "very grown-up" housewarming.

The family has now spent three years in Tarrytown and are adjusting nicely to their fully realized dream home. "We just love being together as a family and can do that so easily in this home," Katie says. **■**