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Interiors

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MODERN LUXURY
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TEXAS

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BECCA HENSLEY

Becca Hensley is based in Austin, but rarely home. She has published work in hundreds of magazines and newspapers, including *Austin American-Statesman*, *Toronto Star* and *Self*. For this issue, she wrote about Departure Lounge in Austin. "I loved writing about fellow travel aficionado and oenophile Keith Waldon and his Departure Lounge," Hensley says. "It's a transporting portal that awakens the desire to journey."



DROR BALDINGER

Dror Baldinger, AIA, is an architectural photographer based in San Antonio. When he visited Jim Gewinner's Fredericksburg home for the first time, he assumed he was going to see just another Hill Country house. "Jim's house is nothing like that," Baldinger says. "When the house comes into view after turning a corner, it is both stunning and unexpected."



HELEN THOMPSON

Helen Thompson is a nationally known writer whose areas of specialty are interior design, architecture, kitchen design and food. She has written and produced articles for *Elle Decor*, *Architectural Digest*, *House Beautiful*, *Martha Stewart Living* and many other magazines. For this issue, she takes us into the Dallas home of Mary and Neil Dorflinger, whose house was designed by LaRue Architects of Austin. "I can't remember writing about a house where the homeowners are as happy to be there as the Dorflingers are," Thompson says. "It made me happy to hear them describe a home that's welcoming from the moment a visitor drives into the drive and sees Mary watching for them from the kitchen window."



DAN PIASSICK

"I was born and raised in Dallas and have been shooting on my own for the past 18 years," says photographer Dan Piassick, who lives with his wife and three dogs in a 1926 bungalow in East Dallas. "In that time, I have been lucky enough to be able to stick to my 'anything but weddings' motto." For this issue, Piassick photographed a house designed by Denise McGaha. "Denise is not only one of my favorite clients, but she is one of my favorite people," he says. "I am very lucky that I get to spend so much time with such an awesomely creative person."



STEVEN LINDSEY

Dallas-based writer Steven Lindsey covered real estate, shopping and products for this issue, all of which he found inspiring. "I'm always amazed at the creative talent we have in Dallas, and the stories I worked on for this issue prove that our supply is practically limitless. From the faux bois pieces in the Areté Collection and the beyond-luxe dream kitchens and bathrooms that can be created at Expressions Home Gallery to the spectacular views and Laura Hunt's inspired interiors at the subpenthouse at 2900 McKinnon St., it's enough to give me home envy for weeks."

LIVING IN TEXAS | DESIGN



DESIGN STAR
Mark Cravotta specializes
in one-of-a-kind interiors
for the home and beyond.

AUSTIN

BRANCHING OUT

After almost two decades of focusing on residential design, Austin's Mark Cravotta is taking on the commercial world.

By Becca Hensley
Photography by Amanda Elmore

"If the desired outcome is formulaic, then we aren't the right fit," says Mark Cravotta, owner of Austin's Cravotta Interiors. "Our clients know they can expect an environment that's uniquely designed to fit their personality and lifestyle. I tell people that they won't find their project in our portfolio until after we've worked together."

Currently at work on The Overlook at Lake Austin, a 22-unit modern-residence condo project in Westlake Hills, Cravotta also masterminded the sophisticated tailoring of a penthouse at the Four Seasons Residences. Exemplifying

Cravotta's fine-tuned aesthetics, the opulently appointed penthouse is a symphony of rich, textural surfaces, including hand-painted silk-papered ceilings, leather mosaic walls, patterned wood and ceramic tile. A visual

artist and jewelry designer before founding his design firm in 1996, Cravotta brings a keen eye to each project—as evinced at the Four Seasons penthouse and other one-of-a-kind home designs. His work can also soon be seen at Austin chef Nicholas Yanes' Juniper restaurant, set to open this summer.

Cravotta's relationships with local galleries, artists and craftsmen is legendary. And his fearless ability to meld eras, juxtapose contemporary with vintage, manage casual beside formal, and utilize bespoke fixtures and furnishings sets him apart. Touting his biggest influence as travel, he says his trademark is elegant design that comes off as "comfortable, beautiful, but not too precious." Because Cravotta approaches each project as a tabula rasa, he hesitates when asked to commit to his favorite color scheme for 2015. "I don't like to limit a color palette based on the calendar, but I am really liking a particular shade of dark and moody teal."

What's up next for Cravotta Interiors? "More restaurants and our first boutique hotel." 701 Brazos St., Ste. 300, Austin, 512.499.0400, cravottainteriors.com

LIVING IN TEXAS | HOSPITALITY

ALL TEXAS

NEW KIDS ON THE BLOCK

Snooze in style at some of the Lone Star State's newest—and newly renovated—hostelries. With an emphasis on local flavor, a reverence for the past and enthusiasm for the future, these four earn your slumber.

By Becca Hensley

Large and in Charge

The long-awaited 34-story, 1,012-room JW Marriott Austin welcomed its first guests in February, making it the second-largest JW Marriott in the world. With interiors by Chicago-based Simeone Deary Design Group, the hotel exudes the artistic and diverse sensibilities of Austin.

Stained oak, agate sconces, Texas limestone and art installations pay homage to the Hill Country landscape. In the lobby, an eye-catching copper sculpture designed by Howard Harris celebrates Austin's famous urban bat colony. Rates from \$269 per night, 110 E. Second St., Austin, 512.474.4777, jwmarriottaustin.com

HISTORY CLASS
Highlights of the Sayles Landmark's Luxe room include a Victorian bed from the 1870s and an antique crystal chandelier.



WARM WELCOME
The lobby of the JW Marriott Austin features floor-to-ceiling metal screens reminiscent of macramé, positioned to divide the space into multiple interiors.

Abilene Reprise

With a room called Judge's Chambers kitted out with 13 vintage baseball gloves, and a suite christened Heavenly Rest anchored with 19th century church pews, the Queen Anne-style Sayles Landmark proves history has whimsy. One of Abilene's most renowned mansions, the former home of Hattie and Henry Sayles opens as a modern-day bed-and-breakfast with high-tech amenities and bygone flair. The common areas of the Sayles Landmark, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, repurpose artifacts with creative élan. Consider the back staircase bannister, made from a section of 100-year-old cemetery fence. Relish the kitchen island, composed of the glove and scarf display cabinet rescued from the iconic Minter's Department Store. Peruse the vintage law books used as wallpaper in the upstairs hall. And let the Bootmaker room take you back with its vintage green tin walls, torn from the ceiling of a local bootmaker's shop. Rates from \$165 per night, 642 Sayles Blvd., Abilene, 325.670.9402, sayleslandmark.com

CONTINUED...

JW MARRIOTT PHOTO BY JOHN PESINA



SUITE DREAMS
Hotel Van Zandt, set to open in Austin this summer, is now taking reservations for its 319 rooms and 41 suites.

Eco Inn

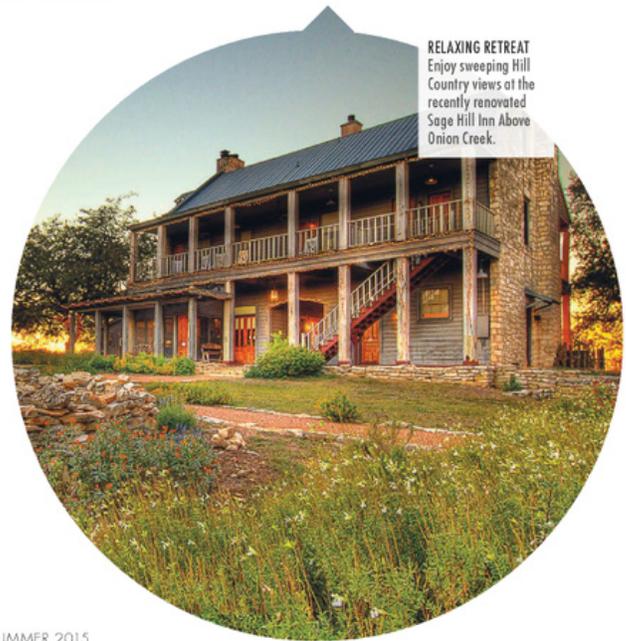
The Sage Hill Inn Above Onion Creek in Kyle has been gloriously renewed. A haven from traffic and the frenzy of busy lives, the 16-room property was purchased in 2012 by Eric Goldreyer, the founder of bedandbreakfast.com, and John Banczak, the president of the online company. Knowing a little something about the hospitality industry, the owners refurbished the inn last year, with the goal of coddling guests in sumptuous digs. Their eco-conscious renewals include double-sided fireplaces, stand-alone tubs, commodious sitting porches, river stone flooring and gourmet kitchens in select cottages. Improvements to the original property also add a 3,000-square-foot deck around the pool, an oversize hot tub (large enough for 14 soakers) and an immense fire pit. Hammocks invite repose, and miles of hiking and birding trails tease guests into action. The Garden Spa uses local herbs such as lavender and juniper for treatments, and Executive Chef Ryan Castille works with local purveyors including Dewberry Hills Farms, for modern-tinged menus. *Rates from \$279 per night, 4444 W. FM 150, Kyle, 512.268.1617, sagehill.com*

...CONTINUED

Tune Crooning

Key to Austin's musical history, the Van Zandt name will live on at Hotel Van Zandt, a Kimpton hotel. Due to open this summer, the 319-room Rainey Street District hotel will embrace Austin's melodic soul. Touting specialty staff, such as a music event concierge, and a fourth-floor stage for live music performances, the hotel features classic Kimpton brand quiriness, which melds well with Austin's idiosyncratic edge. Nevertheless, New York-based designer Mark Zeff drew influence from Austin's sophisticated undertone as capital city and university hamlet. His use of sleek, modern, upscale materials—Italian wood, gleaming bronze and shiny granite, to name a few—underscores Austin's urbanity. Local artwork marks the walls—most notably a specially commissioned piece by Townes Van Zandt's son, JT. A locavore-focused restaurant and musical check-in amenities add to the hotel's pizzazz.

Rates from \$350 per night, 605 Davis St., Austin, 800.546.7866, hotelvanzandt.com



RELAXING RETREAT
Enjoy sweeping Hill Country views at the recently renovated Sage Hill Inn Above Onion Creek.

EXPLORE



AUSTIN

TRAVEL PORTAL

An espresso machine purrs, wafting a heady coffee perfume that smacks of Rome. Lining a wall, dozens of wine bottles glisten in the sun. Carrara marble, leather couches and Jacobsen egg chairs, mostly in white, gray and black, have a chiaroscuro effect that whispers tony chic. You might think you're in a haute salon in Zurich, save for a hand-carved wooden door from Thailand, some aesthetically placed Moorish arches and a cadre of colorful South American weavings. The real setting, however, is **Departure Lounge**, the innovative wine tavern, coffee bar and travel agency all rolled into one. Located in downtown Austin's Warehouse District, this brainchild of travel industry veteran Keith Waldon has become Austin's coolest place to confabulate. Meant to be a portal to inspire travelers, Departure Lounge, which is part of the Virtuoso luxury travel agent network, serves wines from around the world, cheese and snack plates to complement them and light fare with an international provenance. Designed by Joel Mozerky, known for his penchant for classic glamour with a Hollywood heyday élan, Departure Lounge has another raison d'être. "We want to be an interactive discovery zone to transport clients to the world's top destinations," Waldon says. Using an exclusive program called Travel Persona, on-staff advisors assist travelers in determining their best vacation—and booking it with perks aplenty. Like the concept? Look for more Departure Lounges in the future. Waldon is eyeing a spot in Dallas and another in Austin. 311 W. Fifth St., Ste. 102, Austin, 512.322.9399, departurelounge.com —Becca Hensley

UP, UP AND AWAY

Keith Waldon creates a haven for travel enthusiasts and wine connoisseurs at Departure Lounge in Austin.