



# 101

Taking a cue from traditional Texas style, our Hill Country villa elegantly pairs old-world sensibilities with laid-back lakeside living

## Design Ideas!

### Welcome to Escondido

**THE SETTING:** Just a short drive from both Austin and San Antonio, the Escondido community is in the heart of Central Texas in Horseshoe Bay, situated along the pristine shores of Lake Lyndon B. Johnson and spanning 550 acres of rugged Hill Country terrain.

**THE STYLE:** With European leanings, the home's design principles embody the timeless charm, classic architecture, and authentic details befitting a historic Mediterranean villa. Native building materials reflect the Texas landscape and harmonize with the Southern locale.

**THE SPACE:** Our home rambles around a series of terraces and courtyards, making the most of indoor/outdoor living. On the main level, rooms stem from a central dining area with vaultages oriented toward the pool and lake. Vaulted ceilings open the main living room to an upstairs loft and additional bedrooms. A detached casita provides a guest retreat above and a boat dock below.



2011 Project Team (from left): Michael G. Imber, Michael G. Imber Architects; Marcus Mohon and Katherine Vick, Mohon-Imber Interiors; David Mitchell, Casa Highland Construction; Erin Schneider and Brandon Moss, Michael G. Imber Architects. Not pictured: Bill Bauer, The Garden Design Studio



**1**  
These **aqua outdoor cushions** accent the exterior's blue trim.

**2**  
Placed horizontally, **deck boards** by Trex look like bold stripes on the boathouse walls.

**3**  
Preserving the **surrounding live oaks** helps our new house feel nestled into the Texas landscape.

LAUREY W. GLENN



TOP: TRIA GIOVANI; BOTTOM: LAUREY W. GLENN; FABRIC: RALPH ANDERSON

4

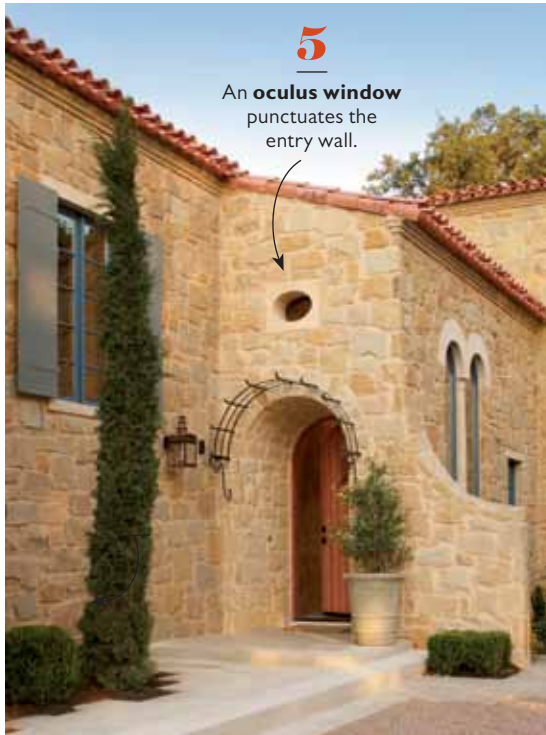
**TEXAS FLAVOR**

A hand-forged iron railing by Design Estudio Inc. adds a hand-crafted feel to the staircase.

6

**Tucking the front door inside an arched entry**

“creates a bit of mystery by allowing the house to slowly reveal itself,” says Michael.



5

An oculus window punctuates the entry wall.

**Ideas To Inspire**

**7** A **floating staircase** provides a direct view of the courtyard from inside the front door. “The foyer sets the tone by immediately stopping you with the view,” says architect Michael G. Imber.

**8&9** **Limestone floors** and **rough-hewn fir beams** reclaimed from a 110-year-old barn imbue the foyer with a rich, timeless look.

**10** Scraped to appear worn, **stone stair treads** look like they’ve endured centuries of use.

**11** Decorative blue **blown-glass finials** add an unconventional twist to the staircase’s wrought iron newel posts.

**12** The foyer serves as more than just a point of entry with a **cozy reading nook** tucked in beneath the staircase. “This is a retreat spot,” says designer Marcus Mohon.

**13** Blue trellis fabric on the bench adds a **pop of color and pattern** to an otherwise neutral space.

**14** Placed above ground level, **exterior windows** on the facade draw the eye up and mimic European design standards.



15

Flooding the space with natural light, a large **clerestory window** floats above the fireplace.

16

Casual **cord loops** keep draperies from looking too stiff and serious.



17

A range of textiles (including velvet, wool, linen, and cotton) adds texture and keeps the muted hues of the C. R. Laine upholstery from falling flat.



### Ideas To Inspire

**18** A 5-foot-tall **paneled wainscot** minimizes the room's 18-foot ceiling height. "We wanted it to feel voluminous but also intimate," says Michael.

**19** **Separate seating arrangements**, highlighted by dual chandeliers, promote multiple conversation areas and visually divide the room.

**20** A combination of chair styles illustrates Marcus' design principle of **mix, don't match**. "I wanted to keep the room relaxed to reflect its lake location," he says.

**21** **Juxtaposed finishes and materials**, including acrylic plastic, wood, and painted pieces, create a look that appears to have been collected over time.

**22** A creative use of space, an open, **attic-like loft** with a low, sloped ceiling overlooks the living room.

**23** The cased opening between the foyer and living room is enhanced with **stone detailing**—giving the visual impact of grand columns.



**24**  
**TEXAS FLAVOR**  
Local interior artist Nancy Coleman scraped and painted the wainscot to resemble weathered wood.

*Ideas To Inspire*

**25** Centrally located, the **dining room serves as the hub** of the home. “During the day it’s a place for games and homework, and at night it morphs into an intimate dining area,” says Michael.

**26** **Mixing high-back upholstered seating** with low, slipcovered chairs avoids the predictable formula of a table with matching chairs.

**27** An **oversize chandelier** draws the eye up to a reclaimed-wood-clad ceiling.

**28** Suspended from rings, **elegant curtains break an inch and a half beyond floor level**, allowing the fabric to shrink or expand in the Texas heat. “Draperies should rest atop the floor like a loose ball gown,” says Marcus.

**29** **French doors** are on a direct axis with the outdoor fireplace (right), creating quite a view when flung open. “Every indoor living space here draws you outside,” says Michael.



**30**

A **wood-burning fireplace** warms up outside dinner parties, especially in cool fall months.

**31**

**Walls curtained in a sheer fabric** by Sunbrella invite romance yet allow natural light to illuminate the room.



**32**

It’s easy to fit in extra guests around a large, **round dining table**. Use a mix of chairs for more interest.

**33**

Sinuous **wall sconces** brighten corners and have a sculptural quality.



**34**

Antique fir headers crown the sliding doors with an element of rustic style.

**35**

The television floats in front of a curtained wall with panels that can be pulled shut to fully close out the study and bar.



**47**

A wrought iron pergola lends structure to an outdoor seating area, with a charming spot for climbing roses to grow overhead.



**46**

Equipped with a sink, an under-counter ice-maker and fridge, and ample storage, the tavern-style bar eliminates having to run to the kitchen for a drink.



**36**  
TEXAS  
FLAVOR  
Ceilings of reclaimed fir from Texas' Barnwood Etc. add rich texture and a sense of age.

*Ideas To Inspire*

**37** Creamy plaster walls give the entire house subtle texture. The material is also consistent with historic Mediterranean homes.

**38** Sliding glass pocket doors disappear completely into the wall to connect the family room to the terrace. "We tried to blend indoor and outdoor spaces every chance we got," says Michael.

**39** To make the most of waterfront views, the arched window and sliding doors are left free of draperies.

**40** The two-tone sofa with a chocolate base has washable off-white cushions that ensure this lake house is stylish—and kid-friendly.

**41** Stenciled accent pillows complement the solid upholstery and introduce a small dose of pattern with a handmade touch.

**42** Lightweight tables in varying heights float throughout the space and can be relocated quickly in a pinch—ideal for impromptu soirees.

**43** A bench upholstered in tufted linen works double duty as a coffee table.

**44** The folding screens flanking the large window are the only matching pieces in the room. Marcus says, "Pull in some symmetry, but also throw it off."

**45** To keep the bar area from becoming cavernous, the back wall is covered in smoked glass mirror—adding a hint of retro glam.

TRIA GIOVAN



**48**

The **elevated swimming pool's shape** recalls an old ranch cistern.

**49**

A **barrel-tile roof** nods to Mediterranean style and embraces a range of earthy hues.

**50**  
**TEXAS FLAVOR**  
**Gold sandstone** (quarried in Lometa, Texas) on the exterior reflects the vernacular style.

**51**

The **detached guest casita** is raised above garden level to further its sense of seclusion.



### *Ideas To Inspire*

**52** **Bright blue trim** accents the exterior doors and windows. "The color hints toward Provence," says Michael. "That simple gesture connects local architecture with something more romantic."

**53** Operable farm-style **shutters painted soft, warm gray** appear to have been sun-bleached, giving the home a sense of age.

**54** The large outdoor space at the rear is broken up into **several small furniture groupings**, all situated around the central pool.

**55** **Solid ivory outdoor cushions** used throughout all the different seating groups unite varying furniture styles on the terrace.

**56** Chunky rattan chairs flank the stone fireplace in the **covered terrace** (above right) to create a cozy gathering spot.

**57** A **shuttered loggia** (left), complete with a row of metal chaises, provides privacy without blocking beautiful lake vistas.

**58** Sunny yellow **retractable canopies** made of Sunbrella fabric soften the loggia's ceiling and offer respite from the harsh Texas sun.

**59** **Gauzy draperies** add breezy, effortless style to the loggia—so dreamy!



**60**

In lieu of upper cabinetry, **floating wood shelves** punctuated with exposed bolts give texture and offer extra storage space.

**61**

The island appears longer and less utilitarian with an **antique table** placed at the end.

**62**  
**TEXAS FLAVOR**  
Paintings of the Hill Country help the hardworking kitchen feel homey.

**64**

A **plaster hood** with limestone corbels turns a vent into a showstopper.

**63**

The **ivory paint color** used throughout the house (Sherwin-Williams Buff) is soft, not stark.

### Ideas To Inspire

**65** **Dark ebony-hued cabinetry** from IKEA anchors the mostly white room and adds an earthy feel that's consistent with the rustic architecture.

**66** The kitchen gains a sense of age from an extra-tall backsplash of **subway-style tiles** installed in a bricklike pattern. Popular in early 20th-century subway stops, the tiles impart classic charm.

**67** **Caesarstone countertops** look like natural stone but have the practicality of a scratch- and stain-resistant finish.

**68** A **stainless steel base** sets the square island apart from surrounding cabinetry and streamlines the room's old-world posture. "This home offers the charm of yesterday combined with the freshness of how we live today," says Michael.

**69** **Facing French door refrigerators** help balance the room and provide extra storage for large crowds or parties.

**70** **Hand-scraped wood flooring** by Shaw Floors is made from recycled materials and mimics the look of antique wide-plank floors.

**71** Adding to the overall mix of styles and time periods in the kitchen, a **vintage-inspired iron chandelier** hangs above the sleek center island.



**72**

A built-in bench provides a convenient place to set flowers and groceries upon entering the home from the garden court or garage.



**73**

The walls, ceiling, and cabinetry are painted a **soft blue** (Sherwin-Williams Waterscape), referencing the home's exterior trim color.



*Ideas To Inspire*

**75** Generating depth and interest that can't be equaled by gypsum drywall, **wood plank walls and ceilings** pump up the charm factor.

"We wanted to turn the laundry room into something fun," says Michael.

**76** **Reproduction porcelain enamel pendants** suspended from cloth cords make a vintage statement.

**77** Adding to the laundry room's versatility, a **deep-basined apron-front sink** satisfies ranch style and makes flower-arranging a cinch.

**78** To give the eye a place to rest amid a sea of blue, a **black soapstone countertop and backsplash** anchor the room.

**79** A **decorative pattern cut into the backsplash** mimics the archway to the kitchen.

**80** **Open shelving** replaces upper cabinetry, paying homage to genuine cottage style and allowing tight quarters to appear open and airy.

**81** A **charming Dutch door** opens to the garden court and welcomes in the fresh air of the temperate climate.



**74**  
**TEXAS FLAVOR**  
Quarried in Texas, Lueders limestone lines walkways and patios indoors and out.



TRIA GIOVAN (2); PAINT: RALPH ANDERSON; BOTTOM: LAUREY W. GLENN

**82**

An **Andalusian motif** cut into the shower's door frame adds an architectural folly.

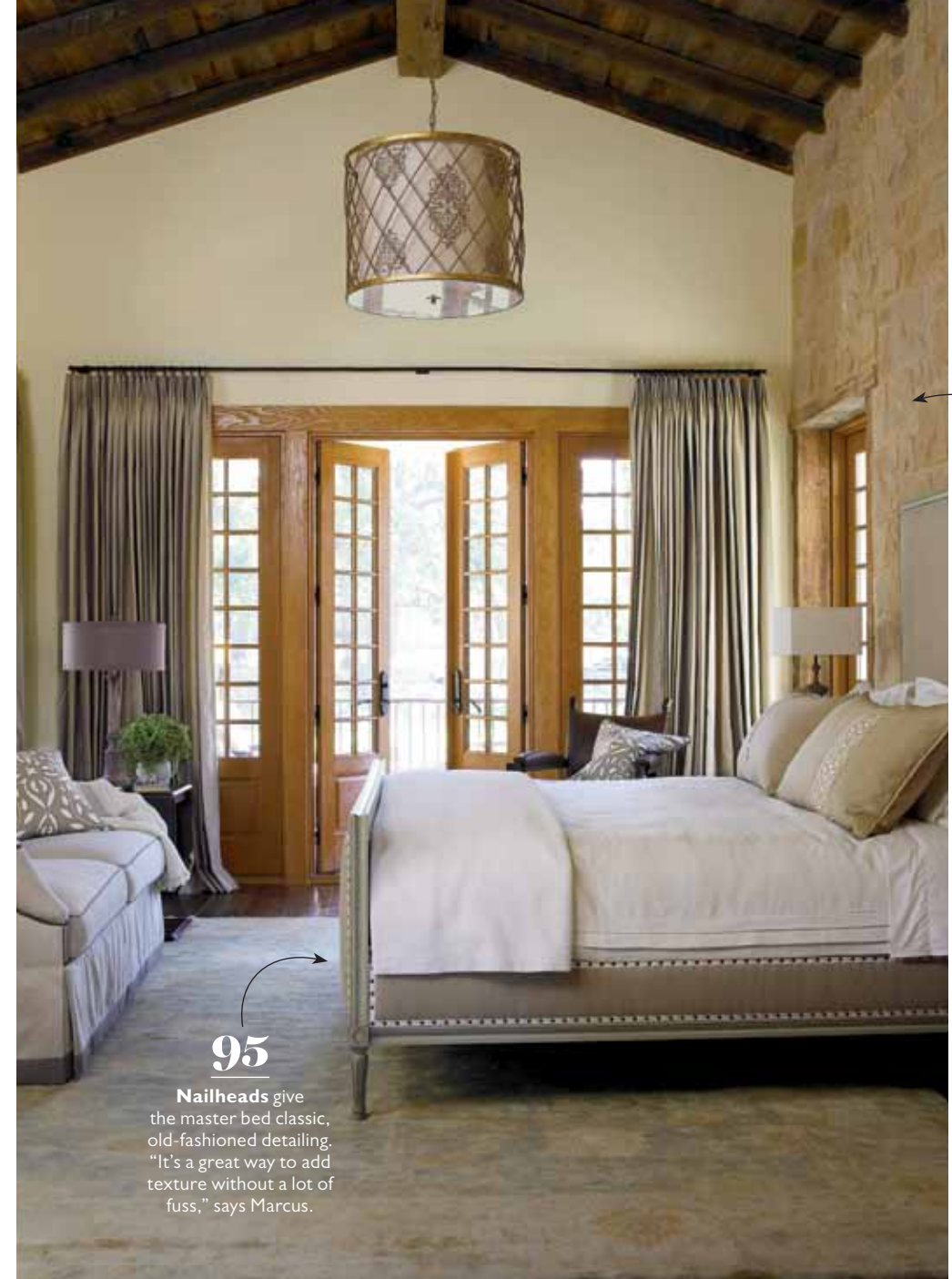


**88**

Painted black, the **window frame** extends the eye outward to the courtyard.



LEFT AND TOP RIGHT: TRIA GIOVANI; BOTTOM RIGHT (3): LAUREY W. GLENN; STYLING: AMY BURKE



**95**

**Nailheads** give the master bed classic, old-fashioned detailing. "It's a great way to add texture without a lot of fuss," says Marcus.

**94**

An **interior wall composed of sandstone** implies the home was added onto over time.



**Ideas To Inspire**

**84** A **barrel-vaulted ceiling** adds architectural intrigue and allows the master bath to live large.

**85** **Smooth, reflective surfaces combined with lots of white** give the master bath a contemporary design. "When everything in your bath is shiny and clean, you just feel better," says Marcus.

**86** **Square marble tiles** cut in half and installed in a running bond pattern on the floors and shower walls provide a sleek look.

**87** Giving the room both reflection and depth, the entire **sink wall is covered in mirrored glass**.

**88** A pair of **mirrors framed in cut bone tile** adds a feminine touch layered over the wall-mounted mirror.

**89** A **freestanding soaking tub** by Kohler with an elegant profile and contemporary polished-chrome hardware looks like a piece of sculpture in front of the arched window.

**90** The **completely enclosed courtyard** beyond the arched window ensures this bath is totally private—no window treatments required!

**91** The master bedroom's **extra-tall upholstered headboard** keeps furnishings from seeming dwarfed by the high ceiling.

**92** With a view of the lake, the master bedroom's **private porch** beckons for lazy afternoons.

**93** **Comfy, contemporary furnishings and accessories** by IKEA lend the two light-filled upstairs guest rooms (right and far right) casual style.





FIRST FLOOR

SECOND FLOOR

### Project Team

**DEVELOPMENT:**

Escondido,  
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**LANDSCAPE DESIGNER:**

The Garden Design Studio,  
Austin, Texas;  
[gardendesignstudio.us](http://gardendesignstudio.us)

### Ideas To Inspire

**96** A **three-car garage** buffers the home from the street and encloses the pea-gravel parking court. "We saw the garage as an opportunity," says Michael. "It serves as a gateway and helps shape the space."

**97** Instead of grandiose spaces, a series of smaller rooms connected by large cased openings maintains **authentic European scale**. "Layered sight lines to the water create a sense of discovery," says Michael.

**98** With more than 4,000 square feet of **outdoor living space**, the rear terraces and porches maximize this home's waterfront location.

**99** The **study serves as a pass-through room** between the primary living areas and the master suite to boost privacy.

**100** On the second floor, **two small bedrooms and baths** provide a retreat from the activity on the main floor and are ideal for visiting friends and family.



**101** **Come see it in person!** Our **2011 Idea House** is open for tours through October 2. Visit [southernliving.com/idea-house](http://southernliving.com/idea-house) for details. While you're in the area, be sure to stop by Marble Falls, about 8 miles away. Browse the shops in the historic district, and don't miss the pie at the famous Blue Bonnet Cafe.



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LEFT: TRIA GIOVAN; RIGHT: LAUREY W. GLENN

LAUREY W. GLENN(7); COUNTERTOP AND FLOORING: TRIA GIOVAN