



A FORT WORTH HOME BLENDS BEAUTIFUL SCENERY AND CONTEMPORARY ARCHITECTURE TO BECOME A WORK OF ART

Large windows frame the contemporary fireplace allowing the homeowner to enjoy the entire property from the comfort of his living room. Curved, wooden beams running the length of the ceiling add interest and sculptural detail.

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When Lester and Stacey Strait decided it was time to build their retirement home in the Fort Worth area, the empty nesters wanted anything but a traditional house. The Straits were attracted to Winn Wittman, AIA, principal of Winn Wittman Architecture, for his sense of style and expertise in contemporary architecture.

An easy flow between the kitchen and living rooms offers a degree of separation without closing the rooms off, making this space perfect for entertaining.



A small side courtyard takes advantage of the impressive landscape. It serves as a space to relax and enjoy the natural beauty of the property.



The curved glass window offers guests a preview of the interior design. This surprising element reflects the painstaking thought and attention to detail.

Wittman doesn't just design homes for clients; he co-creates with clients to build their ideal residence. His signature style has an element of the collective unconscious. "It taps into various elements that have been used throughout history in design without necessarily evoking a specific architectural tradition," Wittman says.

The four-bedroom, 5,500-square-foot residence is what Wittman describes as "international style on steroids." It's highly functional, yet also incredibly sculptural, regardless of the angle from which it is viewed. They took advantage of the lot's natural beauty by building the home into the hillside and landscaping around existing trees.

"Many homes seem to look inward," Lester Strait says. In his home, the outside is the focal point. Beautiful, natural vistas are welcomed in through large, floor-to-ceiling windows. "It's better to look outward and enjoy the whole property," Strait says.

Although the house is designed to blur the lines between the inside and outside, it is also built to withstand the extreme Texas weather. Fine, lightly colored stucco reflects much of the sun's rays

during hot summers and the commercial grade windows are made from aluminum. The little wood used on exterior of the home is protected by the eaves of a standing seam metal roof.

"We wanted to enjoy the house without having to always worry about maintaining the home," Strait says. "The materials used in the home will age well without needing significant regular maintenance."

To combat the high energy costs of Texan summers, the roof is sprayed with 5.5 inches of insulation and the walls hold a soy-based foam insulation to keep the home safe from outside temperatures. The windows are placed strategically with large overhangs not only to allow natural light into rooms, but also to keep out the sun's hot rays.

Located close to Lake Grapevine, one of the goals was to catch glimpses of the lake from the rooftop terrace, with the bonus of being able to see fireworks from several cities in all directions on July Fourth. A courtyard area on the ground floor capitalizes on scenery from the side of the home.



Wittman considered how the home would be viewed from every angle before finalizing the design ensuring that the home would exude sculptural details. The red tower, which holds a staircase, was inspired by Aldo Cibic, an Italian architect.



The long horizontal window offers a panoramic-like view of the surrounding trees. It also slides open to let in fresh air and natural light.

Strait's favorite vista is through a wide rooftop window high on the master bedroom wall. "[From] there, I can see the lightening from approaching storms or the scamper of squirrels running through the tops of oak trees," he says.

Building this dream home was not without its challenges. The older neighborhood meant many other families were already in the area and creating privacy was a key consideration in the design process. Additionally, the lot is steeply sloped. To compensate, Wittman placed the home as far from the street as possible and built into the slope. The wooded area completes a natural barrier from the busy street.

The main entryway, Wittman's favorite aspect of the project, brings guests into the living room with a few surprise elements along the way. "I really like the whole entry approach and the relationship of the various forms to one another," Wittman says. "The red stair tower and the curved glass wind [together] and funnel you into the entry area. I like to have an element of surprise, where the

house is not revealed all at once but bit by bit."

The entryway reveals a living room with impressive curved ceiling beams and a stunning view of the surrounding woods. Large windows outline an impressive stone fireplace and polished concrete completes the contemporary look. A long modular couch and modern chairs offer plenty of seating for entertaining.

In the kitchen, a long, horizontal window provides views into the surrounding trees. It can also be opened to fill the room with fresh air. White glass covers the cabinets, adding to the clean, contemporary theme. The long island and abundance of counter-top space allows large groups to prepare meals and dine together, another of Strait's favorite aspects of his home.

Open to the kitchen, the dining room features a simple, yet impressive table and chair set. The open space allows for flexibility and added seating for entertaining. In the far corner of the dining room, a floor-to-ceiling, curved glass window offers a pleasant surprise. "People seem to really like the [window]," Wittman says.



above The glass-topped dining room table is an extension of the contemporary design and offers plenty of room to seat family and friends.

below Not a room was forgotten when creating opportunities for enjoying the landscape from inside the home. Even the master bathroom boasts large windows that allow natural light to flood into the space.

A master suite completes the main floor. Large windows and natural light continue into the couple's peaceful retreat. Carrara marble from Italy creates a rich feel in the master bathroom. A bright white color palette completes the luxurious space.

As for the exterior landscape, Wittman says they simply amplified the natural beauty. They selectively manicured the existing landscape and added rocks, gravel and bushes. The hillside was planted with Asiatic Jasmine and native flowers. Select areas were paved with river rock to allow for drainage on the steep slope. Several outdoor areas, including two patios and decks off the living room and master suite, allow space for enjoying the scenery. "Providing various opportunities for outdoor living was an important design consideration," Wittman says.

This attention to the natural landscape throughout the design process results in a home that brings the outside into every room. The fluid continuation of scenery and contemporary style makes this home a work of art. TH&L

