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THE DRAGONFLY HOUSE

After Ashlee Johnson and Chuck Mooney found themselves literally tried by fire, they set out to design a meaningful new home — named after a special winged insect — for their midcentury-inspired, eco-friendly way of life.

by Amber Bell
photography by Olaf Growald

The dining space is simple yet elegant with a West Elm white lacquer-top table and a sleek Nelson Saucer Bubble Pendant from Nelson Bubble Lamps. A gorgeous 1961 Steinway piano resides nearby, restored by Collora Piano in Dallas. "A husband bought it for his wife in the 1960s, and after owning it for over 30 years, they donated it to a Catholic school where it remained until Collora purchased it at auction," says Ashlee, who purchased it the very day she found it. Above the piano are eight framed photos from a London-based Etsy shop, featuring various music icons beloved by the family, including Fleetwood Mac. "It's a really fun conversation piece. Anyone who can come in and name them all gets a gold star!"

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When Fort Worth native Ashlee Johnson began house hunting in Aledo for a home closer to her partner, Chuck Mooney, and her family, she had no idea of the life-altering journey that awaited. Just four months after she and her children — Campbell, 16, and Claudia, 14 — moved into their brand-new spec house in the Lost Creek neighborhood, a fire broke out and claimed everything.

Campbell had been at home when it started and escaped by knotting his bed sheets together and climbing down from his second-story window, suffering second-degree burns and cuts along the way. Meanwhile, Ashlee was at Cook Children's hospital with her daughter who was undergoing a major spinal fusion surgery. Her son called from the neighbor's house to tell his mom their home was ablaze, and when Ashlee arrived at the scene, it was nothing but charred remnants.

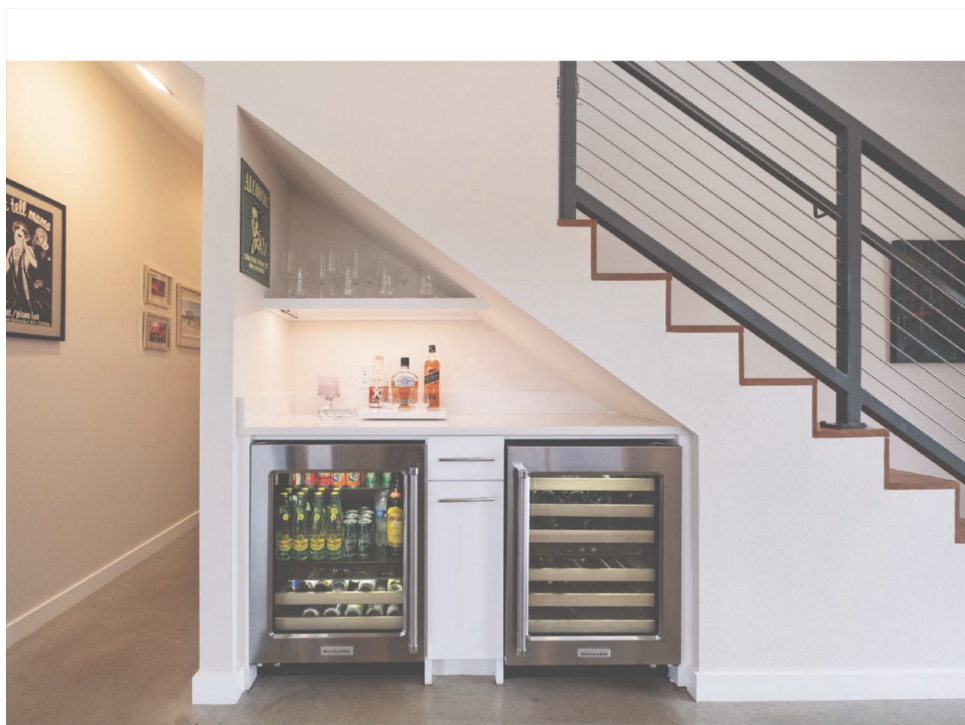
The family relocated to a condo in downtown Fort Worth while they began the rebuilding process, and both Campbell and Claudia made full recoveries. "When you lose everything like we did, you realize how little you actually need," says Ashlee, general manager and co-owner of The Ashton Depot Catering and Events. "So, when we started from scratch, I said, 'Let's only replace the things we really want and that we really love.'"

She and Chuck designed the new house on their original lot, which includes part of Mary's Creek and backs up to Walsh Ranch. Completed in April 2017, the 2,900-square-foot, modern build touts a neutral-toned, anti-flammable HardiPlank exterior and dark gray stacked stone for a midcentury mod appeal. They also incorporated numerous energy-efficient details like spray foam insulation, galvanized metal roofing and a 1,500-gallon rainwater cistern, which they use to water the landscape designed by Michael Kinler from Redenta's Garden. There's also Milgard windows outfitted with 10 percent visibility, glare-reducing solar shades from The Shade Store that are carefully placed around the home to maximize interior air flow.

The real pièce de résistance is the 36 solar panels that deliver 100 percent of the home's power. Chuck — who provides credit card processing and ATMs for local businesses — initially spearheaded the sustainable approach, which has always been important to him, but Ashlee was quick to jump on board. "Chuck doesn't put a single chemical on our lawn," she explains. "And



Ashlee procured many of the home's pieces from West Elm, including a comfy living room sofa and stylish end tables. She and Chuck chose to use the original concrete slab as flooring and simply had it polished for a finished look. Clean white walls feature several colorful works from Dallas-based artist Julia Briggs, like the aptly dubbed "Penthouse Pool Party" acrylic on canvas that depicts a trio of cocktail-sipping women by the water.



we're always recycling and composting our food and everything."

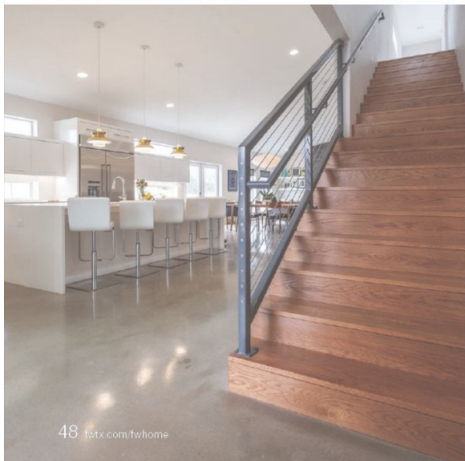
The pair worked closely with Ferrier Custom Homes owner Don Ferrier and his daughter, Heather Ferrier, the company's general manager and fourth generation namesake. Known for their design savvy and green-minded homes — Don was named National Association of Home Builders' Green Builder Advocate of the year — the Ferriers enabled Ashlee and Chuck to bring their inspired vision to life. And in 2018, the residence won a Housing Innovation Award from The Department of Energy.

The three-bedroom, 3 1/2-bath setup is largely one story with the exception of Campbell's spacious second-floor room. It connects to an outdoor rooftop patio, which also provides a valuable secondary exit in case of an emergency. (Though, Ashlee quips, they'll likely never have another fire and have a

FEMA-approved F5 tornado shelter in the garage.)

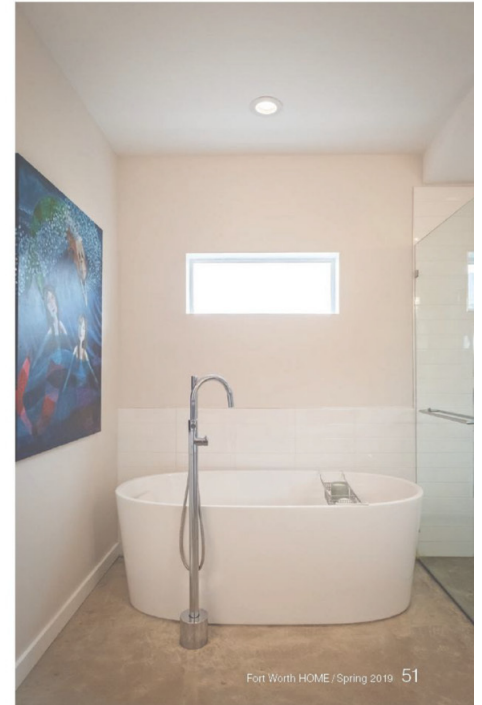
Claudia's bedroom, the great room — which consists of the kitchen, living, study area, wet bar and dining space — and the master bedroom comprise the lower level. "I bought all the furniture before the house was built," says Ashlee, who worked with a West Elm designer to outfit the rooms. "We spent a lot of time measuring, comparing against the architectural plans and doing storyboards so we could visualize how it would look."

In the spirit of transformation and adaptation, Ashlee and her family affectionately named their home the Dragonfly House. "My daughter sketched a beautiful dragonfly for me that first Christmas after the fire, before we'd even moved into the house," says the proud mom and partner. "We learned they symbolize our ability to overcome times of hardship." 🏠



The all-white, clean-lined kitchen is airy and bright with a set of three brass Doo-Wop pendant lights by Louis Poulsen above the island. "Instead of a traditional kitchen backsplash, we opted for windows above and below the cabinets," says Ashlee. "There is so much natural light that during the day there is no need to turn the lights on at all."

Ashlee lived in New York for a decade while working as a recruiter for financial services on Wall Street, so she has odes to her beloved city throughout the home. One of her prized possessions is a two-piece painting of the New York skyline by Dallas-based artist Julia Briggs. It hangs above a seating area in the master bedroom occupied by a pair of Aegian-hued leather chairs by Roar + Rabbit from West Elm and a pretty, blue-toned rug.



Though the home's aesthetic is mostly neutral, some rooms feature a splash of understated color.



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