

A photograph of a modern cabin in the woods at dusk. The cabin features a combination of light-colored stone and dark wood siding. It has a dark, flat roof with wide eaves. Large windows and a glass door are illuminated from within, showing a warm interior. The cabin is surrounded by dense green trees, and the foreground is a gravel area.

The Getaway

A modern "cabin in the woods" offers its owner a weekend getaway for peace, quiet and maybe a little stargazing. Paddling the Brazos is a bonus.

TheRiverHouse

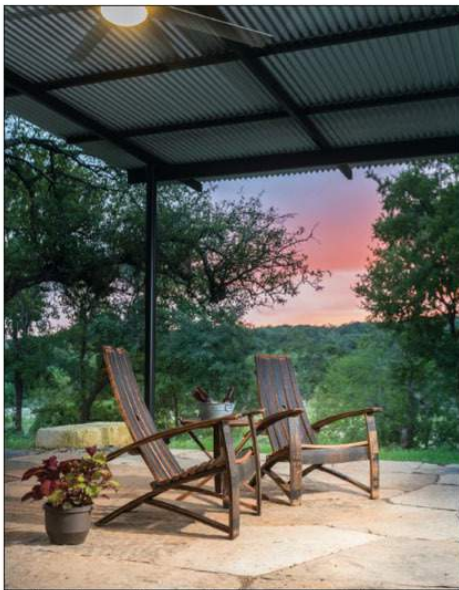
By Meda Kessler Exterior photos by Jeremy Enlow



A weekend home near the Brazos River is environmentally friendly (solar panels, water capture system, sustainable materials), and the design is striking, inside and out.



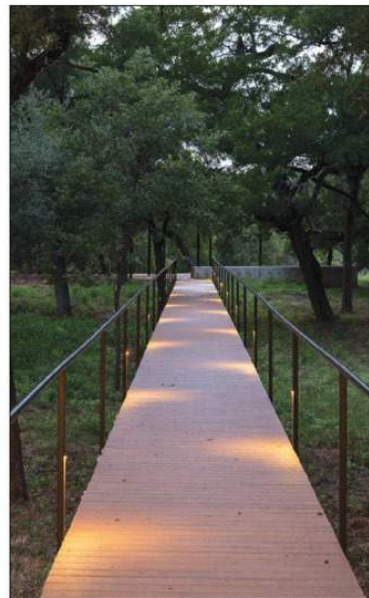
While nature rules on this 26-acre property, Michael Kinler of Redenta's Landscape Design created walkways, paths, pavilions and patios to make getting around and enjoying the outdoors a little easier. A low concrete wall, gravelled parking area and concrete steps lead to a clearing used as an outdoor living room.



A partially covered flagstone patio offers views of grazing deer, sunsets and, of course, the Brazos.

I want to see stars. And I want to be near water.” Those were two of Dave Smith’s biggest priorities when he began looking for property for a weekend home. Smith runs a Fort Worth-based aerospace company and was in search of a getaway that wasn’t an all-day trek but was far enough away to feel like a true vacation spot.

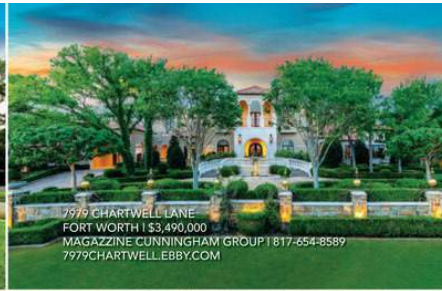
He found some acreage about 90 minutes away near the Brazos River in Mineral Wells — fitting, as Smith is a fan of John Graves’ *Goodbye to a River*. He was drawn to the undeveloped acreage where the river meandered along one edge, the low water exposing expanses of granite cliffs and large sandbars. Majestic post oaks and other native trees dotted the undulating property, and at nightfall, the sky twinkled with pinpoints of light in



Kinler designed the 200-foot elevated boardwalk that Ferrier Custom Homes built of a composite material for durability. It connects the home to a patio near the river and uses LED lights to subtly illuminate the way after dark.



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The Getaway

The 100-year flood plain prevented the house from being sited closer to the river, but the view from the banks of the Brazos is spectacular.

TheRiverHouse



The pavilion features steel-edge steps that help to define the space. A low concrete wall creates more seating. A steel frame is half covered with corrugated galvanized steel and metal cattle panels. Wisteria planted near the posts will someday provide shade.

multitudes such as one never sees in the city.

While Smith had found the perfect spot for his weekend home, the next challenge was to build it, which required improving a dirt road just to get there. One of his main goals was to make the house sustainable. He had met Fort Worth's Don Ferrier after looking at the builder's commercial work. Don and daughter Heather are known for their green design and construction. "He wasn't quite the



The path in front of the house leads up to a gathering space on an elevated spot defined by more steel edging. Quarry blocks of limestone were set up as seating. Old-growth trees shade the area.

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The Getaway

The home's interior is a soothing retreat, and plentiful windows ensure nature is the star of the show. Area rugs throughout the home are from Feizy. A stacked stone wall in the living room features floating shelves with built-in lighting. A pair of Selva Italian leather chairs and a Burton James sectional offer comfortable options for after-dinner gatherings.



Interior photos by
Focus-Fort Worth
Photography

The RiverHouse

right fit for our office project," says Smith, "but I thought if I ever built a vacation home, I would like something more modern."

A chance discovery at Southlake's Art in the Square

festival provided inspiration for the house Smith's interior designers eventually dubbed "A River Runs Through." Drawn to the work of Flower Mound artist Erika Bushee of Art Rocks Studio, who creates three-dimensional pieces using thin slabs of slate and river rock, Smith commissioned a custom piece for the Brazos house.

Early building efforts were not without their problems. Hopes of siting the home near the river were dashed after Smith learned that it would put the structure in the flood plain. Luckily, building on another spot close by also allowed preservation of



It's only fitting that homeowner Dave Smith has a signed, first-edition copy of *Goodbye to a River*.

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The bathrooms feature dark tile with lots of texture and pattern. The black floor tile is low maintenance and user-friendly.

The RiverHouse

most of the trees, another must on Smith's list. The distance from the river prompted a design feature — a long boardwalk — that's now one of the home's more unusual features.

While the house looks like a modern cabin in the woods, it's built to be as energy efficient as possible, using structural insulated panels faced with locally sourced rock and wood. A deep overhang helps shade the interior. The house is solar powered, and it captures 100 percent of rainfall. All the plumbing is low-flow; the lighting is all LED. "Since it was a weekend house, Dave wanted it to be off the grid as much as possible," says Heather Ferrier.

Designers Judy Jones and Shelly Bessonette of SAJ Interior Design



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The master bedroom features luxurious touches like the Cassina taupe saddle leather bed from Scott + Cooner and art commissioned from an artist sourced at the Main St. Fort Worth Arts Festival.

The Getaway

TheRiver House

worked with the Ferriers and the homeowner during the building process of the 3,000-square-foot house. The women had worked with Smith before, in designing both his office and his Fort Worth home. They suggested adding more windows to the spacious living-dining-kitchen area, giving the house a more open feel while maintaining its energy efficiency.

For the interior, they came up with a comfortable and low maintenance look that complements the clean lines and glass expanses of the modern exterior. "We've known Dave a long time," says Bessonette, "so he has become a friend as well as a client. This project was an exciting one because it was more contemporary. It also was challenging because of the remote location, and there was a learning curve in

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TheRiverHouse

THE DETAILS

Design build Ferrier Custom Homes, ferriercustomhomes.com

Interior design SAJ Interior Design, sajinteriordesign.com

Landscape design build Redenta's Landscape Design, redentas.com

Wood flooring Green World Industries Masterpiece Donatello hickory from ProSource Fort Worth, prosourcewholesale.com

Tile Bathroom, hallway flooring: Walker Zanger Black Naturale Cemento; kitchen backsplash: Walker Zanger Stardust Midnight, Walker Zanger Dallas, walkerzanger.com. Master bath shower: Marble Silver Waves, Interoceramic Tile & Stone Gallery Fort Worth, interoceramica.com. Guest bath: Mod Valley Pewter, Renaissance Tile & Bath Dallas, renaissance tileandbath.com

Bath fixtures Brizo Siderma Collection, Ferguson Bath, Kitchen & Lighting Gallery Fort Worth, ferguson.com

Kitchen and bath countertops Caesarstone, ProSource Fort Worth, prosourcewholesale.com

Lighting Custom dining room pendants: Hubbardton Forge Zephyr; outdoor entry sconces: Hubbardton Forge Collage, Ferguson Bath, Kitchen & Lighting Gallery Fort Worth, ferguson.com

Fans Minka Aire, Ferguson Bath, Kitchen & Lighting Gallery Fort Worth, ferguson.com

Furniture Select pieces from C. Maddox & Co., Dallas Market Center; Cantoni Dallas, cantoni.com; David Sutherland Showroom Dallas, davidsutherlandshowroom.com; Scott + Cooner Dallas, scottcooner.com



SAJ Interior Design came up with the concept for the cantilevered table, which was built by Don Ferrier. Up side chairs with walnut arms and legs are from Cantoni. The homeowner loves to use his pellet grill, located outside just steps away. He also approves of the Kegerator located at the end of the kitchen counter. The solid-surface Caesarstone complements the earthy Walker Zanger tile backsplash.

working with a green house."

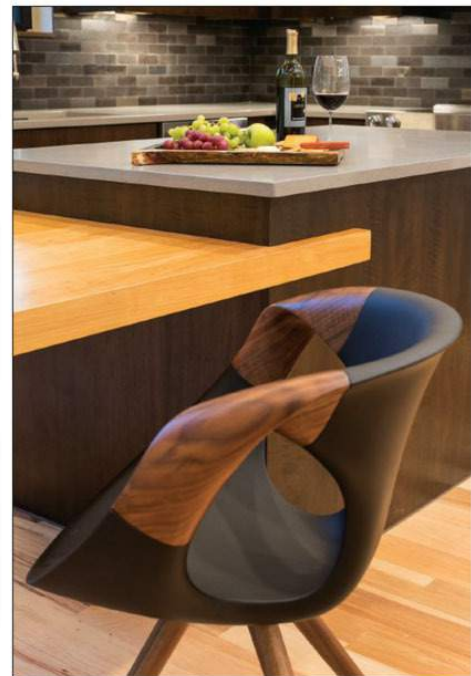
Materials, including hickory and tile used on the floors, are sophisticated but also user-friendly for the guest roster that includes friends, family and dogs.

Furnishings are minimal and carefully selected for their function and form. "Dave went with us to pick out pieces such as the sectional, as he wanted them to be comfortable," says Bessonette.

Design choices were made with the river and land in mind, too. The triple pendant light over the dining table resembles a curving stream. A stone feature wall in the living room picks up on the natural surroundings, as do the beams in the ceiling. The tall casement windows crank open, allowing breezes to blow in; skylights in the bathrooms brighten the rooms. The commissioned artwork with its river resonance hangs prominently in the dining area.



Even the exterior light sconces, sourced from Ferguson Bath, Kitchen & Lighting Gallery in Fort Worth, offer an artistic touch.



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Flower Mound artist Erika Bushee's art inspired much of the "natural" look of the home. The custom triptych is the sole piece of wall art in the living area, artfully displayed above a Hellman-Chang Meridian console from David Sutherland.

The Getaway

The River House

While landscaping is pretty much being left to Mother Nature, the Ferriers brought in Michael Kinler of Redenta's Landscape Design to add some special touches. Kinler was charged with keeping the property looking natural while creating an arrival area in front of the home, a gathering space on an elevated clearing under a canopy of trees and a pavilion closer to the river. Low concrete walls create seating; wide concrete steps allow an easy walk to the elevated "patio" where Smith hosted a party for his newlywed daughter. A 200-foot-long elevated boardwalk Kinler designed to connect the river pavilion and the house is one of the property's most attractive organic features. The result is accessible seating areas shaded by the trees where one can settle in to watch birds and deer and, of course, the stars. **361**

