

ECLECTIC EXPRESSION

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If you have ever driven down Country Club Lane, you have probably noticed Sissy and Mac McAllister's home with its warm beige stucco and red clay tile roof standing tall above the privacy fence that separates it from Texarkana Country Club. The angular lines of the modern, Spanish architecture and palm trees playfully peeking over the fence stand out amongst the other more traditional homes in the area.

The house, originally designed by architect Larry McGowan, was built for Texarkana golfer Tony Meredith in 1974. "I remember Tony from when I was a child. We'd go follow and watch the Texarkana Country Club Championship. He was a great golfer and won the club championship several times," explained Sissy. "After we bought the house, I was told that Tony had also loved all things Mexican, and that inspired him to build a Spanish-style house."

Spanish characteristics start long before you enter the home. Besides the aforementioned stucco and clay tile, the house is accentuated by several wrought iron features. Juliet balconies

adorn the back of the house with their graceful shapes that swell out, curving back in at the bottom; decorative c-scrolls and fleur-de-lis topped balusters add even further detail. Below the balconies are decorative metal brackets, while above the balconies are black canvas awnings supported by twisted, wrought iron posts.

The beautiful, wooden front doors were crafted from V-groove paneling and have decorative clavos and long metal handles. "Tony had the front doors, and maybe some of the other doors, imported," said Sissy. "And this Saltillo tile is original." Looking down as you walk inside, you will notice the beautiful orange tile that continues from the front porch, into the house, throughout the downstairs, and out onto the back patio. The McAllisters have taken great care to preserve many of the wonderful, original features, but they have also certainly added their distinct personality to this beautiful property.

Along the back wall of the living room is a series of glass doors that allow your sightline to continue across the back patio, over the pool, and straight to the golf course. The living room also has



two-story ceilings accented with dark wooden beams and is separated from the dining room by a fireplace with a striking red mantle. Above the fireplace hangs a collection of Mexican Batea bowls Sissy has collected over the years. Their fun, floral motif plays off the mix of bold patterns and vibrant colors found throughout the room.

Looking around, it is clear the McAllisters love and appreciate art of all kinds. Sissy is an artist herself, and many of the pieces are her personal works. "I guess my lifelong goal was to make a silk purse out of a sow's ear," Sissy said, laughing. "I find the junk things and think, 'That could be wonderful.' The [living room coffee] table was originally an old mill wheel I found in two pieces at a junk store

when we lived in Missouri, and I thought it was interesting, so I had someone make the metal legs and cut a piece of glass for the top." She is also responsible for a number of other unique pieces throughout the space: beautiful paintings, refinished furniture, and amazing clay paper faces.

Throughout the house, you find one unique piece after another, each with its own intriguing story of how it came to be. Most interestingly was the tale about the skyline painting hanging behind their sofa that Mac acquired rather unusually. "I met this really talented, interesting guy," Mac recounted fondly. "We were at his house carrying on, and I saw this really cool painting, so I offered to



buy it. He said, 'I won't sell it.'" Undaunted, Mac asked, "What if I wash the dishes for it? He said, 'If you wash the dishes, I'll give it to you.' So, I washed all the dishes."

From the living room, making your way down into the family room, you enter a cozy space with ample seating and a fun, eclectic vibe. Here, the McAllisters added a second fireplace on the far end, flanked on one side by two pinball machines and on the other by an oversized poster of John Wayne and a series of framed gun prints. Down the adjoining wall, they added a large built-in bookcase with storage. Opposite the fireplace is a bar area complete with a slot machine. "The pinball machines are about 50 years old. They are the last of the analog machines made before pinball machines all went digital," said Mac, "I was able to buy them right out of the box. The slot machine



is about 70 years old. It wasn't bought new, but [it] does still work." Sissy then added with a laugh, "You can bring your own nickels or play with ours. We just ask that if you play with ours, you leave any winnings."

While this one-of-a-kind house is fittingly full of colorful, textural art and unique pieces, the thing that drew Sissy and Mac back to her hometown was really the beauty of the adjacent golf course. "When we decided to move south to find more golf days, I never dreamed

I'd end up in Texarkana, Arkansas, with palm trees in my yard, and maybe pine, pecan, or oak," said Sissy. "But the views, especially from the Juliet balconies upstairs, are amazing. You can see the greens and all the lakes. We wanted someplace comfortable where [you can] set your glass down or put your feet up." ❶