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# CREATIVE COLLABORATION

For a Little Rock builder and his wife, working on their own home with a talented interior designer leads to a rewarding partnership and a beautifully versatile family environment



**ABOVE:** In the entryway, rich wood, wrought iron and shades of gold set the tone for the look of the rest of the home. **FACING PAGE:** To add interest to the color scheme of golds and neutrals, in the dining room, Tobi chose fabrics in a variety of patterns, including the cord chaperones, damask and striped prints on the chairs, and graphic rug.





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—RICHARD HARP



THOUGH HE'S NOW ONE of Little Rock's top builders, Richard Harp began his career by building a 1,500-square-foot home in Fayetteville and organizing his receipts in a shoebox. "When my mom heard that, she offered to start entering invoices into Quickbooks!" he says. Despite his low-tech beginnings, the experience gave him a strong background in every aspect of home building, from the ground up, and after relocating to Little Rock, he launched his own business, Richard Harp Homes. Today, his work ranges from remodels to custom-designed homes, and he prides himself on being an expert in using energy-efficient building technologies, computer-based project management and home automation.

When Richard and his wife, Brandy, began thinking about building a new home for their family, including daughter Isabella and son Nicholas, the Bella Rosa Estates neighborhood was a natural choice, because Richard and his business partners had just begun developing it. "We enjoy the lot size and relative seclusion, yet we really have quick access to the major Little Rock corridors," Brandy says. In addition, Richard, who is a certified graduate builder and a certified green professional with the National Association of Home Builders, wanted to make the home as energy-efficient as possible, eventually earning designation as an Energy Star Partner.

Around the same time, interior designer Tobi Paisley of Tobi Paisley Interior Design began exploring the possibilities of a professional partnership with Richard. "I knew Brandy and Richard from Junior League events, and I invited him into my office to see our design process," Tobi says. Immediately impressed, Richard asked her to meet with Brandy to discuss the design of their personal home. "The timing was perfect to form a partnership," says Richard. The trio began an incredibly rewarding collaboration on the space. "I kept the structural and utilitarian interests in mind, and Brandy and Tobi ensured the spaces were matched with the correct fabrics, colors and furnishings. So, as a team we built the house together," he says.

**CLOCKWISE FROM BELOW:** Richard and Brandy spend most of their time with two-year-old Isabella and five-month-old Nicholas in the open hearth room and kitchen. In the kitchen, Tobi combined a light glaze on the cabinets with a heavy, distressed finish on the island, completing the look with the glazed subway-tile backsplash for a youthful touch that complements the overall French aesthetic. The hearth room is accented with architectural drawings, a nod to Richard's passion for his career building and remodeling homes. **FACING PAGE:** The stone and stucco exterior and gray-blue roof are the perfect execution of Richard and Brandy's vision. "Richard is extremely organized," Tobi says. "In fact, the project was finished ahead of schedule."



Throughout the home, French-inspired design was a major influence. "The home was certainly inspired by French country design but executed in a simple way," Tobi says. "The interiors are not overly accented, which gives it a very updated and fresh feel and allows the architectural elements to stand out." A European color palette of blues, yellows and creams is a unifying element, from the floral and silk fabrics inside to the stone and stucco exterior and gray-blue roof. The hand-scraped hardwood floors, Mansfield-style fireplace with cast-iron surround and wrought-iron, travertine and granite finishes were all carefully chosen to create an overall atmosphere of relaxed elegance. Large windows allow beautiful views and copious natural sunlight. "We used traversing drapery on all the windows so that they could maintain the views and have total control over the amount of light in the space throughout the day and into the evenings," says Tobi.

While creating a cohesive look for the home was essential to the Herps, it was also necessary that the home meet their needs as a family and have an open floor plan for entertaining. The master bedroom and children's bedrooms are on the first floor, making it easy for Richard to check in on the kids from his home office, while



In this great room, the soft patterns and colors let the architectural elements, including the arches and columns, truly shine, to show the abundance of natural light.





**ABOVE:** Designed for relaxing, the master bedroom includes a fireplace and sitting area, all outfitted in monochromatic fabrics in a variety of patterns and textures. **RIGHT:** Luxury is the key in the master bathroom, from the chandelier to the marble columns.

the evenings find the family congregating in the open heart's room and kitchen. The master bedroom, however, was designed as a private retreat for Beverly and Richard, including a sitting area, stunning master bath and a second laundry facility. "The monochromatic color palette in the master suite is so serene and relaxing," Tobá says. In fact, the finishes throughout the home are perfect for a busy family, thanks to their slightly rough-hewn nature. "Even though the influence is somewhat formal, the finishes are distressed and casual which covers a multitude of 'sins' when it comes to wear and tear from the kids," she continues.

For Tobá and the Harps, the finished collaboration is far more rewarding than anything they could have created singly. Whether for family time, business or entertaining, the home is an ideal environment and a testament to all of their talents. "Richard made my job easier because his great knowledge of product and the building process helped translate my design ideas into structural elements," says Tobá.

