



**LIGHT AND BRIGHT**

Most of the builder's features were redesigned by Nina Magon before construction began. A focal point of the living room is the modern fireplace, with a dramatic wooden detail leading to the ceiling. The sofa and chairs are by Roche Bobois, and the rug is by Surya. A coffee table by Modigliani and a drink table by All Modern add the finishing touches.

HOUSTON  
**MODERN  
MIRACLE**

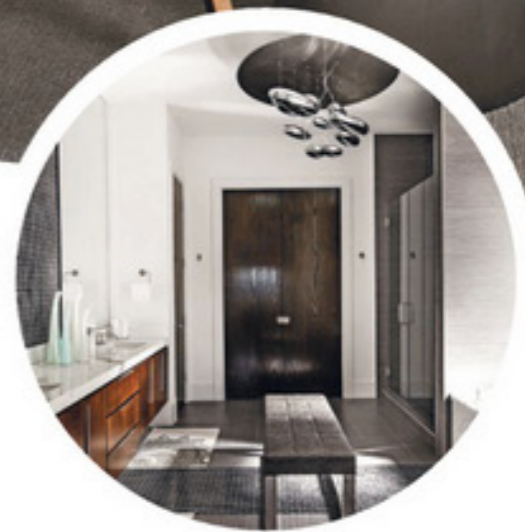
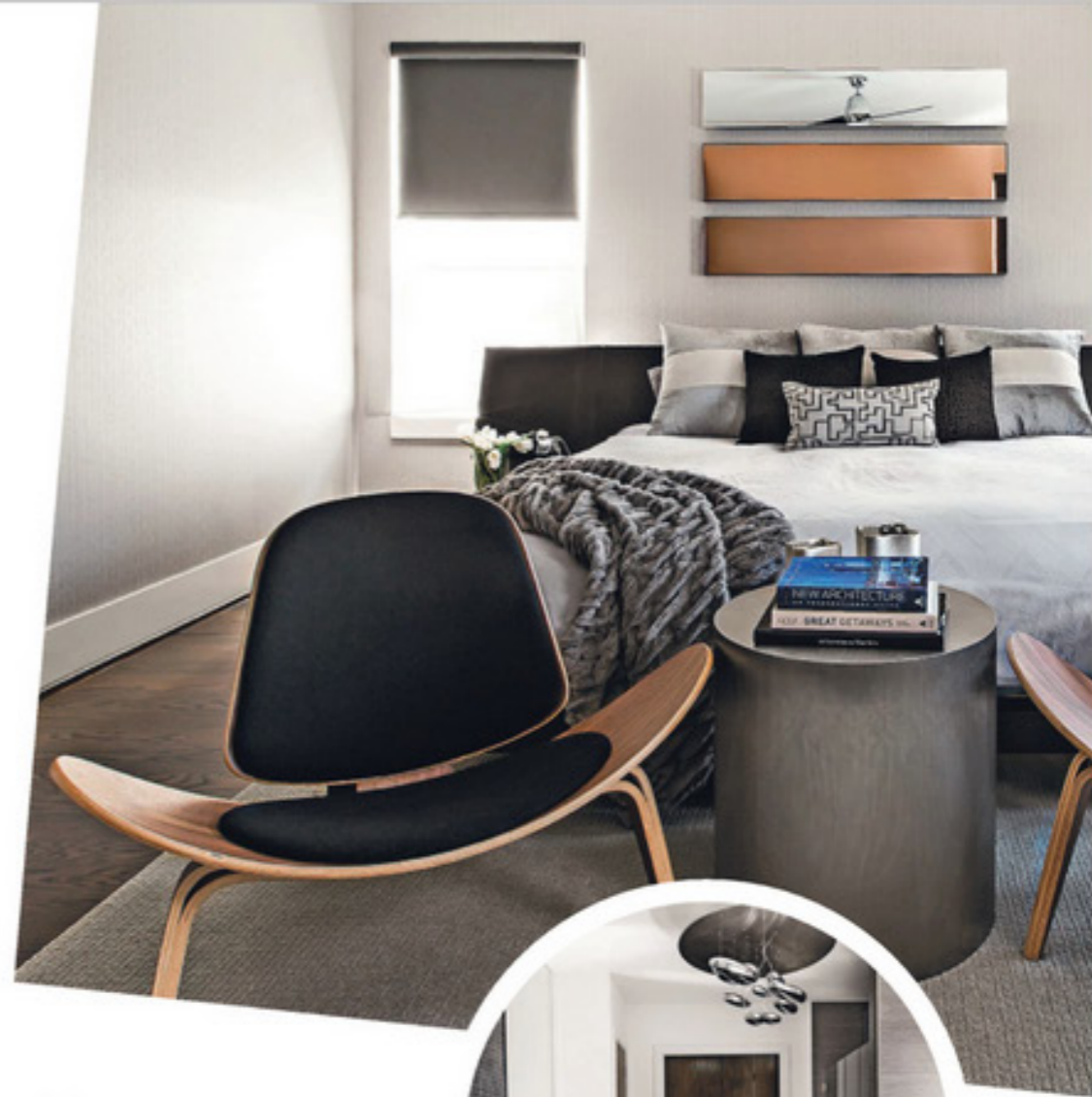
Nina Magon converts a builder house into a contemporary showplace in Houston.  
By Connie Dufner | Photography by Laurie Perez

The West Houston house that Nina Magon designed for a two-physician couple with young children was remodeled even before the first brick was laid. The owners wanted a new, modern house, but in the master-planned community they had bought into, there were only a handful of plans to choose from, and none offered what they were looking for.

Enter Magon of Contour Interior Design, who challenged the builder at every step of the way until her clients got the home of their dreams. "They didn't love us," she allows. "We moved beams, changed staircases, added glass, laid the driveway in pavers with grass in between and installed square lights," says Magon. "It's basically a traditional house turned modern."

In fact, during the remodeling and building process, so many people peeked in the windows or stopped by to see what Magon's clients were doing that the neighbors ended up asking the builder to incorporate changes into their homes. "It was a little bit of a drama," Magon says. "The floor plan was duplicated four times in the neighborhood. After a while, the owners didn't allow too many people in the house, as they didn't want anyone else to copy their floor plans."

The house opens into a striking living room, retrofitted with large windows. "The original windows were smaller and had more mullions with traditional vinyl. We changed as many as we could into aluminum and changed the sizes to huge storefront windows," Magon says. "We got them as big as we could."



**THE GLAM MENAGERIE** From top: The downstairs master bedroom features a table and chairs by Nuevo; the master bath includes the statement-making Mercury chandelier from Artemide, the Mirage crocodile bench from Sunjon Modem, mats by Thomas Paul and countertops in statuary venato marble from Italy. Opposite page: An art installation made from Alabastri di Rex tile commands the dining room wall. The table and chairs are from Cantoni, and the rug is from Surya. The Etoile chandelier by Slamp completes the modern room.

The floors, fireplace surround and bench are done in 24-inch square white porcelain tile with a print that looks like marble. "All the downstairs was spec-ed for carpet," Magon says. "We took it all out." The traditional fireplace made way for a linear 60-inch fireplace. A focal point of the room is the striking wooden detail leading from the fireplace to the ceiling, created from 4-inch planks painted in an ebony and dark walnut stain.

The staircase, originally curved, was altered to be straight, with glass and metal railings. The sofa and side chairs are from Roche Bobois; the rug is from Surya; and the coffee table is from Modloft. "The homeowners were from Africa. They wanted colors that reminded them of the country. They chose greens, blues and yellows for accent colors. We wanted to keep all the architectural

details neutral, and they knew they could always replace the colors."

A dramatic mosaic of Alabastri di Rex tile from Horizon Tile as an art piece makes a statement on the dining room wall. The material is a stone floor tile that can be arranged in abstract patterns. Around the Cantoni dining room table are six brown leather chairs and two bright-yellow accent chairs, all by Cantoni. The yellow chairs are draped with sheepskin. "Placing the yellow chairs at the heads is expected. We wanted to do something surprising, so we placed them randomly," she says.

"They really wanted something different," Magon says. "They said, 'We live in a cookie-cutter neighborhood. We want our house to stand out.'"

## Design Details

**Residence**  
Single-family house

**Location**  
Houston

**Interior Design**  
Nina Magon  
contourinteriordesign.com

**Vendors**  
**Roche Bobois**  
Spiral side chairs  
in living room  
roche-bobois.com

**Surya**  
Rugs throughout  
surya.com

**Modloft**  
Coffee table in living room,  
bed in master bedroom  
modloft.com

**All Modern**  
Drink table in living room  
allmodern.com

**Cantoni**  
Table and chairs in  
dining room, side tables  
in master bedroom  
cantoni.com

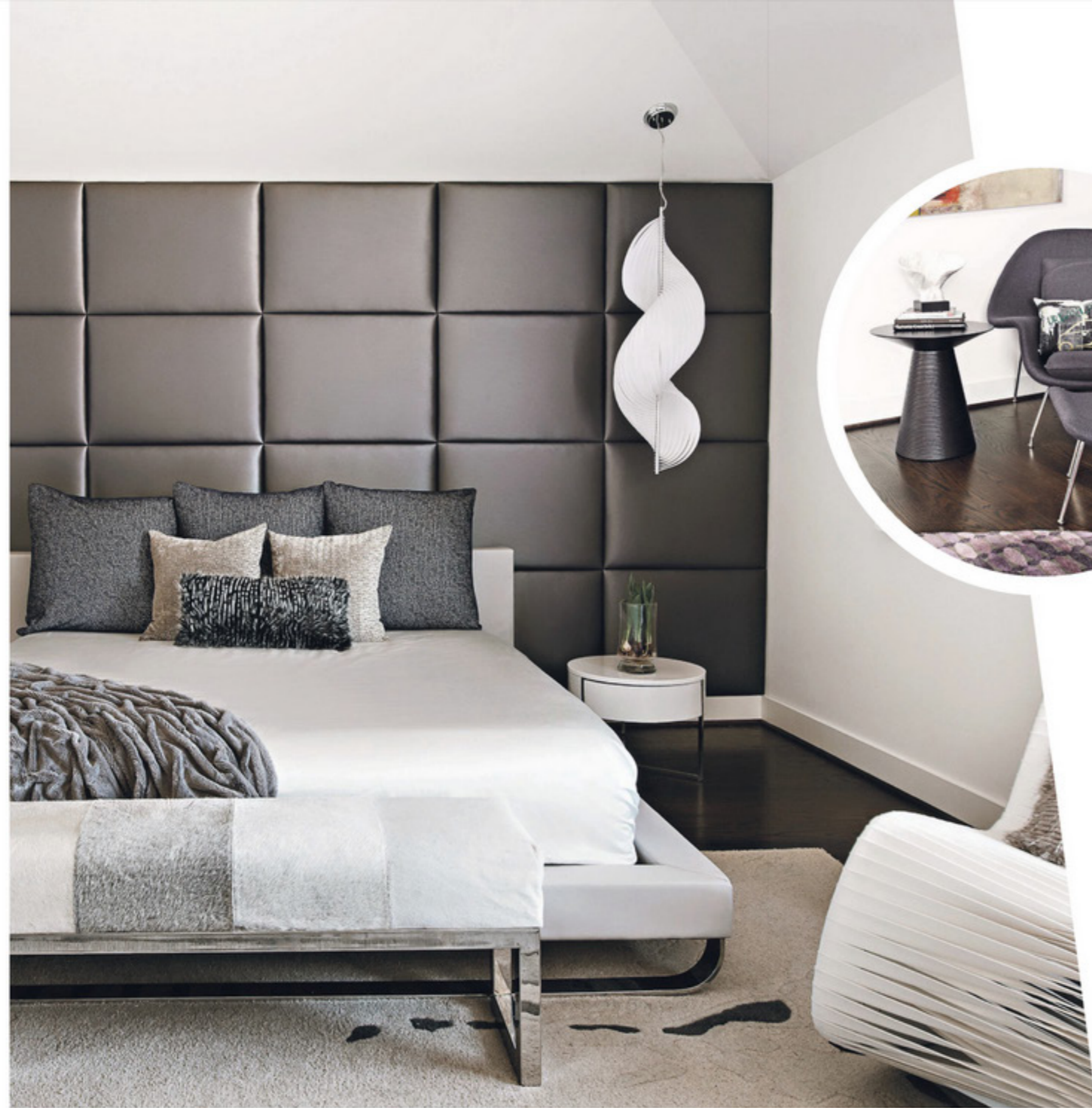
**Slamp**  
Chandelier in dining room  
slamp.com

**Artemide**  
Chandelier in master bath  
artemide.us

**Sunpan Modern**  
Bench in master bath  
sunpan.com

**Nuevo**  
Twirl pendant lamps and  
table in master bedroom  
nuevaliving.com

**Zuo Mod**  
Chair in reading nook  
zuomod.com



**CONTEMPORARY COOL**  
From top: A chair from Zuo and table by Nuevo form a stylish reading nook; designer Nina Magon. Opposite page: In the master bedroom, a Modloft bed rests against an upholstery wall headboard. The white rocking chair is from Phillips Collection. Cantoni side tables, a Surya rug and an Interlude bench underscore the sleek and soothing environment.

The house is 4,600 square feet, with five bedrooms. Started in early 2012, it took two years to complete the building and an additional year to finish furnishing it. During that time, Magon got to know the family well and, in fact, was present for the birth of the couple's daughter. And while Magon and her husband count them as friends, there were inevitable frustrations along the way. "In every client relationship, something happens that's rocky," Magon says. "First, we had the difficulty with the builder. Obviously the homeowners wanted everything custom, and you have to order the stuff. It doesn't come in the next day; it takes three months! We furnished the house from head to toe. There was one piece, a coffee table in the game room—we thought it looked like stone, but it was actually a chalky material. One day, they came home and there was chalk all over the house from the kids. We were in trouble."

With all the obstacles in their way, did the homeowners ever think about building from scratch? "We had multiple discussions about that," Magon says. "I asked why they decided to live here, and they said they didn't know. After we built the house, they got several offers to buy it... They moved into the house, and he's already been calling me. He's been looking at lots." ■

