



THE UNEXPECTED ROUTE HOME

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PHOTOS BY MATT CORNELIUS



There's a famous quote by Angela N. Blount that says, "Sometimes the most scenic roads in life are the detours you didn't mean to make."

This feels like the perfect introduction to the story behind Lisa and Mark Looney's new house. Unlike most new homeowners, the Looneys were not looking to move at all, much less build from scratch. Instead, it all started when Lisa had a friend from Hot Springs call and say she and her husband were headed to Texarkana for the day to look at houses. She wondered if Lisa had any insight into a couple of the houses they were considering, so Lisa invited them over for a visit. When the friend and her husband got to the Looney's, they fell in love with the house and asked Lisa if they could look around. After a thorough (self-guided) tour, the friends asked Lisa if they might consider selling and made an offer the Looneys accepted.

"We unexpectedly sold our other house. We didn't have anywhere to even move or go," Lisa explained, as though still shocked by how it all transpired. "I thought, 'What have I done? I didn't even ask my husband.'" Luckily, Lisa's cousin, Gayle Wright, invited Lisa and Mark to stay with her while they decided what to do next. They enjoyed staying with Gayle so much that they ended up buying some of her land and building right next door.

Even more than the blessing of time with family, the move continued to prove to be the right decision. Lisa had been experiencing some health issues, and mobility around their two-story house on a hill was becoming more and more difficult. "I was having orthopedic issues walking, and I couldn't even get up and down the stairs. My granddaughter's room was upstairs. She would say, 'Oh, Yaya, come up and let's go play,' and I'd have to say I couldn't because I'd just had knee surgery," she recalled sadly. "And the doctor was telling me that I'd need another, plus two hip replacements."

As a result, a primary focus in this new build was aging in place. Aging in place is a building concept where you plan a house that can accommodate different potential health issues as you age. For the Looneys, this meant placing importance on wide hallways and doors so wheelchairs or walkers could fit and considering features

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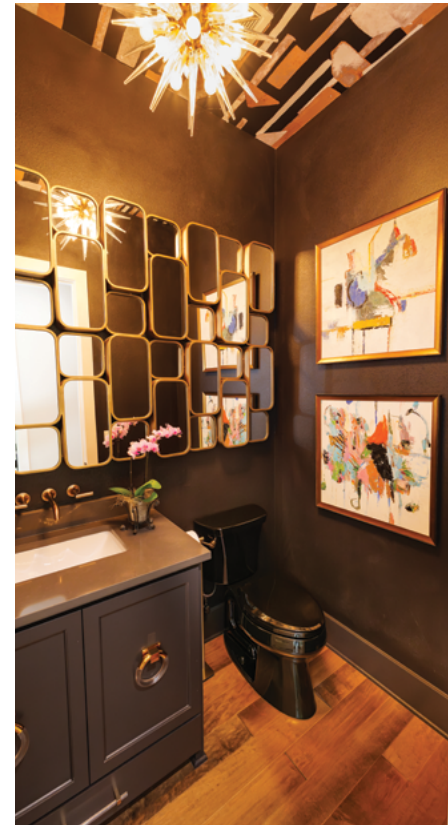
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like the touchless faucet in the kitchen, low-profile transitions between flooring surfaces, and motion-censored under-cabinet lighting in the primary bathroom for the middle of the night bathroom trips. The Looneys say Lynlee Harvey of Lynlee Builds, who helped with both the design and build processes, and Mike King, their general contractor, were integral in making sure the house is as functional as it is beautiful.

Be assured, the house is truly beautiful! When the wooded drive opens up, you are met with the strong horizontal lines of the exterior, adorned with buff lueder stone and dark metal siding made to look like wood but with less maintenance. The natural feel of the house allows it to sit with a quiet yet stately grandeur among the trees. It doesn't overpower the surrounding nature at all but feels perfectly appointed. The sightline from the front door goes straight through the back, with glass windows framing the trees outside.

Inside, you are met with even more of the warmth of nature. Décor choices have been made that incorporate varying textures of wood, stone, and leather. One of the highlight pieces of the home is the

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dining room table. "It's made from petrified wood that is basically thousands of years old, and it's really heavy. It took ten people to unload it and move it into the house. If we ever move, it's staying here," Lisa said with a laugh.

Continuing through the common areas of the house, you instantly notice that while the decor is very nature-based, it is still very chic. "Kyle Barrett of Dwayne Bergmann Interiors helped me with the decor, and I told him that we really wanted the house to be Colorado meets California—woody but with a modern feel," described Lisa. "We gave him an idea of what we wanted and he certainly delivered! He has such warmth, talent, and vision. We could not have been more pleased with the results."

In the kitchen, the oversized white oak island gives definition to the space and guarantees the Looneys have ample storage. Sophisticated mixed metal barstools with white leather cushions add just the right touch of glam Lisa was looking for. A striking white and tan quartz with lots of movement adorns the countertops and the backsplash and wraps the vent hood for a dramatic, one-of-a-kind feature. On the other end of the large common area is a fireplace made of rough-cut travertine marble with a central vein of raw steel that was pickled and torched by Scott Harris. The dramatic fireplace was then flanked by oversized contemporary paintings of trees in shades of white, gray, and gold.

Down the hallway in one direction, you find a special room set up just perfectly for visits from the Looney's granddaughter, Marni. Her room has been accented with buttery soft bedding in dreamy shades of muted pink, and in her bathroom are playful floral sconces and soft aqua cabinets. In the other direction is the primary suite. It is here you find Lisa's favorite sitting area, where she likes to spend quiet mornings enjoying her coffee while her ever-faithful companion, their precious dog Rock Hudson, keeps her company. "Hudson sits right here, with his head on the windowsill, watching all the wildlife outside," Lisa said.

The primary suite's bathroom includes a deep soaking tub for Lisa and a steam shower for Mark, as well as several fun personal pieces of art. "This piece is called a butt sketch," Lisa said while pointing to a



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beautifully drawn pencil sketch of a couple from the back. "In 2016, at the Mobley's wedding reception, they had a butt sketch artist, and you could get pictures drawn while you were there for a souvenir. So, we had our butts sketched, and I put it in a frame."

Art by other local artists, including Tyler Arnold and Kathi Couch, can be found throughout the house. One of the best parts about owning art purchased locally or by local artists is that each piece includes a story that the owner inevitably loves to share. "This picture was the first oil painting I ever bought, about 35 years ago. It might seem strange to have an oil painting in a laundry room, but I bought it at White's Glenwood House and had to pay for it over a year," described Lisa. "Kyle put it here because it's special to me. When I walk in and I see it, it feels like home."

In every part of the Looney's new home, you feel the warmth of their family through the meticulously chosen decor and the heartfelt stories behind each cherished piece. From the smallest details to the grandest gestures, it's a constant reminder to appreciate life's blessings and embrace unexpected changes with open arms. ①

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