




ARTISTS IN RESIDENCE

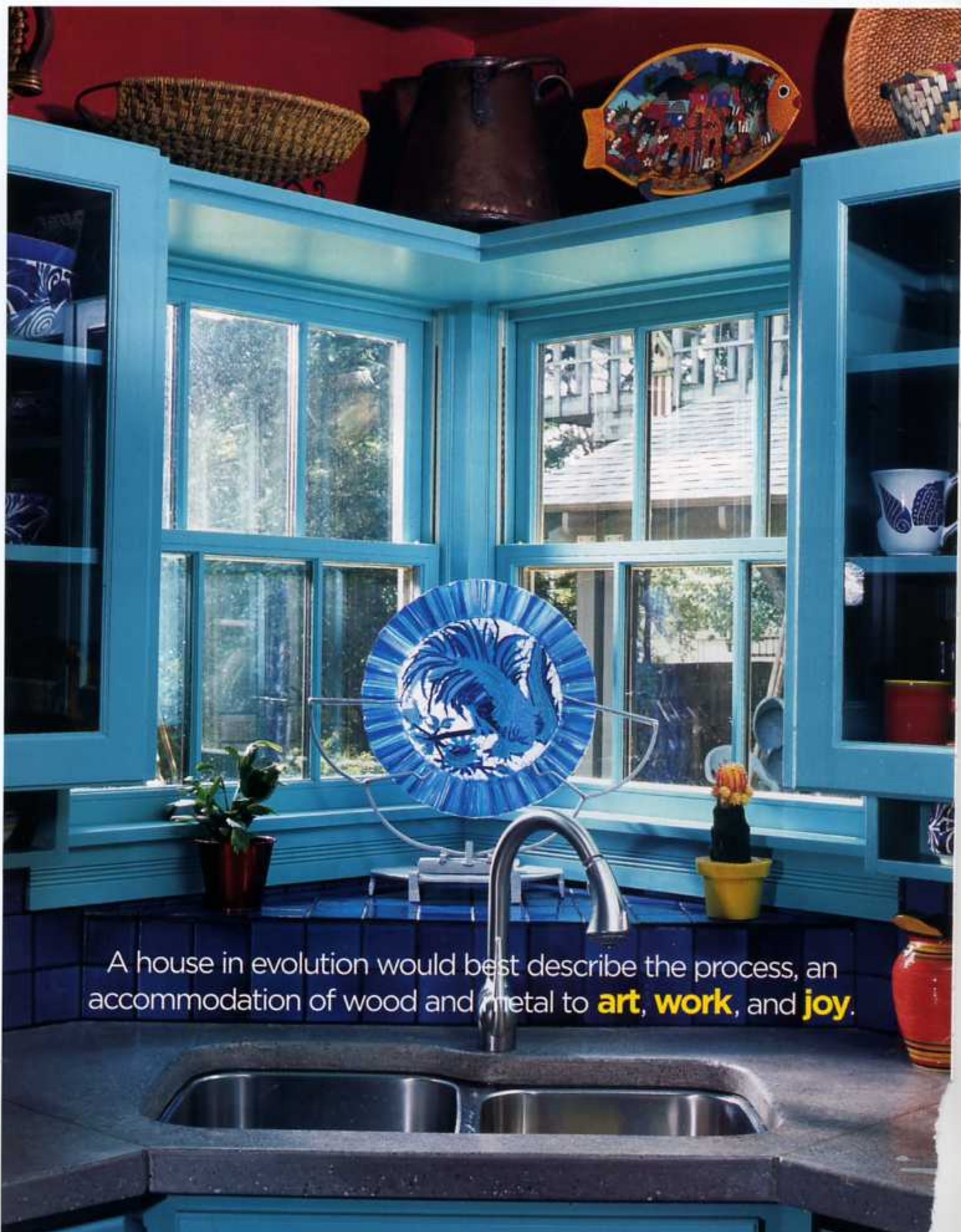
David and **Linda Hickman**
converted a tired old house
in East Dallas into a hip lab
for creative experimentation.





OPPOSITE PAGE (BOTTOM): His artistic temperament in full force, David Hickman rejected conventional design at every turn. Rather than building a floor-to-ceiling glass wall, he cut 27 distinct windows into the walls, framing the outdoors 27 ways, like pictures.

THIS PAGE: The floors are scored concrete, stained and embedded in places with ceramic tile and river rock. Natural light floods the room, which features David's "Danell" sculpture.



A house in evolution would best describe the process, an accommodation of wood and metal to **art, work, and joy.**



MAKE THE ORDINARY EXTRAORDINARY.

David crafted an overhanging top for a **utilitarian stainless steel toolbox**, complete with wheels and drawers of various depths, transforming it into a serviceable and smart kitchen island. Two **tiles painted** with Flamenco dancers, a gift from a former sculpture student, form the focal point for the oven alcove.

Linda Hickman discovered the house on a lunch hour 25 years ago. She was a year away from being married, and in a way the cottage held similar promise of a future, poised as it was on an overgrown acre in East Dallas, ready to meet the inhabitants who would one day elicit its very best.

"It was a worn-down old house that needed everything," she says smiling. "But I thought David could make it beautiful."

He did much more. An award-winning sculptor whose work is commissioned for both public and private spaces, Hickman has continually renovated the two-bedroom, wood-sided ranch since he and Linda took residence in 1981. Twenty-four years later, the house is undeniably theirs.

As their lives have grown, so has the space in which their days take form. A house in evolution would best describe the process, an accommodation of wood and metal to art, work, and joy.

"If you walked into a room and Linda was on one side of it and David on the other, you would know in an instant that they were together," says Bentley Tibbs, AIA, the architect who worked with the Hickmans on their most recent expansion. "The shape of (this) building, the walls, the angles, is a response to how these two people live their lives with each other, to their give and take."

An architect friend referred the couple to Tibbs, whose task it was to enlarge the existing kitchen into the back yard. When he suggested adding an adjoining room as well, the Hickmans realized that a multi-functional space would satisfy many needs. It could be a gallery where designers and collectors could view David's work. It could be a spot for entertaining friends and fellow artists. It could be a music room for David's accordion and handcrafted dulcimers and mandolins.

But attaching 600 square feet to a 69-year-old structure is a dicey feat, from both the inside and out. As two creative minds collaborated, though, design ideas and solutions flourished among the pecan trees, respecting the integrity of the quiet original house while integrating daring scale, angle, and color.

"When we poured the cement, leaves from the trees fell onto the surface, creating a sort of fossilized effect," David says. "It was easy to do the project in certain ways. If we needed to cut or drill something, or make new molding for the kitchen, I'd send the crew out to the studio to use my saws."

For nearly 20 years,



Before

USE SIMPLE MATERIALS IN A REFINED WAY FOR A FEELING OF RICHNESS.

Wood, glass, concrete, and metal can evoke the luxury of granite and marble when crafted with artistry.



David has sculpted full-time, working in wood, steel, glass, and stone. His pieces, which are kinetic and massive, are constructed in and around a 32-square-foot freestanding building on one end of the property. In 2004, the Texas Commission on the Arts selected him as the Texas State Artist in their three-dimensional category. The Dallas Chapter of the American Institute of Architects named him Artist of the Year in 2005.

His kitchen, a veritable steel band of glazed marigold, turquoise, and cobalt, celebrates his handiwork, from the poured-in-place concrete countertop, to the wall tile installation and the drawer pulls, carved out of native Bois D'Arc wood from the osage orange tree. "Bentley designed the space; the contractor built it, but they left a few things undone so I could come in and play," he says.

New solid cabinetry—using the original glass—was built to resemble the old; a soffit above was exposed and charged with magenta, and an ink-hued floor of rubber was laid underfoot. The back wall of the house was taken down, stretching the kitchen back 100 square feet and forming a natural segue into the gallery.

The secret to a successful addition is creating the feeling that the space is, in fact, not an addition, but an integral portion of the house. Tibbs chose to design a footprint that is not square—anywhere—but jumps 10 degrees off of 90, either way. Some angles are 80 degrees; some are 100. The ceiling, highest at 13 feet, slopes three inches every foot. Tibbs cut 27 distinct windows into the walls, even the three behind the purple bookcase that display maquettes of David's work.

"Floor-to-ceiling glass didn't look right to me," David says. "With separate windows, every one becomes a frame, and the picture changes constantly."

David scored the concrete floor, which is stained and embedded in places with ceramic tile and river rock. The gallery has minimal detailing, such as moldings and window frames. "It is not modern or typically contemporary," Tibbs says. "It is a structured, yet organic thing, a quietly dynamic space and a good use, I hope, of very straightforward materials. The natural light was treated as being as important as a material, as wood and metal."

In one corner, David erected an undulating mosaic fireplace, "a representation of a volcano erupting and flowing out into a river bed." He shaped wire mesh with mortar to form curves on top of a plywood frame, which were then covered in 4-inch tiles that he cut in his studio across the lawn. Like a Gaudi sculpture, the piece curves and seems to move, all while anchoring the room's main but delicate seating area.

DUPLICATE AN IMPORTANT SHAPE IN UNEXPECTED SPOTS.

The gallery's asymmetrical footprint is mimicked on stainless steel bookcase drawer pulls and windows high above the floor.





"The shape of (this) building, the walls, the angles, is a response to how these two people live their lives with each other, to **their give and take.**"

— BENTLEY TIBBS, AIA



Outside, a covered dining porch spills into what will soon be a sculpture garden. Like the drywall painted interior, the exterior walls are hardly static, made from corrugated metal and wood, alternatively. Tibbs lined the wood elevations with 3-inch horizontal fins of cedar, protruding from the walls at 10-degree angles and wrapping the building with striated wings. The façade is embellished with elements of design that are undeniably Hickman's, whether a copper scup-

per chain, reinforcing plates, or gutter brackets.

"I do realize that this sort of collaboration would be rare again," Tibbs says.

In the evening, warm glows of yellow from the kitchen and a Navajo red from the gallery form a randomly lit geometry against the exterior's striped finishing.

"It is a little jewel box, to me," Linda says. "Everything we had before was working in a certain direction, and here, it falls together." **D**