

BOLD HOMES

There is nothing timid about the four homes you will find in these pages. The owners knew exactly what they desired and made it happen.

If we have the privilege of choice, the environment in which we live is a reflection of who we are.

The owners of the four homes featured here all share the characteristics of decisiveness, risk-taking, passionate vision, and a powerful sense of place.

Within the walls of these distinctive dwellings are two couples who abandoned brand-new custom-built structures in order to pursue and restore older, more stylized homes. There is a woman who grew up in a culture that fostered hospitable, welcoming domestic atmospheres who later found her inner Ralph Lauren-inspired design groove. And finally, one daring Indiana University professional couple demolished a derelict house in order to build the madly modern, hardware-adorned loft home of their dreams. Bold moves all.

By Tracy Zollinger Turner
Photography by Kendall Reeves





The view from the loft bedroom of Laura Plummer and Michael Nelson's east side home. "We liked the idea of the house being industrial in a residential setting," says Michael. The couple worked to find a balance between the use of metal and rougher building components and creating a comfortable living space.

'Hardware Store Modernism'



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Tucked away on a small side street in an east side neighborhood, Laura Plummer and Michael Nelson's ultra-contemporary home stands in contrast to everything that surrounds it. Corrugated steel siding plays games with the sunlight, constantly shifting the texture and structure of its boxy, two-story form with shadows. Every window and doorway pops with bright red trim, infusing the factory-made elements with modern-art spirit.

Laura and Michael long envisioned living in a wide-open space with a loft bedroom. In 2013, the chance to buy a ramshackle home offered them the opportunity to build something new and wildly distinctive over an old, somewhat tricky basement foundation. Despite major obstacles like termite damage and dilapidated plumbing, the couple managed to get the majority of the old house demolished and the new one designed and built in about two years.

Architect Sam DeSollar designed a home that met Laura and Michael's desire for an open floor plan with an industrial aesthetic. Michael has referred to it as "hardware store modernism." Built by Dave Sharp of Sharp Designs, many of the same materials and fixtures are used inside and out. The outdoor balcony, interior stairwell, and bedroom loft are bounded by sturdy goat fencing held in place by speed rail posts.

1. The house is decorated with a mix of antiques, several newer furnishings from Relish, and a mulberry paper chandelier called "Anemoi" designed by Jiangmei Wu, an assistant professor of design at IU.

2. Presented with three possible designs by their architect, choosing the shape of the house and the style of the windows was the first decision.

3. The second-story bookshelves are a more recent addition. To fill them, Laura and Michael carried books up the ladder, armload by armload.

4. An old library card catalog index cabinet that Laura picked up from the IU Surplus Stores pays homage to the couple's origins. "We both did our dissertations using these for research," she says. "When I saw it for sale, I bought it sentimentally, not really knowing what we would do with it." Wine bottles turned out to be a perfect fit.

5. "The space is able to take all of the antiques we have and not feel ponderously traditional," says Laura.





1. The hardware on the heavy barn doors to the closet and bathroom in the master bedroom comes straight from a farm supply store, not some novel design company.

2 & 3: The couple made consistent fixture and design choices for the upstairs (right) and downstairs bathrooms, including pale blue mosaic floor tile, steel tubing, accent paint colors, and the corrugated metal that was used for the home's exterior. A painting by Laura's uncle hangs in the loft bath.



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4. The couple coveted a second-story loft bedroom because they wanted to feel like they were "up in the trees," says Michael. "That's what it feels like," says Laura. "We have a view of the house. The bookcases and paintings feel like they are part of the bedroom."
5. Both Laura and Michael work at Indiana University. Michael is the assistant director of content in the Office of Creative Services. Laura is the director of the Scholarly Writing Program. The couple met when they were graduate students in IU's Department of English in 1990.

Closets are closed off with heavy sliding barn doors. Corrugated steel makes an indoor appearance, not only on shower walls but also surrounding the fireplace, which is flanked by impressive raised bookcases that require a rolling ladder to access.

The demolition process of the old home was painstaking and largely bulldozer-free. While the bulk of the excavated material was donated or given to friends, a few vestiges of the old house—a 1951 Aladdin "Pasadena" model kit home with additions—were preserved. A wet bar was created from white 1950s-era metal kitchen cabinets (from the home's apartment addition), repainted an orange-red by Bloomington Powder Coating and topped with old butcher block Laura salvaged years ago. The main kitchen's original wooden cabinets were refashioned into an island, topped by three enormous slabs of Indiana limestone.

The home offers a constant invitation to look up and out, and the couple find their day-to-day living habits have changed. "We move around a lot more here," says Laura. "We've built in places to sit together and read. And it's always interesting to see where people choose to sit when they visit."



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A House Long Admired

1. The 1929 Spanish colonial revival home is in the Elm Heights neighborhood, which was officially designated a historic district in 2012.

2. Reza, Jamie, and Gus, their Chihuahua, relax on their deck in front of a working wall fountain.

3. A meditative spot on the back porch and patio, which is Reza's morning sanctuary.



While growing up in Bloomington, Jamie McMillan frequently visited a close friend in Elm Heights, and whenever she did, she found her eye drawn to a white stucco Spanish colonial revival on East 1st Street.

Her attraction didn't end with the Spanish architectural aesthetic, however. Later, Jamie went on to study Spanish literature at Indiana University, then worked and traveled for a Spanish airline while living in Chicago. Before returning to Bloomington, she spent time living in Spain, Chile, Egypt, and Los Angeles. Throughout her travels she admired the stark white curves, gritty textures, and earthy design details of several forms of Spanish architecture.

Five years ago, Jamie met and fell in love with Reza Kaffash, who had moved to Bloomington from Iran in 2009. Here, Reza was mentored by local businessman Howard Mease, who steered him toward a career in real estate and the development of his own company, Elite Builders.





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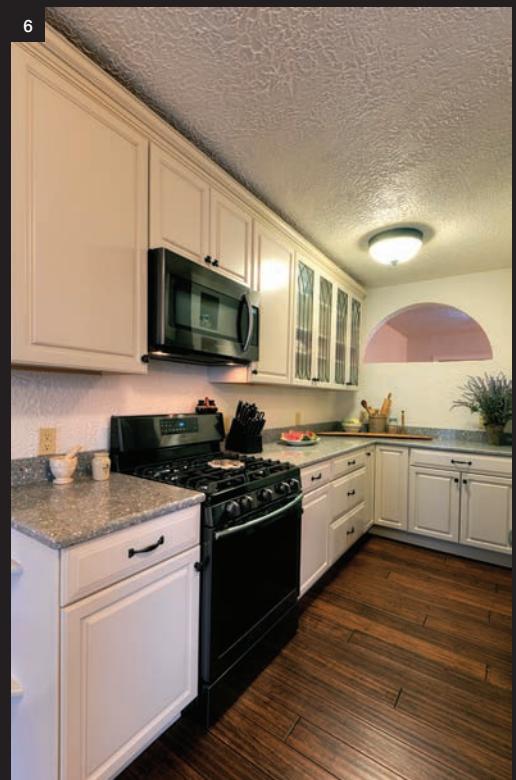
4. The living room welcomes visitors at the front of the house, warmed by the low, original fireplace and furnishings that Jamie has collected from antique stores, flea markets, and estate sales.

5. Floors in the original parts of the house, including the dining room, were deeply damaged. Jamie and Reza covered them with darkly stained bamboo planks that had just enough rustic dings to mimic what lies beneath.

6. From counters to appliances to cabinets, the kitchen underwent a complete overhaul, including a new open arch in the wall that connects it to the living room.



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1. Jamie did extensive research into Spanish colonial fireplaces, then gave the three images she liked best to the craftsman who designed their grand downstairs hearth. It is made of lime, cement, and plaster.

2. One of two extra bedrooms was converted into the master bath with a spacious shower and adjacent walk-in closet.

3. Colorful, hand-painted tile adds another authentic touch of classic Spanish design to the staircase that leads from the kitchen to the previously unfinished basement.

4. Precious few of the house's original wrought iron light fixtures survived, so Jamie scoured online vendors in search of sconces and chandeliers with the proper feel, like this one in her office.

5. An addition the last owners didn't complete is now the master bedroom, with new stucco walls created to match the rest of the house.



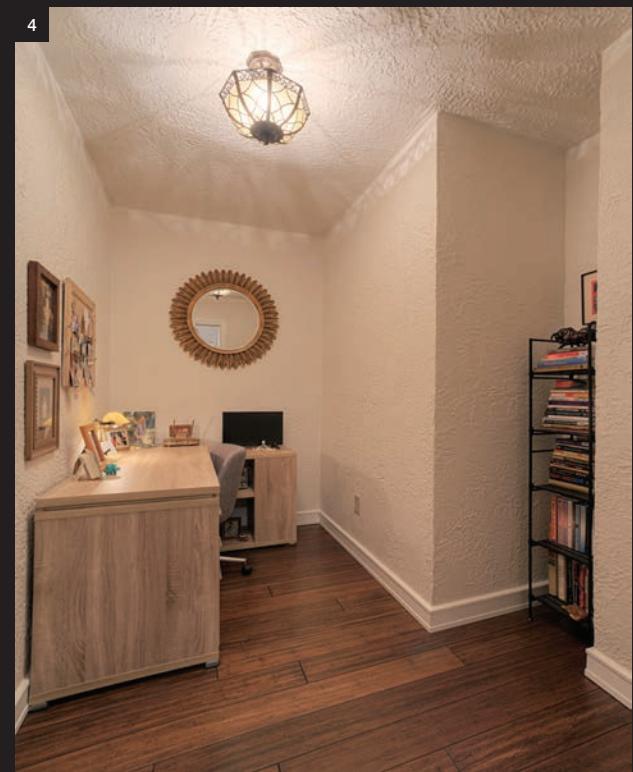
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After the couple married, they designed and built a home on the southeast side of Bloomington, where they lived for a year. Then that Spanish colonial in Elm Heights, built in 1929, came on the market. A restoration-in-progress that had been halted years earlier by the death of one of its owners, the house had several walls that had been stripped to the studs and a foundation laid for a new master bedroom that remained unfinished.

"I wanted this house so badly," says Jamie. "And here Reza was, so happy in this brand-new, beautiful home."

In 2015, the couple purchased the Spanish colonial that Jamie had admired since childhood.

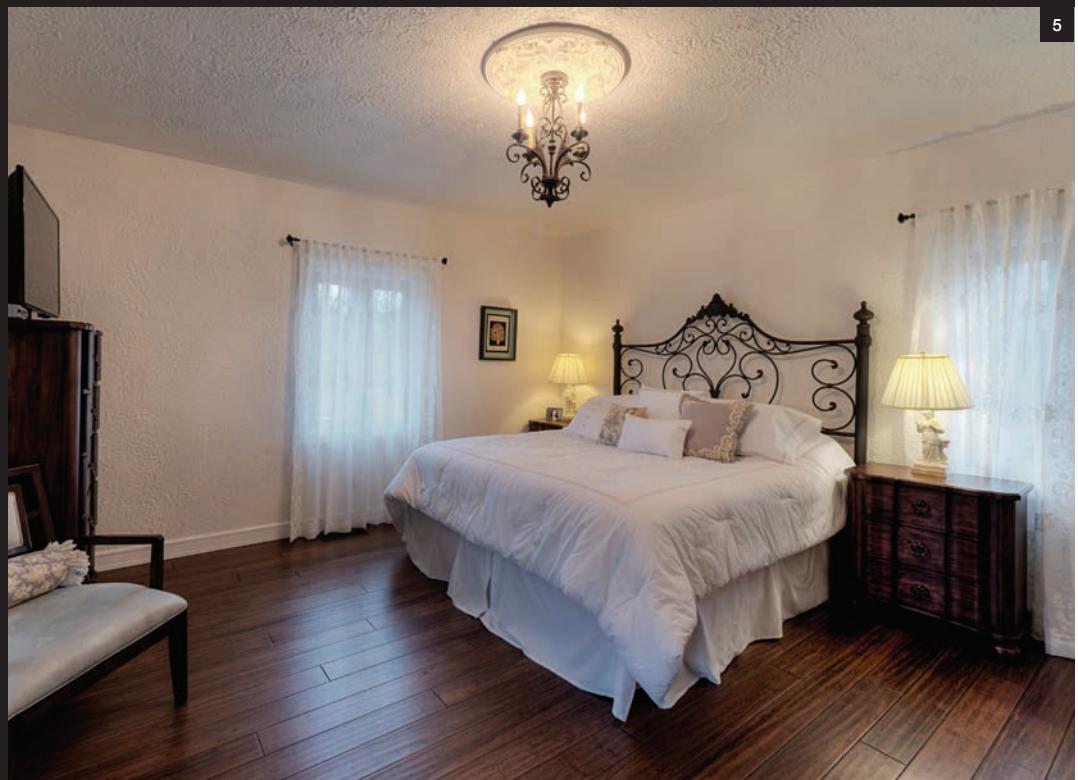
Over the course of 11 months, Reza, Jamie, and their network of master craftspeople faithfully restored as much of the home's original structure as they could. Interior walls were mended or rebuilt and finished with cement stucco that is virtually indistinguishable from the original. Two of the original doors were saved, while others were replaced with custom solid hardwood doors made by a craftsman in Crown Point, Indiana. They cut out arched windows between the kitchen and adjacent rooms to scatter more light throughout the house and discovered that the walls were built like a veritable fortress of cement and iron mesh.

"I can't tell you how many saw blades we destroyed," Jamie says.

The couple also made changes to accommodate the house's unfinished addition, and their lives. A second bedroom was converted into a spacious master bath with an adjoining closet and office. The kitchen was updated and enlarged. The unfinished cement-floor cellar was completely finished, with wrought-iron railings and steps underlined with colorfully hand-painted, imported Spanish tile.

The porcelain-tiled back patio is Reza's morning coffee sanctuary, replete with original iron light fixtures and a fountain. Not one to miss a detail, Reza even created ramps from the patio to the backyard for the couple's 13-year-old Chihuahua, Gus, and "tried to make them look old and Spanish," says Jamie.

Any resistance Reza felt over the initial move has disappeared. "Now that the house is finished, I've fallen in love with it," he says.



A Home that Stands Apart



Jeff Scofield and Mike Duncan's Blue Ridge neighborhood home is impossible to miss. The sleek horizontal stone and glass features of the first story are topped by a center cube-shaped tower with large glass windows. And if that weren't striking enough, a pair of life-size bull terrier statues greet visitors from either side of the double front doors. Jeff and Mike playfully refer to the house as "Dunfield Manor"—a union of their two last names.

Anyone who has browsed Jeff's Warehouse, the antique shop full of mid-century modern finds mixed with fun and funky artwork that Jeff owns on South College, won't be startled by the boldness of the home's interior style. They might, however, be surprised by its minimalism, given the volume of furnishings Jeff and Mike have at their disposal.

"A lot of antique dealers have homes so stuffed, it's almost like *Hoarders*," says Jeff, referring to the A&E television show. While they certainly have some signature pieces, Jeff says they've chosen to go a different direction: "We've filled our home with things we love that have meaning—things that aren't worth much, but you wouldn't sell for anything."

A 1960s Sputnik chandelier that belonged to Jeff's grandfather hangs over the dining room table. On the wall is a painting Jeff commissioned, taken from a picture of Mike hugging Tammy Wynette, a performer Mike loved so dearly he cut a vacation short in order to attend her funeral. In their office, a memory wall is a personal museum, its shelves filled with memorabilia like Jeff's father's fire chief badge from Columbus, Indiana; an old-fashioned ice cream scoop that he found in a creek as a kid; and a small replica of Tammy Wynette's tour bus. "Everyone's No. 1 question

1. The curious, cube-shaped tower on this mid-century modern makes it one of the more unusual homes in Bloomington.

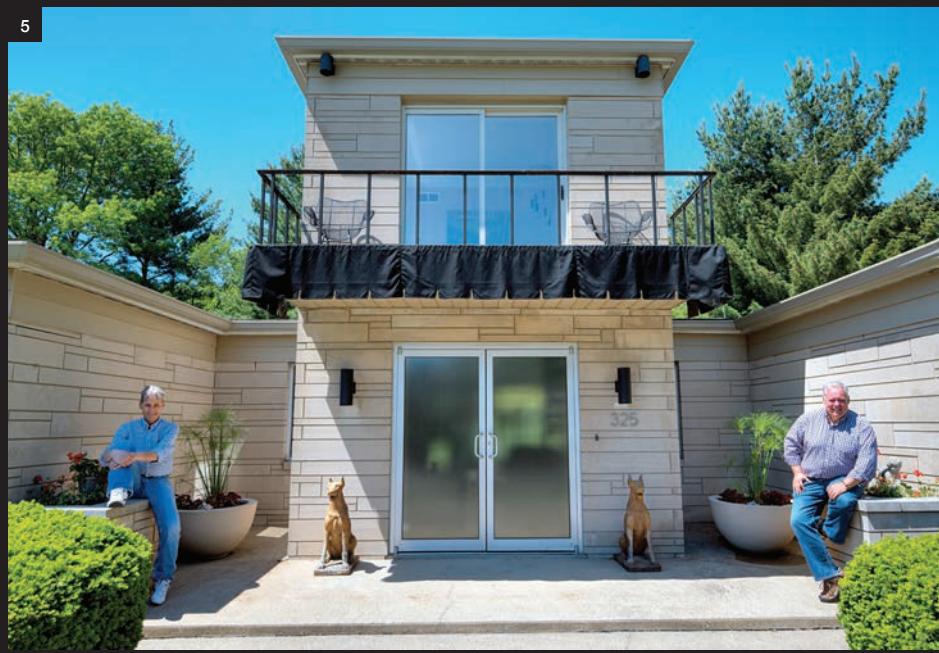
2. The back patio is punctuated with a just few objets d'art, including a small brick birdhouse (near the patio door) that was handmade by Jeff's grandfather.



3. Antique mid-century modern furnishings, a family heirloom Sputnik chandelier, and a painting that was divined from a photo of Mike with his hero Tammy Wynette bring the living room and dining area together.

4. Replacing crimson carpet with slate tile and creating a more sculptural staircase were two of the most time-consuming renovations made by Jeff and Mike when they bought the home.

5. (l-r) Mike and Jeff (and two canine sentries) flank the tower-topped entrance to "Dunfield Manor."





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1. Before the days of Jeff's Warehouse, Jeff dealt in lighting. This is evident in the collection of antique and contemporary lamps throughout the house, including the master bedroom, which has a heavier, more traditional design.

2. Jeff and dog Hogan pose in front of a floor-to-ceiling lamp designed by artist Shepherd Fairey that gives the living room a hint of Alice in Wonderland flavor. Fairey created the well-known "Hope" posters for Barack Obama's initial presidential campaign.

3. Elegant cabinetry maximizes the efficiency of the home's long, lean kitchen.



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4. The light-filled tower room gets most of its use when guests come to visit, but the unusual, signature shape it gives the house is something that Jeff feels they appreciate daily.

5. The office memory wall is a treasure trove of unique personal belongings, from old photographs to found objects to homemade Halloween masks.



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about this house is why the tower room is there,” says Jeff. There’s an interesting answer. When the home was built in the 1960s, the owner, Bob Temple of Bloomington Hardware, loved being able to look out at the IU campus and football stadium, which were clearly visible from the tower. Today, unfortunately, trees eclipse the view.

Jeff and Mike bought the house in 2006. Previously, they had lived in a new build, but, Jeff says, “I just didn’t feel like the place had a soul.” This house was decidedly different. “Have you ever walked into a place that just feels like home? I had that feeling about this place,” he says.

Given the need to remove red carpeting from the walls and gold shag from the floors, not to mention the plumbing repairs, Mike had the opposite feeling. But as they did the work to authentically redecorate the place and saw how much their beloved dog, Hogan, enjoyed looking out of its huge plate glass windows, the house became home. It also reconciled their two tastes. Jeff is the former owner of Victorians and a Tudor, while Mike has long preferred up-to-the-moment contemporary homes. “This mid-century modern house really represents us as a family,” says Jeff.

Where Comfort Comes First

The Danish term *hygge* has become enough of a buzzword among home decorating and hospitality gurus to spawn several books and numerous articles in national publications. While it has no precise English translation, *hygge* (pronounced hoo-gah or hue-guh) is essentially the full-bodied experience of a cozy, welcoming space. For Maggie Brown, who grew up in Copenhagen, Denmark, *hygge* was simply “what everyone did” when it came to home and hearth.

“I’ve known about *hygge* all my life, and all of a sudden it’s everywhere,” she says. “It’s mostly about ambience. You try to make people feel comfortable and relaxed, give them some good food and wine, light some candles, put out fresh flowers, and just have a place where it’s nice to visit with each other.”

Maggie moved to the United States in 1964 and to Bloomington in 1975, when she began working for her then-to-be husband, dentist Robert Linnemier. The pair built a spacious home in The Stands neighborhood. They entertained often, until Linnemier passed away in 2007. Maggie later married Indiana University Jacobs School of Music professor and trombonist Keith Brown. The two moved to a more manageable, 13-year-old bungalow in the Stone Ridge subdivision. Maggie has transformed the home into a space full of cozy nooks that seem to be made for conversation and connection.

“Everything I’ve ever bought fit really well into this place,” says Maggie, who unequivocally claims Ralph Lauren as her favorite designer. Lauren’s influence is evident in the deeply colored walls and patterned carpets throughout the house, which give the spacious rooms a more intimate feel. There is also a flair for the equestrian, including several print illustrations featuring foxhunts and one

1. Overstuffed couches and chairs edge around tables in arrangements designed to support conversation, giving the sizeable central living space a lodge-like atmosphere.
2. The home in the Stone Ridge subdivision is only 13 years old, but it has a decidedly classic character, inside and out.
3. The black area rug and the chairs at the perimeter of the formal dining room offset the traditional feel of the furnishings. Works by Maggie’s favorite local artist, painter Sarah Sandberg, hang here and throughout the house.
4. The sunroom’s floor-to-ceiling windows provide a warm place to sit during colder months and radiate natural light into the common area and kitchen. Note the English saddle-inspired chair at right.





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1. Maggie's love for designer Ralph Lauren is particularly evident in the dark chocolate browns, plaid touches, and equestrian artwork of the master suite.
2. Ample mirrors, a built-in vanity, and an attached dressing room in the master bathroom are a primping utopia.
3. "I love to think about carpeting and patterns as part of the color palette," says Maggie. She enjoyed locating carpets like this floral one for a guest bedroom.



4. "I feel when people come to visit, they are very relaxed and enjoy being here," says Maggie, pictured here.
5. Light-catching chandeliers are a common sight throughout the house, including in this second-story guest bedroom.
6. The back patio has plenty of privacy and doesn't require a lot of maintenance. Maggie is considering making it her next decorating project; she may include the addition of a fountain.

memorable leather chair shaped like an English saddle purchased at ETC for the home. "I don't ride horses, but I love the look," Maggie says.

There is an Old World feel to the décor, including framed antique needlepoint from Denmark and another remarkable chair with cannon-shaped arms that appears to pay homage to a Royal Navy ship. Many newer items have a traditional look, from chairs upholstered in toile to tables and chests painted with American folk flair. Dramatic chandeliers and black furniture pieces (Maggie's favorite color) add just a hint of contemporary funkiness to the mix.

Warmed-up design is such a passion for Maggie that she and a friend even ran a small business called "Fluff It Up" for five years. The pair would visit people's homes, size up their existing furnishings, and then embellish the space by rearranging things or taking the owners shopping. "I really loved it and it was very fulfilling for me," she says. "I think I was a late bloomer in realizing this is what I love to do." *

