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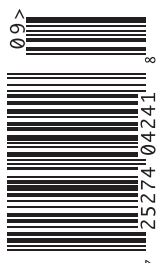
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FANTASTIC FOUR!

| By Amber Bell, Holly Crawford and
Chris Kelly | Photography by Shannon O'Hara,
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It's here! Your chance to get seriously inspired. We've sneaked a peek inside the homes of four top Houston interior designers to see just what makes the final cut into their private retreats. The answer? Everything from laid-back Parisian-style opulence to Southern sophistication. Welcome home...

Courtney Hill

Not every Houston designer can boast of decorating stints with international industry heavyweights such as Victoria Hagan and Greg Jordan. But then, Courtney Hill Fertitta is nothing less than a petite powerhouse. At 35, she's making a name as Houston's go-to decorator for out-of-the-box, modern-meets-classic interiors.

"[Hagan's] design was very clean, modern and precise," Hill says, from the dining room of her two-story Upper Kirby home, "but I wanted to study the more traditional aspect."

So she went on to work with New York-based designer Jordan, a Louisiana native who introduced her to a more Southern style. It was there, she says, that she learned to soften Manhattan modernism with traditional touches. And today, it's this combination—a savvy eye and chic style—that's earned the UT alumna an impressive roster of projects spanning

CONTINUED...

Courtney Hill Fertitta in her master bedroom, where a strict white-on-white color scheme is broken only by pale yellow throw pillows on the bed



Creamy Calcutta marble countertops and a glossy white-tile backsplash blend with white, glass-paneled cupboards to open up the compact kitchen. Hill also designed a multi-purpose table with leaves and wheels to make the most of the space.



Not one for clutter, Courtney Hill's house features just a few thoughtfully placed statement pieces. **1.** A vintage lighter came from Area furniture. **2.** Hill nabbed a door knocker during a visit to the Paris Flea Market and later transformed it into an elegant wall sconce. Bright idea! **3.** A carved wooden Chinese deity was a birthday gift from husband Jason.



Hill discovered the mantel's rustic clay-cast horse-head bookend at Heights Antiques.



TWO FOR COCOA
Chocolate suede chairs with nail-head detailing that channel Chanel's logo are grouped with a marble-topped folding table from Homestretch and Steven Seiberg's charcoal-and-ink art.



The dining room has custom C&G chairs, upholstered in fabric the always-precise Hill is quick to describe as 'dove-gray.' The gold chandelier was purchased in New York.

"I take a lot of inspiration from fashion, like a pleat from a skirt that I'll try to incorporate into draperies," says Hill, who early on was torn between careers in fashion design and interior decorating.

...CONTINUED from the Gulf Coast to the East Coast. She's designed modern and traditional houses in West University and River Oaks—from the ground up. And Hill frequently does start-to-finish remodels, including a historical Victorian home in Morgan's Point and a new residential project in Atlanta. A few of Hill's clients have asked her to design their offices after completing their homes.

"It's the greatest compliment to be asked to do another project, especially another facet of a client's life," she says, adding that her feet are still firmly planted in residential renovation.

And closest to her heart is the addition she's embarking on at her own 2,500-square-foot home. Hill plans to double its size. "We're keeping the feel of the house, which was built in the '20s," she says. "We've put so much love in this house that whenever we go to look for a new house, we just don't want to start over."

The interior designer glances around the dining room of the home and crosses her ankles on the brown-and-white geometric rug. Every detail is perfectly accounted for, and an air of finely polished serenity pervades. There are minimal signs of everyday hustle, which is a feat given that her toddler, Ella, also lives here with Hill and her husband Jason Fertitta, a wealth-management rep at Morgan Stanley (and who isn't directly related to restaurateur Tilman Fertitta, a misconception the couple constantly has to correct).

With its pink-box exterior, the home has a colonial quality, and emphasizes a neutral palette—soft blues, khakis and white-on-white. Subtle French country accents like the white French doors just behind Hill's dining chair, opening out toward Pelham Street, warm up the immaculate space.

"My house [is my favorite project] because I have complete freedom to design whatever I want," says Hill, who also designs custom furniture. "I take my time to build a collection of unique pieces and accessories."

And although she shops all over the country in search of perfect pieces, her welcoming entryway features an antique chest from Shabby Slips (the Houston shop owned by designer Renea Abbott, also featured in this issue), a large gold-framed oval mirror, fresh white hydrangeas in a square glass vase and a flickering white candle. The colors and delicately modern arrangement look more like what you'd find in a high-end spa than a bustling household.

It's spa-level quiet, too. But just for the moment. Hill, who's been in demand for almost a decade, is usually a-mile-a-minute (and so devoted to clients that personal business often takes place in the wee hours). Hill is an ace multi-tasker, balancing family life with her active career. She, Jason and Ella travel frequently, hitting New York every couple of months for business and pleasure. Hill shops for clients and draws inspiration from spots like Thomas O'Brien's Aero store in SoHo and the new Loro Piana fabric showroom in the Decoration & Design Building on Manhattan's east side.

"I'm always working, no matter where I am," she says. "I'm constantly dragging my husband to antique stores and art galleries. I'll keep looking and looking until I find the right piece. I never settle."



A dark walnut buffet and a mirror framed with a golden serpentine fish create a vignette in the dining room.



One-year-old Ella's 'Piper Puppy,' a gift from Longoria Collection, sits in her room on a club chair by Custom Creations, surrounded by the palest of pink walls and accents such as a small Lucite side table and plush white Flokati area rug.



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The living room's sofa and chairs were custom-made by C&G Furniture, the steel coffee table by Peck & Co. Above the mantel, the impressionistic 1977 polo painting by Peggy Oxford was a gift from Hill's mother-in-law. The art also includes a grid of four abstract prints by the late Irene Rice-Pereira.