



# Magical Mediterranean

An historic Birmingham home pays homage to its past but is decidedly modern.

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PHOTOS BY JEAN ALLSOPP

**TUCKED AWAY ON A QUIET STREET** in the Forest Park neighborhood sits a home reminiscent of the Mediterranean coast. Original owner W.B. Ford had the home built for his family in 1925 and patterned it after the homes he saw while traveling in Greece. True to Mediterranean style, the house is constructed of hollow tile blocks overlaid with stucco and features wrought-iron accents and a traditional clay tile roof.

When David and Kent Magee bought the house a little more than two years ago, it had been recently renovated by the previous owners, one of whom was an architect. The renovation addressed all

of the home's working systems and added contemporary touches to the home's traditional architecture. "Because the previous owners had done the renovation so well, we had the luxury of focusing on filling it up with things we love," Kent says. "It gave us the chance to start fresh."

The couple fell in love with the 3-bedroom, 2-bath, 2,680-square-foot home—and the neighborhood. "We've lived in some cool houses before," David says, "but this is a special house. We fell in love with Forest Park. It's our favorite neighborhood we have ever lived in."

After moving in, the Magees set about putting their own personal stamp on the

house, engaging design firm Hannon Douglas and designer Doug Davis to do just that. With an extensive art collection as the centerpiece, Doug let the owners and their art inform the design of the interior spaces. "The project was fun because the Magees were so open to starting over," Doug says. "Kent was very open to pattern and color. The house is truly representative of its owners."

"This house wanted something fun," he continues. "It has this bohemian Mediterranean vibe that allowed us to do interesting things. It's such an unusual home with such unique details and unexpected modern touches."



The home's entryway is a light-filled former screened-in porch with Spanish tiles and a large painting from the owners' eclectic collection. The living room features arched and Moorish doorways, lending architectural interest to the room. White-washed walls put the colorful artwork at center stage with other pops of color brought in by the room's upholstered pieces. Five sets of French doors flood the space with natural light, and the original fireplace features ornate carving and a Latin phrase. "The windows spill in light like no place I've ever seen," David says.

The contemporary kitchen features modern charcoal cabinetry, black honed granite countertops, and sleek stainless steel appliances. Porcelain tiles on the kitchen floor are laid to resemble wood. The adjacent formal dining room features a custom bookcase and pink damask curtains that pull color from one of the room's highlighted paintings. Kent's grandmother's antique dining chairs got a modern makeover with a practical vinyl fabric and are paired with a modern wood table meant for entertaining. More French doors open to the courtyard in the back. Two bedrooms and a shared bathroom complete the first floor of the home.

When the Magees bought the house, they also inherited a mature Koi pond and decided to make it a focal point of the backyard space. With the help of landscape designer Peter Falkner of Falkner Gardens, the Magees got just what they wanted: a lovely courtyard space perfect for relaxing or entertaining. "When you're in the back courtyard, you feel like you've been transported somewhere else," David says. "It's a real treasure."

The upper floor is devoted exclusively to the luxurious master suite. The cozy bedroom has its own pri-

**THIS PAGE:** The home features multiple living areas, with unique art pieces from the owners' collection as the focal pieces.

**OPPOSITE PAGE:** Clockwise from top: Colorful furniture and artwork pop against neutral walls and rugs. The rooftop patio provides views of downtown. Patterned curtains cover arched windows and doors.









The master bedroom features neutral colors and is surrounded by windows, allowing for plenty of natural light. Below: The master bathroom features double vessel sinks.



vate balcony, and the master bathroom features double vessel sinks and a large walk-in shower. A spacious walk-in closet and a sitting room, originally designed as an art studio, complete the space. The arched windows on three of the room's walls let in natural light and provide almost 360-degree views of the surrounding neighborhood. Up a short set of steps, a door opens onto a rooftop patio offering amazing views of the downtown Birmingham skyline. "It's always pleasant up here," Kent says. "And the views are incredible."

"This house tells the story of Birmingham when Birmingham had big dreams," David says. "It speaks of worldliness. It's magical." Kent, who spent years in the fashion industry agrees. "This house makes me feel good," she says. "Coming from the fashion industry, I'm a big believer that your clothes should reflect who you are, and the same goes for your home. Your house should reflect your personality, and this house does that." ■

