



## THE BOUNDARIES BETWEEN INSIDE AND OUT BLUR IN WAYNE BRAUN'S ART-FILLED MUSEUM DISTRICT HOUSE.

**A**fter 15 years of cramped high-rise living, Wayne Braun was ready to expand. "Frankly, I got tired of being stuck in a building. I decided it was time to get back down to earth," says Braun, design director emeritus of PDR, a Houston design and interior architecture firm. "After so many years in a condo, the connection to the outside is what I missed the most — the ability to walk outside easily, back and forth." When the kids were out of college and a large lot in the Museum District came on the market in 2011, the timing was right to build a house from scratch, says Braun, who designed the architecture and interiors for his new

house, completed in 2013. Brendan Custom Homes acted as general contractor. For inspiration, he looked to works by International style greats Le Corbusier, Gwathmey Siegel and Richard Meier, who are known for their elegantly simple, rectilinear buildings with open interior spaces enveloped by glass.

"What resonates most with people about my house is how light and bright it is, even on rainy days," he says. On the first level, 24 by 9 feet of sliding glass doors in the living room and 16 by 9 feet of windows in the dining room surround a private courtyard with lap pool. "When you open the glass doors in the living room, it completely changes that room into a giant cabana," he says. "It's like you're really outside. That one aspect is truly transformative."

**"**I'm a frustrated architect, so I always wanted to design my own home," says Braun, who began college majoring in architecture in the mid-1970s at the University of Kentucky but later changed to interior design. His passion for construction and form found another outlet: designing office furniture for a half-dozen manufacturers including Steelcase and HBF (Hickory Business Furniture) in his spare time. "I always saw furniture as miniature architecture since it's three-dimensional," he says. "I also have a fascination with woodworking because of its manipulability and natural surface patterns. There's a foreverness about beautifully crafted wood furniture." Some of his own furniture designs fill his new home, including a sleek

BY REBECCA SHERMAN. PRODUCED BY MICHELLE AVIÑA. PHOTOGRAPHY CASEY DUNN FOR SISTERBROTHER MGMT.





marble console and a contemporary version of a Victorian rolltop desk crafted in maple with exquisite nickel teardrop pulls. "When I design furniture," he says, "I always design custom hardware. My attitude is: If that's where the human hand touches, you need something unique and tactile."

Other furnishings in the house were chosen for their sculptural qualities, such as simple Shaker-style side tables, an Arne Jacobsen floor lamp designed for the SAS Royal Hotel in Copenhagen, a vintage bentwood mahogany Ward Bennett chair and a pair of chrome-and-red-leather Mies van der Rohe bar stools that were originally designed for The Four Seasons restaurant in New York. A pair of 1950s Hans Wegner chairs was purchased with an inheritance left to him by his godparents, whose home was furnished in mid-century style. "I think about them every time I look at the chairs," he says.

Braun's collection of mid-century furniture is interspersed with a sleek new B&B Italia sectional and Minotti ottomans purchased specifically for the house's large-scale, open rooms. Those ottomans help transition the indoor space to the outside. "They look like they could be made for the outdoors, but they're not," he says. "I wanted something low that you could see over. I've had events at the house with over a hundred people, including the Rice Design Alliance. With the door slid open, it's a great way to tie the two spaces together." For the

**Previous page:**

The living room, as seen from the courtyard, with sliding doors open. B&B Italia sofa and Minotti ottomans, all from Internum. Vintage 1950s Hans Wegner armchairs. Over the sofa, Amy Ellingson's *Variation (accumulation)*, 2013, a commission. The sculpture is Steve Murphy's *Untitled*, 2011.

**This page, clockwise from top:**

Walnut table by German manufacturer Wilkhahn, with vintage Zanotta leather chairs from Kuhl-Linscomb. Mies van der Rohe stools in the kitchen were originally designed for the Four Seasons restaurant in NYC. The commissioned round painting is Darren Waterston's *Tondo*, 2013, from Inman Gallery. Bronze figure is by Mario Korbel, 1923. A partial wall made from Parisian limestone hides a staircase in the entry.

In the living room, B&B Italia sofa from Internum. Vintage 1950s Hans Wegner armchairs. Mixed-media artwork is Jacob Hashimoto's *Untitled*.

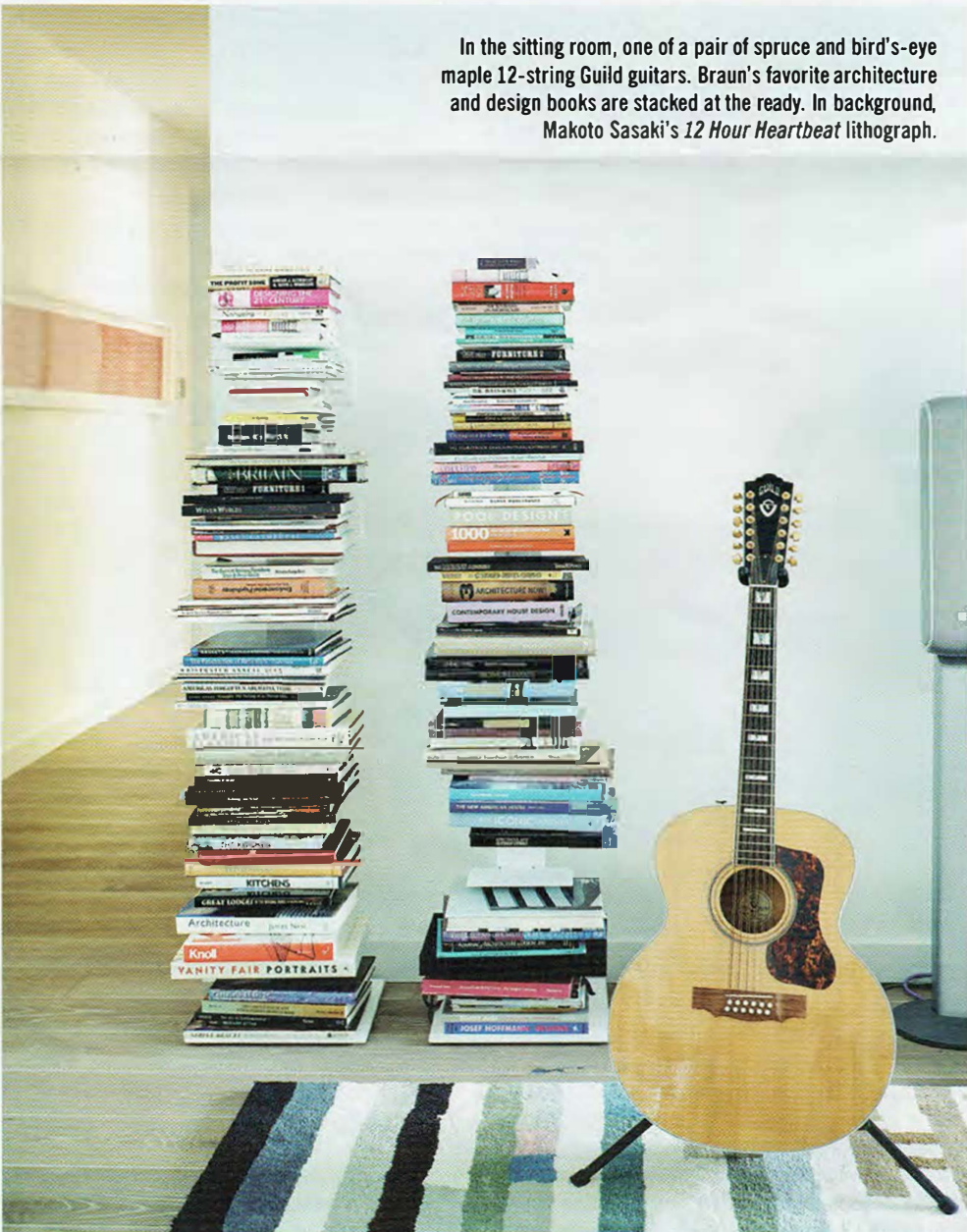
The courtyard's retractable Flexy canopy is by FIM Manufacturing. Knoll Bertoia chair, Ekitta red table, sectional lounge by Gandia Blasco from Internum, Eames outdoor lounge by Herman Miller from Office Pavilion. Bubble portable firepit by Planika from Internum. Birdfeeder by J Schatz. Rug from Internum.



Nick Hornby's *Vanity* working on a weak head produces every sort of mischief (Jane Austen), 2011.



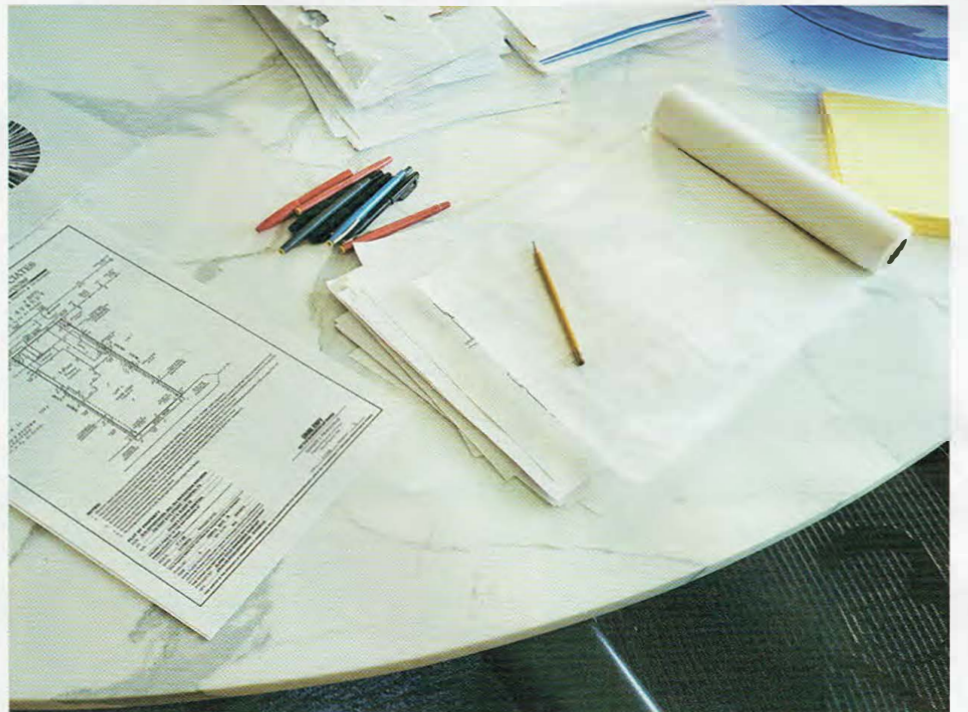
In the sitting room, one of a pair of spruce and bird's-eye maple 12-string Guild guitars. Braun's favorite architecture and design books are stacked at the ready. In background, Makoto Sasaki's *12 Hour Heartbeat* lithograph.



Above, top: Marble console designed by Wayne Braun holds a Helmut Newton book.

Above: In the kitchen are Poggenpohl cabinets, custom white opaque glass countertops, Dornbracht plumbing fixtures. On the shelves, a collection of unique objects including a hand-turned wood vessel by Phillip Moulthrop and an Alessi Bauhaus martini shaker designed by Marianne Brandt. Tea kettle is an industrial design by Ross Lovegrove.

Below: In Braun's study, a Florence Knoll marble table from the Knoll showroom holds blueprints.



dining room, he purchased a massive seven-foot walnut table by Wilkhahn, the esteemed German manufacturer of conference furniture. "It was important to me to get a round table for this house," he says. "There's something special about being with friends and being able to see everyone."

Because Braun is an interior designer who also thinks like an architect, he gave plenty of consideration to how the architecture would aesthetically support his growing art collection. "I wanted to have a space that celebrated the art and was not just a passive foil for it," he says. He worked closely with Julie Kinzelman of Kinzelman

Art Consulting to buy artworks for specific areas in the house. "She understands what art can do for you in a bigger sense, in terms of your emotions and how you enjoy it," he says. "The works I gravitate to show how the artist created the piece." One example is a complex paper wall sculpture by Japanese artist Jacob Hashimoto, which hangs in the living room. "It's a fabulous piece of execution, and everybody loves to look at the various layers," he says. "It has a magnetic draw." A black-and-red 1967 lithograph on cheesecloth by Louise Nevelson that hangs in the master bath is highly textural and shows the artist's hand at work. And artist Makoto

Sasaki, using a quill pen and red ink, recorded a dozen hours of his own heartbeats onto paper to create *12-Hour Heartbeat*, which hangs in Braun's guest bedroom. "It looks like a textile, then you realize it's ink. It's continuous. He never lifted the pen."

Braun also has collections of hand-turned wood vessels (including one by Philip Moulthrop, one of three generations of the legendary Moulthrop family of woodturners in Georgia) and woven baskets. One basket is by Billie Ruth Sudduth, an acclaimed basketmaker living in the mountains of North Carolina whose works are in the Smithsonian Institution's Renwick Gallery. "She was a former math teacher who





Clockwise from top right:  
 In the master bedroom, circa-1870 bronze-and-gilt Gloria Victis figure and clock by Antonin Mercié. Kent Dorn's *Death Valley Daze*, 2012, from McClain Gallery. Rob Fischer's *Blue Luggage*, 2014.

In the master bedroom, from left, Nobu Fukui's *Wonder*, 2014, and Val Britton's *Unfolding Field*, 2013. Minotti credenza and bed from Internum. Design Within Reach bedcovering. Vintage Finn Juhl Chieftain chair by Baker Furniture from Wright auction house in Chicago. Custom rug from Masland Carpets & Rugs. Poul Henningsen lamp from Lesco. Hand-carved wooden sculptures by Richard Senoner, Italy.

In the guest bedroom, Art Deco bronze sculpture by Demètre Chiparus. Shaker-style table and Ward Bennett chair, both vintage. Wood-turned vessel found in Alaska. Taipei carpet. Marfa artist Nick Terry's *Untitled*.

In the master bath, a resin tub by Blu Bathworks, Vancouver, and Caesarstone sink with hidden pipes from Australia. Dornbracht fixtures.

was interested in the geometry of basket weaving," Braun says. "I visited her at her studio and bought it. It's one of my favorite pieces." Other art obsessions include figurative cast bronzes from the late 19th century through the 1920s and 1950s. "The castings are so beautifully done; the sculptural technique and the images are less intellectual than most art, so it's more about the craft." For that reason, he was also attracted to contemporary artist Christopher Smith's 14 aluminum-infused cast resin nude sculptures, which are mounted in the stairwell, and English artist Nick Hornby's 2011 angular, stylized bronze profile of Jane Austen.

Braun's art and furnishings are all highly personal collections — even the architecture he created for the house speaks volumes about the man. "Spaces should be uplifting," he says. "I spend most of my time on the first floor, on the sofa, looking outside, reading or sketching. I come down in the mornings, slide open the doors, shut off the air conditioning and have coffee. It's so fine to look out at plants and trees, to be a part of nature."