Welcome to the Modern South
Meet the 2021 Next Legends: six visionary design stars serving up novel tales on Southern design.

Roaring Twenties Redux
A 100-year-old historic gem in Atlanta reclaims its spirited past with an upbeat overhaul for a young family.

Southern Composure
California designer Richard Hallberg introduces a new era of restraint in an old Nashville mansion.

The Sun Shines in Texas
A stunning collision of edginess and timelessness results in a classic-but-cool, light-filled home in Austin.

Awakening the Delta
The town of Wilson, Arkansas, is rewriting the script for 21st-century agricultural communities across the South.
The Sun Shines in T E X A S

Designer Angie Hranowsky lights up a late-20th-century Tudor with vivid, vanguard shades of yellow, saffron, peach, and fuchsia—a gutsy display even for indie, ultra-cool Austin.

Make it a double: Daffodil walls (Golden Straw, Pratt & Lambert) are amplified by trim painted a deeper shade of yellow (Hay, Farrow & Ball). Peach velvet sofa fabric, Pierre Frey

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It may be true, as the saying goes, that well-behaved women seldom make history. But smart rebels know that audacity gains more traction when it’s tempered with charm. Take Charleston-based designer Angie Hranowsky’s project for a young Austin family that wraps chic, innovative gestures in a setting of comfort and tradition. “I wanted to walk that line between edginess and timelessness,” says the designer.

Hranowsky was beguiled from the outset by the house’s well-crafted bones. “I came in the front door and thought, ‘Oh, yeah, we can make this really special,’” she recalls. “It’s a 1990s house, but well-built and proportioned, with great architectural details.” In other words, it was the perfect canvas for her fresh approach to decorating.

To the clients, Texas natives who’d connected in Manhattan (“Texans find Texans wherever we go!” says the wife), the house marked both a return to their roots and a fresh chapter. They’d spent 17 years on the East Coast, building careers, starting a family, and absorbing a wide range of aesthetic influences. But city life had worn thin. “I could barely host a playdate without climbing the walls,” says the wife of their 1,000-square-foot apartment. The couple is highly social—their wedding party included 15 attendants apiece. They longed for a house where they could stretch out, play, entertain, and grow.

The first step was to invite light into their new interiors, which were shadowed by thick doors and oak floors. Hranowsky installed steel casement doors throughout and pickled the floors. “That was huge,” says the client. “Natural light now floods every room.” Equally important to the clients was ensuring no space would be unused, so Hranowsky conjured an unfolding sequence of rooms that reflected the full range of the family’s interests. It starts at the entry hall, which, on first glance, appears fairly traditional with its high-gloss paint, paneled walls, and elegant banister. But a swirling wallpaper and antelope-pattern stair runner wink at what’s to come: “that this house is going to be classic but cool,” says Hranowsky. She carried the dueling themes into the dining room, where details like klismos-style chairs and

Klismos-style chairs and silver-leaved wall panels express elegant formality, while a deeply tufted emerald banquette makes the dining room feel as hip and inviting as a favorite supper club.
silver-leafed wall panels express elegant formality, while a deeply tufted emerald banquette makes the space feel as hip and inviting as a favorite supper club. Hranowsky is known for her buoyant color palettes, and this skill is on full display in the living room, where yellow walls envelop a swanky, dreamy space complete with a sofa upholstered in peach velvet, chairs in tan Serengeti fabric, and pillows in purple and pale seafoam green. For full-on immersion, she opted not to paint the moldings a contrasting color, instead using a deeper yellow even for the mantel. Indeed, whereas some designers might turn to neutrals to subdue the impact of intense colors, Hranowsky instead relies on rich, contrasting shades. For example, she balances aubergine against green and silver in the dining room, plum with ice blue in the master bedroom, and saffron and fuchsia in the daughter’s bedroom. And in the bar, she pairs deep teal woodwork with a vibrant zig-zag wallpaper that reveals itself on close inspection to be a pattern of brightly colored moths—which the client now refers to as her “barflies.”

In the spacious family room, Hranowsky introduced ceiling beams to create scale and placed two sofas back-to-back, upholstering them in a gold-print fabric chosen to withstand daily use. “Everybody asks, ‘What if I spill red wine?’” says Hranowsky. “But that rarely happens. What you really want to hide is everyday wear.”

Though each room has a distinct personality, the designer uses subtle repetition to unify the spaces. The entry hall’s warm blacks are echoed in wrought-iron curtain rods and lamps throughout along with lampshades, stone, artwork, and pottery. Meanwhile, the peach of the living room sofa is reflected in the room’s soft caramel tones of wood and leather and its salmon-pink lampshades, and also in the grosgrain ribbons that trim the dining room curtains across the hall. Purples and plums pop up throughout.

Such connect-the-dot elements are really just another expression of Hranowsky’s commitment to equilibrium: Even the grandest gestures are grounded in smart details. The designer traces this sense of balance to her childhood love of fashion and her education in graphic design, both of which help her eschew decorating ruts and trust her intuition. “I want my projects to feel natural, not formulaic,” says Hranowsky. “I hate to be pigeonholed.”

It’s a fate that’s not likely to befall her anytime soon—at least not in a certain corner of Austin. “She’s just a cool little badass,” says the client.

“I wanted to walk that line between edginess and timelessness.”
—DESIGNER ANGIE HRANOWSKY

Hranowsky made clever use of scale in the family room with twin sofas (Restoration Hardware) forming dual, dashing salons: one side for watching television, the other as a cordial extension of the kitchen. Stools, McGuire. Island pendant, Circa Lighting. Colorful moths, which the owner refers to as her “barflies,” line up to form the bar’s groovy, zig-zag-striped wallpaper (Timorous Beasties). Cabinetry paint, Nocturnal Sea by Pratt & Lambert. Vintage spoon-back chairs flank a settee covered in a brushstroke-inspired linen (Zak+Fox). China Seas’s Arbre de Matisse pattern turns a guest room into a woodland fantasy. Bed linens, Signoria. A custom bed repeats the linear beauty of a midcentury settee. Armchair, Bunny Williams Home.

Spray red linen draperies (Katie Leede) with Kelly Wearstler triangular-patterned trim (Lee Jofa) filter light into a French-blue study.