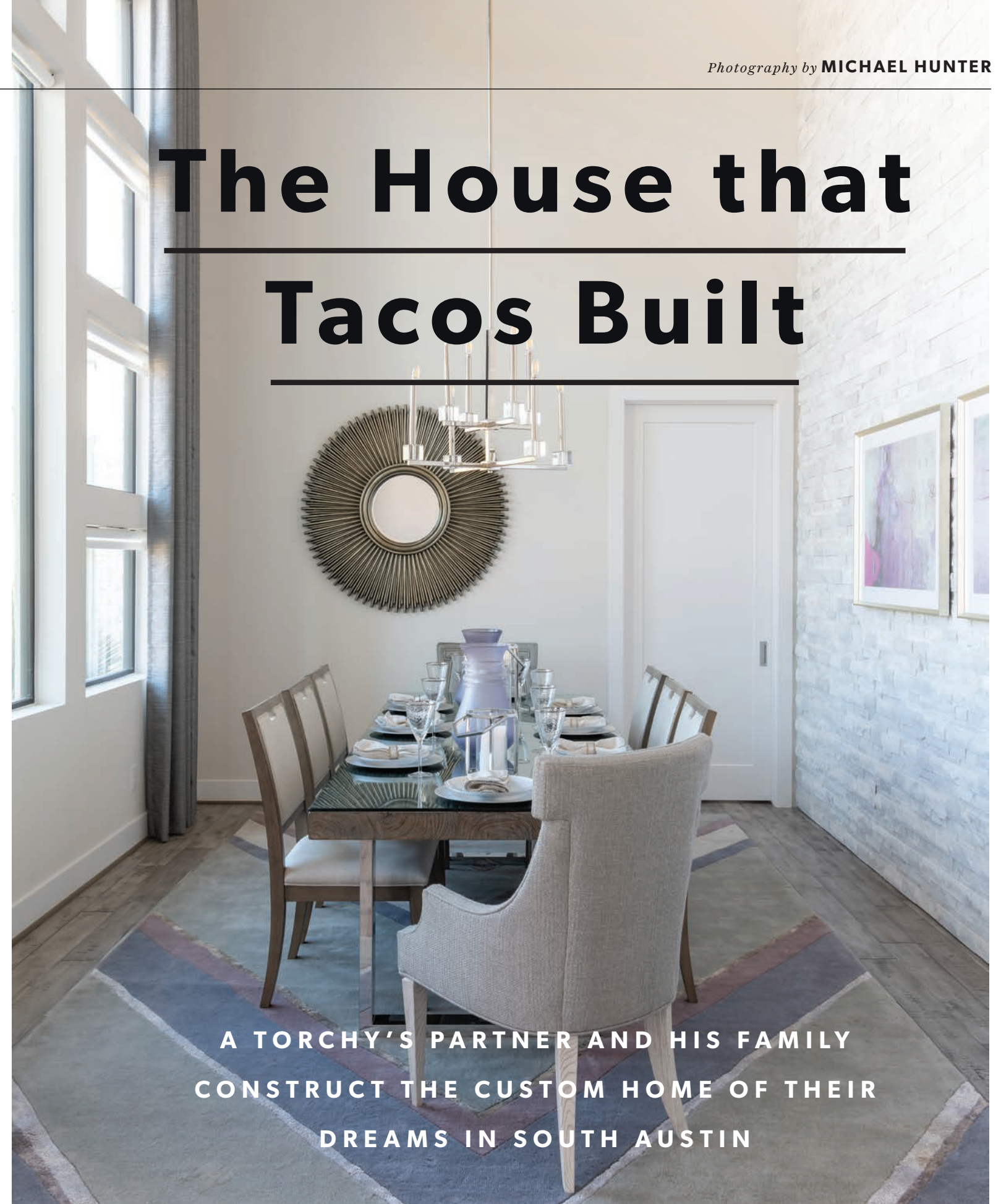


The Walds (from left: Jay, Myah and Sara) moved from their previous home in search of more space and a bigger backyard.



The House that Tacos Built



A TORCHY'S PARTNER AND HIS FAMILY
CONSTRUCT THE CUSTOM HOME OF THEIR
DREAMS IN SOUTH AUSTIN



A mirror console from Hooker Furniture adds a bit of glamour to the main living room (left); several windows help bathe the study (opposite) in sunlight; a custom wood piece featuring the Torchy's Tacos mascot graces a wall in the media room (bottom); artwork, accessories and architectural pieces add character throughout the home.



Jay

and Sara Wald and their daughter, Myah, loved living in the Meridian neighborhood, a custom community just south of Circle C, which they first move to in 2012. But they also knew they were ready for a bigger house with a large backyard and a pool fit for an active family. "We looked in other neighborhoods like Barton Creek and Spanish Oaks, but we kept coming back here," says Jay, a partner and the chief innovation officer at Torchy's Tacos. "We have many friends in the neighborhood, and there are lots of kids our daughter's age [8]. When they opened up some bigger lots in the back, it was a perfect fit."

They asked Jay's brother Eric Wald, a building contractor in the Dallas area, to build the house—but it took him awhile to agree to take on the project. "My brother and I get along great, but we had a logistics challenge: I live and work in Dallas, and my fear was finding tradespeople I could trust," Eric says. "But then I went and saw the lot and got excited because I realized they were going to do something really nice."

The Walds' custom house is designed around the large common area, made up of the living room and kitchen, which opens up to a 1,100-square-foot patio. The result is an indoor-outdoor oasis, complete with a pool and an outdoor seating area. "The outdoor living space is very impressive, with 40 feet of glass sliding doors that open to the backyard patio," says Eric. Top-notch materials were used throughout the home as well, with engineered hardwood for the floors, tile in the bathrooms, and quartz and stone countertops.

Even though Eric was worried about not being on-site every day, the build ended up going more smoothly than he could have ever imagined. In fact, the 5,550-square-foot stone and stucco house, which has four bedrooms and sits on an acre lot, took exactly a year to build, from pouring the foundation in November 2017 to move-in in November 2018. "I was very pleased with that," says Eric. "I never thought it would get done that fast."

Eric says three things helped with the process: hiring a company to make the famously slow City of Austin permitting process go faster, getting referrals for quality local tradespeople and having interior designer Robin Bond on the project. "She always knew what we were doing and what she wanted," he says. "She has her ducks in a row and is very organized."

Bond agrees the project was a seamless one, from working with Eric



The patio (opposite bottom) and pool deck have multiple seating areas and feature outdoor furniture from Ratana; the media room (opposite top), complete with bar, is where the family spends movie night on Sundays.



“The more I researched what Hill Country Modern really was, the more I realized that I wanted pretty,” Sara says. Everything I looked at, I would look in that direction.”





on the big-picture construction and exterior finishes, to choosing the interior details with Jay and Sara, a stay-at-home mom. Although the couple initially said they wanted a Hill Country Modern look, after some probing, Bond realized there was more to the story. “Detective work is very important, because when we went out with Sara, we realized she was a glamour girl,” Bond says. “She likes sparkle and glitz.”

Sara laughs with agreement. “That’s very, very true,” she says. “The more I researched what Hill Country Modern really was, the more I realized that I wanted pretty. Everything I looked at, I would look in that direction.”

Sara would send pictures and ideas to Bond, who would send back product ideas and more pictures. “I’d say yay or nay, and we’d go from there,” says Sara. “It was very easy and looked great when it all came together.”

Perhaps you could call the end result Hill Country Glamour. The Walds’ interiors feature a mix of textures, including suede, furs and leather, and a bold use of color, with pops of blue, purple and gold. There’s also a variety of artwork, mirrors and architectural pieces used throughout the home. “The house turned out unique to them,” says Bond.

While the majority of the decor is quite feminine, there is one area of the house that is a bit more masculine: the gray-and-red media room, where a wood art piece of the Torchy’s Tacos devil mascot by local artist Aaron Michalovic is prominently displayed and where a *Damn Good* sign hangs over the bar. “We wanted to pay a little homage to the brand—it means a lot to me,” Jay says. Torchy’s, which Jay says is in “major expansion mode,” will have 64 stores open by June across Texas, Arkansas, Colorado and Oklahoma. “Tacos built this house,” Sarah points out.

Having lived in their new home for six months, the Walds can say their dream of having an indoor-outdoor oasis came true. The family spends most of their time in the great area, whether with the doors open while entertaining friends outside on the patio or by the pool, or having cozy nights in by the TV in the living room. They’ve also started a tradition of Sunday family movie nights in the media room, where they watch films and TV shows on the projector screen.

But they aren’t quite finished working on the house just yet. Their next project is a large, colorful mural by Leigh Watson on a wall of the patio, similar to one found at La Condesa. “It will have layers of different colors that will look like paper being torn off to reveal hidden things about our family,” says Jay. Adds Sara, “The idea is to have a few different images underneath that pertain to our lives.”

No doubt there will be a few tacos involved. 🍌



The master bedroom (top) has a tiled fireplace and a bed from Bernhardt Furniture; Myah’s bedroom (right) has a teal color scheme while a guest bedroom (near left) has a purple one; a built-in cabinet provides storage in the study (opposite top); a mix of textures is evident throughout the house, including a guest bedroom (far left).

