

A Gathering Space

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Featuring work by Hyde Design Build

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A Gathering Space

For one Memphis family, a home renovation added magic to the flow of life.

by Abigail Morici



Print



PHOTOGRAPHS BY CHRISTINA IOVINELLI

The living room welcomes guests for parties and get-togethers, but also serves as a family spot for cozy movie nights.

Andrea and Kyle Morgan knew they had found their new home when they reached the backyard. The previous owners had redone the space recently, adding a pool and a patio with an outdoor living area. It was beautiful and functional, great for entertaining. The house, too, had more space than the one where they were living at the time, just about five blocks away. The extra space was a must: Their fifth baby was on the way. “But, really,” Amanda says, “to have a space where

people could gather — a lot of people, whether that’s our family coming in from out of town or just our community and friends — this backyard checked a lot of those boxes.”

So, knowing the outdoor area’s importance, when

Catherine and Ian

Hyde of **Hyde Design**

Build, were tasked to

renovate the

Morgans’ kitchen and

living room, they

looked first to the

yard, aiming to bring

the outdoor living

space in — the

function of it, the

beauty. The two

spaces had to coexist

and have “a good

flow,” Catherine says.

While the backyard

was “impeccable,” the kitchen and

living room did not fit the Morgans

when they closed on the home last

July. A bit dated, with stucco walls and

drenched in dark tones, rather than

the light neutrals they’d grown



PHOTOGRAPHS
BY CHRISTINA
IOVINELLI

*Catherine and
Ian Hyde, a
couple in
business and
life,
transitioned
from
commercial
work to
residential
renovation.*

accustomed to, it wasn't a space they could really see as theirs.

“That’s where I spend a lot of my time,” Andrea says, “feeding my family, hosting people, all of that. ... And Kyle looked at me and said, ‘What if we just made it our own? What if we did it?’”

Before the Morgans, the East Memphis home had four or five owners, and each seemed to renovate or extend the house in some way. “Kyle had been saying, ‘Let’s make this kitchen our kitchen — let’s leave our mark on this house.’”



PHOTOGRAPHS BY CHRISTINA IOVINELLI

For the Morgan home, a kitchen that made smart use of space and left room for family time was a must.

The dream scenario, they knew, was to tear out the walls, the cabinetry, the tile floors, everything — and they knew they wanted to do it with the help of the Hydes. They had worked together before, enlisting the couple to design a homeschool classroom for their previous house when their oldest daughter, now 13, was about to start kindergarten.

“We loved the idea of helping support people in the neighborhood,” says Kyle. “They had this vision of design [that we liked] and it was kind of fun, all those years ago with the other house.”

That homeschool classroom was early on in Hyde Design Build’s portfolio of projects, Catherine and Ian say. “It was when we first started our business [in 2017],” Catherine says. “It was probably, like, our sixth project.”

Both had experience working commercial projects, Catherine in interior architecture, and Ian in contracting. Their turn to the residential came when they started renovating their own East Memphis home, a project that captivated their neighbors’ curiosity. “They were like,

“We, I need help on my house,” Ian says.

At first, the Hydes were resistant — both held full-time commercial jobs — but at their neighbors’ persistence and encouragement, they began taking on jobs here and there. It helped that Catherine had been looking for something more in her career.

She had designed spaces for the Orpheum Theatre, for St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital, for hotels, and for schools, but they weren’t fulfilling her. These side home projects they had been taking on for others, though, reminded her why she started her career. After all, it’s where she found her niche, in college and even as a child.

As she explains, with a rough childhood, “My house became my friend. I was always moving stuff around. ... I made floor-to-ceiling



PHOTOGRAPHS
BY CHRISTINA
IOVINELLI

Arched pocket doors to the walk-in pantry echo archways (left) throughout the home’s living space.

murals in my room.” Once she began designing residential spaces, “I went back to being a kid seeing a house as my friend. It brought all that back. It was so natural. I was able to crank out stuff really fast. I was able to really connect and just felt like where I needed to be. I just really kind of fell back in love with design.”

As the number of projects accrued for the couple, and grew in scale, the two were able to focus on their business full-time, and Ian found himself falling harder for residential work, just as his wife had.



“I got to work on some really cool historic projects and buildings that affected our skyline in Memphis and the community, and it was great,” he says.

*PHOTOGRAPHS
BY CHRISTINA
IOVINELLI*

“But it just wasn’t personal enough. I kind of got to a point where I was feeling I wasn’t really making a difference.”

But with someone’s home, the couple could help clients reimagine their most intimate spaces. “Catherine and I

both believe your home is your sanctuary and your second skin,” Ian says. “It’s where you can be yourself and you can take off all the things you have to put on to go out into the world.”

“We’re very thoughtful with it,” Catherine adds. “We have a questionnaire depending on the type of project. We ask about their lifestyle habits, what they like to do, what times of day they use their spaces, and if there’s anything they want to change with their habits — that kind of thing.”

For them, design isn’t just about making a space beautiful; it’s about making a space functional according to a family’s needs and wants. “In your home, you can be you, and it’s for you,” Ian says. “It’s not just about having a 48-inch range or a big island with pretty countertops. It’s about what you want to get out of that.”

For Andrea and Kyle’s renovation, Catherine came up with the walk-in pantry first. Tucked behind a custom-made arched pocket door, the pantry is lined with neutral green cabinets with brass finishes, complete with a sink, an appliance garage, and a beverage

center. “It’s like a mini kitchen in and of itself,” Kyle says. “Before, we had a pantry, and now it’s a pantry-plus — that’s not in the high area of traffic in the kitchen.”

“I saw function could improve from our previous kitchen to what we were

dreaming,” Andrea

says. “Our old

refrigerator, where

[the kids] fill up their

water bottles,

inevitably ice or water

would shoot out of

there, as soon as I

was trying to make

lunch. Or I’d walk by

and the toaster would

be out and crumbs

would be all over, and we’d stash it

away in a cabinet but crumbs would

fall out. Or Kyle would make his

coffee, and that was in the upper

cabinet, but it was kind of all in the

same kind of main area, spots where

we would all just prepare food.”

This new pantry, though, alleviates

those problems, with an ice machine

and water filter for the kids to self-



PHOTOGRAPHS
BY CHRISTINA
IOVINELLI

*The walk-in
pantry allows
the Morgans
room for
appliance
storage and a
beverage
station.*

serve their own beverages and the appliance garage to tuck away the unattractive appliances like the blender, toaster, and coffee maker. “And then obviously having that space helped me lay out the rest of the kitchen,” Catherine says, “which then when you walk down into the space from the dining room, I really wanted that beautiful custom vent hood that we designed and that beautiful 48-inch range that could really provoke people to come into this space.”

The space itself presented its own structural challenges in the beginning. Like the rest of the house, with its numerous additions and renovations, the kitchen, Catherine says, “had been added onto probably three different times, so it was hard to really understand how the house was put together and how the different spaces were combined. We had to go back and do some forensic framing work to tie things together a little bit better and marry all three of those different additions so that the space flowed better.”

Take, for instance, the beams that line the ceilings in the kitchen and living spaces; some of them hide necessary

rafters while the rest carry through to keep the visual cohesion. Another effort of visual cohesion: the arched shelves in the living room to match the arched pocket door in the pantry.

That pocket door, which could close easily during parties or any get-together the family hosts, was a sticking point for Andrea and Kyle.

“We’re pretty easy-going, but we were like, ‘It’s got to be those wood pocket doors on the pantry.’ We’re like, ‘They definitely have to be arched.’”

And Catherine and Ian agreed, even knowing how much work would go into constructing them. “It’s not like your pocket door at your grandma’s house that never works and everybody hates,” Ian says. “It soft-closes. It soft-opens.”

“We never just accept things at their face value,” Kyle adds. “We always go into it with that mindset of: Anything’s possible.”



PHOTOGRAPHS BY CHRISTINA IOVINELLI

The Morgan family pose outside their High Point Terrace home: (l-r) Kyle, Evelyn (11), Abel (9), Ellery (13), Alden (6), Andrea, and Boaz (1), plus Bishop the pup.

That mindset also led to the Hydes renovating the guest bathroom, a side project during the kitchen and living room renovations. Once the Morgans had lived in their house for a bit, and during the other ongoing renovations, they realized the bathroom, too, could use some updating. “There was kind of a funky closet, but we’re like, ‘We kind of want to tear down the wall in between and make it a big bathroom,’” Andrea says. “And what we appreciate

about Catherine and Ian is they have the imagination to see it. They're not just going to go for the most simple, easy fix. They're going to really imagine a space and be excited about it."

Of this work, Catherine says, "It's really magic when you can really change somebody's life, and I feel like we did that."

Now that their kitchen and living room are complete, Andrea and Kyle are using their home to its full entertaining potential, though they were hosting in it all along, through construction and everything. "We turn on music and have dance parties in the kitchen," Andrea says.

"[In the living room,] we snuggle on the couch and do Friday night movies."

Their oldest daughter, Ellery, 13, has also been making use of the kitchen, using her sourdough starter whose



PHOTOGRAPHS
BY CHRISTINA
IOVINELLI

The guest bathroom was enlarged and updated as a side project during the renovation.

home is on the floating shelves. “She’ll make desserts and stuff all the time. But it’s sweet that she has like her little corner, she can kind of bake and do prepping and then I’ll be at the island right behind her making food.”

The Morgans’ younger children, ages 6, 9, 11, also join in the cooking, pulling up the barstools to the counter and reaching into the cabinets at their heights. (The couple’s 1-year-old has yet to join in on the fun.) They’ll soon be entering baked goods into the Delta Fair’s kids’ cooking contests.

In the meantime, the family will keep hosting, from their weekly church small group to kids’ birthday parties — and they’ll continue to make their mark on their home.

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by **Abigail Morici**

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