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## THE A-LIST

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SENSATIONAL  
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# LONE STAR STATEMENT

*For a family's retreat in Marfa, Texas, Mark Cunningham crafts an inviting home that marries the best of Eastern elegance and Western ease*

TEXT BY MEGHAN O'ROURKE · PHOTOGRAPHY BY WILLIAM ABRANOWICZ  
PRODUCED BY ANITA SARSIDI



In the Marfa, Texas, home of Sam Hamilton and Jen Chalken, which was designed by Mark Cunningham, the living room includes an Adam Fuss photogram, a fireplace surround lined with Grueby tiles, a Jacques Adnet floor lamp, and a pair of club chairs upholstered in a Rogers & Goffigon linen. The charcoal drawing is by Christian Nguyen, the bench is by Charlotte Perriand, and the vase on the windowsill is by Svend Hammershøi; the built-in bookcases are painted in Ralph Lauren's Turret Stair. See Resources.





FACING PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Chaiken, left, Hamilton, and their twin daughters, Addie and Olivia, on the porch. In the master bedroom's sitting area, an Arts and Crafts daybed with a Navajo throw is flanked by early-20th-century sconces; the cabinet and side table are 19th century, and the cocktail table is from the 1950s. The front hall features Stickley armchairs that once belonged to Richard Avedon and an Ed Ruscha poster above a Belgian Art Nouveau drop-leaf table; the black-and-white photograph is by Henri Cartier-Bresson. **THIS PAGE:** A Poul Henningsen light fixture and a Navajo rug in the family room; a cabinet by Robert "Mouseman" Thompson holds an Ansel Adams photograph, and the walls are painted in Benjamin Moore's Cloud White. See Resources.



**THE TINY DESERT TOWN** of Marfa, Texas, became an unlikely oasis of spare, modular minimalism after sculptor Donald Judd moved there in the 1970s. The artists, writers, and design aficionados who gravitate to Marfa today—drawn by its paradoxical collision of remote solitude and vibrant cultural energy—tend to emulate the boxy, geometric look of Judd's work in their homes.

But when San Francisco residents Sam Hamilton and Jen Chaiken decided to buy a second home in Marfa after holding their destination wedding nearby, they knew they wanted a more lived-in, layered aesthetic. "I go into other people's homes in Marfa and love their austerity, but there's a side of me that appreciates an attic and things to un-

cover," says Hamilton, a former Ralph Lauren executive. "I love that this feels like a house in New England *and* a house in the Southwest."

Chaiken, a film producer, adds, "Our home in San Francisco is very modernist. The mandate here was color." To realize their vision, Hamilton and Chaiken collaborated with designer Mark Cunningham, with whom Hamilton founded the Bay Area shop March. (Hamilton is now sole owner of the former antique-furnishings store, which she recently refashioned as a kitchen and tableware emporium.) Cunningham, who designed the couple's San Francisco residence, was the one who first urged them to visit Marfa. When they fell in love with the town, he helped them shop for a second home there.





A two-story house with a warm Arts and Crafts feel and a large backyard had recently been put on the market. “We all immediately liked it,” Cunningham says. “It’s adobe, and it has a fireplace, high ceilings, and a whole wall of windows.” (It was also unusual for the region—most houses in Marfa are single story.) Though the house was built in 1911, the second floor was a later addition ordered from Montgomery Ward. “In a sense, it was an early prefab,” Hamilton says.

The couple bought it and began renovating, widening the front hall and painting the walls and rafters. The kitchen, state-of-the-art in the 1970s, was now “really depressing,” Hamilton says, with a dropped ceiling and “icky, pickled-wood siding. We took it back to what it was.” Cunningham installed tile walls that draw the eye upward to the newly raised ceiling. He also added back doors with windows, to let in the profuse desert light.

Hamilton and Chaiken spent two and a half years accumulating furniture for the house, with Cunningham’s assistance—he and Hamilton picked up pieces on their regular European buying trips for March. The house has the same pleasingly curated quality as the objects at the shop: A pair of



The study’s English Arts and Crafts light fixture hangs above a Franco Albini desk and a Jean Prouvé chair; the daybed is by André Arbus, and the copper chair is by Donald Judd. **FACING PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:** The family room’s cocktail table belonged to Richard Avedon, and the curtains are of an embroidered linen by Chelsea Editions. A 1930s settee, a ’50s French cocktail table, and a Belgian Deco chair in the living room. In the kitchen, antique English chairs surround a Stickley table; the early-19th-century cabinet is Spanish, and the wall tiles are by Ann Sacks. See Resources.





In the guest room, the Worley Wong bed is covered with a 1930s Mexican serape, and the bench is vintage. **FACING PAGE:** A custom-made bed, a Roman Thomas bench and upholstered chair, and an André Arbus armoire in the master bedroom; the wood chair is by Gerrit Rietveld, the custom-made rug is from Sacco Carpet, and the walls are painted in Benjamin Moore's Cedar Key. See Resources.



armchairs and a cocktail table once belonged to Richard Avedon, and a deliciously oversize chesterfield in the family room was originally part of the Stanford White estate.

The living spaces have a soothingly textured combination of modernist pieces—including a black-and-white print and a copper chair by Judd—and Southwestern accents, such as Native American baskets and blankets. “Mark is able to work in a lot of different vernaculars,” says Hamilton. “He’s really influenced by Southwestern art, which has very graphic, simple design, with texture and repetition. He likes to cultivate the personality within the interior. He was able to draw on things that spoke to Jen and me, and to him as well. Any good designer is going to leave his or her note in there.”

As Cunningham puts it, “I wanted to retain what the house is, and when it was from. But they are, and I am, interested in a lot of different styles. We wanted it to feel like a casual, lived-in house, where things had accumulated over time.” Their careful

strategy paid off. The moment they moved in, Chaiken recalls, the house felt like someplace they’d lived for years. “We thought it should feel like the kind of home where you can open the kitchen drawer and find your favorite spoon,” Hamilton adds.

The couple have seven-year-old twin girls, and the family’s visits to Texas are restricted by their school schedule. Hamilton wants to retire to Marfa, but for now the clan spends August there, and sometimes Christmas. The home is first and foremost a space for them to retreat in comfort and recharge their batteries. “Mark put fabulous curtains in all the rooms,” says Hamilton, “and they create great places for the kids to have plays; they love doing cabaret shows behind them. We painted the attic walls white, and the girls draw all over them. They can’t do that back in San Francisco. Here, the kids can do leaps and turns on the sofa. I’m sure I’ll regret it when the buttons start popping off, but I know I’ll look at these rooms and have memories that can’t be repeated.” ■