



Courtesy Dick Clark Architecture

Music, midcentury and custom cars coalesce in Austin.

Stats

Original square footage: 2,100

Second-story addition: 1,800

Garage addition: 1,900

If you Google 'big' and 'Texas,' you get some amusing links: The Big Texan Steak Ranch—home of the free 72 oz. steak dinner; a big Texas cinnamon roll—not all that big and just a vending machine 'pastry'; and Style Network's 'Big, Rich Texas' reality show—'elite' country club moms and their entitled daughters. It also might lead to an Austin ranch house with a big addition that still speaks the midcentury lexicon.

Gabby and Steve Wertheimer bought their house nine years ago. In the town of Rollingwood, a suburb five minutes from downtown Austin, the neighborhood was developed during the '50s, '60s and '70s. The couple renovated the interior of their 1956 ranch, adding a tomato-red kitchen and terrazzo and bamboo flooring in the three bedroom/two-bath home. There was a two-car garage and a makeshift carport, but because Steve Wertheimer is a serious car guy, that wasn't nearly enough room for his hobby.

"Steve runs the Continental Club here, a very famous rhythm and blues live club, and he's a car collector and hot rodder," says architect Dick Clark, whose eponymous firm was responsible for a 2008 addition. "He and Gabby got married a little later in life and now have a child; that's what spurred the addition. They wanted a [larger] bedroom for themselves and more room for their daughter and Steve's car collection. Instead of driving to where he had a car in storage to work on it, he wanted it at home and Gabby wanted a pool."

"I was born and raised in Palm Springs and always loved the clean lines and open feeling of most homes there," says Gabby. "When I go back and visit, I am always amazed at how many wonderful original midcentury homes remain. Everybody in Palm Springs has a pool in their backyard, so I couldn't wait to put in ours."

"They knew what they wanted but they didn't know how to get it," comments Clark. "They had this big lot and the original house was a little gem of a '50s house. I suggested an enclosed walkway bridge so the new could be totally new and the old could stay what it is, though we changed some rooms up a little bit. That way we didn't mess with all the work they did on the previous remodel."

Clark's concept was for a stand-alone six-car garage with a new bedroom wing above. What sets it apart from a hulking bunker is the angle the top floor

Homeowner Steve Wertheimer (in white shirt) chats with architect Dick Clark outside the new addition. With creative parking, the garage can house six to eight vintage cars plus motorcycles. Current residents include '41, '50 and '51 Mercuries; a 1957 Coupe de Ville customized by Gary Howard; a '29 Model A roadster; a '27 Ford T roadster and wife Gabby's '63 Rambler American 440 convertible.

