

# Softening A Square

*Joseph Minton, Jr. and David Corley  
design a Texas residence*

**IN CREATING** the interiors of a contemporary residence built by architect Frank Welch, designers Joseph Minton, Jr. and David Corley, AID, had two objectives to fulfill. The first was to add warmth without diluting the structure's strong contemporary design. (The single level, stuccoed-exterior house, based on a square, is built around a central open atrium.) The second was to provide a suitable background for the client's extensive art collection. (He is president of the Museum of the Southwest.)

The designers were given an empty house in which to work; the client had transported only artwork from his previous residence. Minton and Corley used variations of a warm-toned color scheme and a profusion of subtle yet complementary patterns throughout, both to soften the severity of the square rooms and provide unity. Rooms, rather than making individual design statements, flow together, forming an overall impression. Colors used throughout are blues, rust, apricot, and brown. Patterns are found in upholstery fabrics and in area rugs; printed linen covers the dining room walls.

Two slight spatial changes were made to facilitate entertaining—a factor that the client had asked to be taken into consideration. What once had been a projection room was converted into a bar. The 15 x 30 foot dining room, although well suited for entertaining large groups, is overpowering for intimate gatherings. Thus, it was divided into two areas by an 18th-century Chinese coromandel screen. At one end of the room is a contemporary steel and glass dining table surrounded by six contrasting Louis XIV chairs for sit-down dinners. A banquette and small table on casters at the room's opposite end forms an area suitable for cocktails and informal gatherings.

Although paintings are dispersed throughout the house, Minton and Corley decided to make the large central hallway function as a gallery. Aside from the paintings, the only furnishings here are simple teak benches and a patterned area rug. Artwork was not categorized for display. Instead, each work is hung according to where the designers thought it would look best. In addition to paintings, other art objects are used as accessories—18th-century Chinese porcelain vases stand on pedestals in the living room, and a collection of pre-Columbian art is displayed in the dining room's antique pine cabinet. □



Photographer: Alexandre Georges

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**1 Travertine** marble floors lead from living to dining room. Vases are 18th-century Chinese porcelain.

**2 A white** structural band encircles the living room, contrasting with the beige-painted walls. The rug, custom colored by the designers and fabricated in Spain, is based on a 1930's rendering of an old Chinese rug. The cast ram's leg table was adapted from an antique by the designers.

*Sofa, armless chairs (custom): Carl Kisabeth  
Chair upholstery: Kirk-Brummel  
Leather armchairs: small black table:  
Robert Minton  
Antique accessories: Minton-Corley*

**3 View** of the dining room (looking out to the atrium) and part of the living room. Dining room furniture is both traditional and contemporary. Regency marble obelisks and Japanese Imari bowl on table are both antique.

*Table: Pace  
Rug: V'Soske  
Chairs: Robert Minton  
Chair upholstery: Tressard  
Wall covering: Kirk-Brummel*

