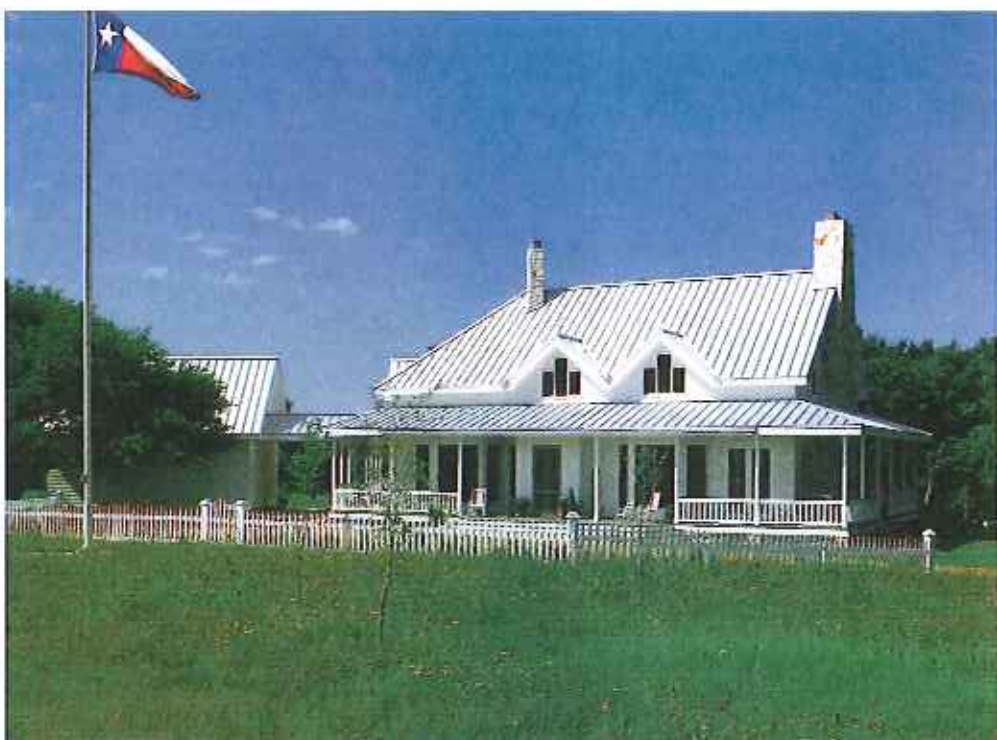


VERANDA

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Mary's Farm

A LITTLE PIECE OF PARADISE

INTERIOR DESIGN BY P. JOE SHAFER, MOORE & SHAFER
ARCHITECTURE BY LOGIC TOBOLA II, FALA
LANDSCAPE DESIGN BY SUSAN FISCHER, FISCHER SCHALES
PHOTOGRAPHY BY HICKEY-ROBERTSON
TEXT BY DEBORAH MERCK SANDERS

The Brenham, Texas, residence designed by Logic Tobola occupies a 108-acre estate, beautified by a colorful cutting garden laid out by Susan Fischer. Grounds provide ample space for lounging, horseback riding, croquet and volleyball.





ABOVE: Horse sculpture by Texan Charles Umlauf is silhouetted against soft yellow fabric by Henry Calvin covering chairs. Coffee table designed by Shaffer. RIGHT: In the living room, an interesting pastiche of patterns includes Manuel Canovas fabrics covering sofas and skirted table; Gainsborough chair covered in Clarence House plaid and Brunswick & Fils red stria; wing chair and drapery fabric by Brunswick & Fils, and a geometric rag rug by Joyce Oladki. Bamscares by Wolf Kahn (on mantel) and McGuire table complete the tableau.

After a fast-paced life in the metropolis of Houston, a hail of rain drops on a tin roof was a welcome sound for former penthouse dweller Mary Reese. At what is commonly known as "Mary's Farm" and formally known as Kenmar Farm, the distant sound of horses neighing has replaced the relentless sound of traffic, and the sun sets on a vista of cool green grass rather than a sea of steely skyscrapers.

In Brenham, Texas, halfway between Houston and Austin, Mary Reese has her own little piece of paradise—something dreamed up over lunch with friend and designer P. Joe Shaffer. The designer joined forces with Jane Moore several years ago and recently formed the Houston firm Moore & Shaffer with her. He had been doing design work for Mary and her husband,





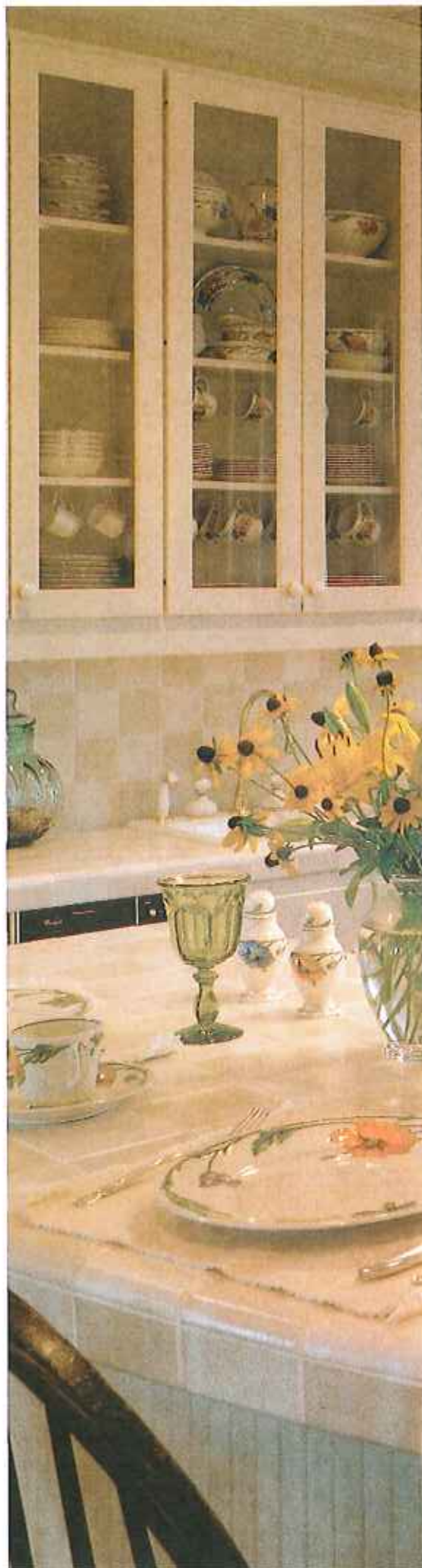


ABOVE: In the 30-foot long dining room, Kittinger chairs were recovered in Manuel Canovas fabric. Mahogany table designed by Shaffer extends to 12 feet. Checked floorcovering is made of cork. Kitchen cabinetry was designed by Logic Tobola.

Kenneth, for over a decade.

On a lark, Mary and her designer took off for Brenham to look at a farm. The Reeses ended up purchasing a 108-acre tract with two lakes and a small mid-1800s farmhouse. They promptly restored and decorated it as a temporary cottage (to later serve as guest quarters) until they could build a sizable retirement home that would also accommodate visits from their three married children and grandchildren.

Tragedy followed. Ken Reese passed away before retiring. Later, the cottage was almost demolished in a gas blast. Its remains were moved to another location, and on the site of its ashes a new 6,000-square-foot home was erected, bearing the name Kenmar for Ken and Mary. The home sketched out by Shaffer and Mary thoughtfully considered the homeowners' existing furnishings and the needs of an extended family. Logic Tobola II of Chelsea Architects, an El Campo native, was chosen to build it because, says the homeowner, "he had been raised on a Texas farm and he knew what was needed for a farmhouse."







In the master bedroom, Gothic furnishings recall the Victorian flavor of the house that once stood on the same site. Victorian sofa covered in vivid blue fabric from Osborne & Little is complemented by floral fabric on armchair from Brunschwig & Fils. Victorian mirror reflects Brunschwig & Fils wallpaper. Linens by Chelsea Textiles.

"It was a collaborative effort among the three of us," recalls the architect. "I scaled down the original draft, but it had all the right relationships. We used a lot of the characteristics of the house that was destroyed, and we stretched the new house around the trees, siting it for views."

The home and barn were constructed by Arlen Thielemann, and their completion in 1994 was greeted with much fanfare. The home was designed for comfort and has a 30 x 40-foot living room with chairs that accommodate both an adult and a child. "Our Houston apartment was very formal," recalls Reese. "Here Joe designed everything with what we already had. He made the sofas larger, deeper and softer."

In addition to calling for new decor, the Brenham residence called for inventive design solutions because of its large proportions. In the living room three seating arrangements were created for the homeowner's many guests. Its conventional-sized Oriental rug would have been dwarfed in the oversized room, so Shaffer designed a







ABOVE: Old wicker chair and 19th-century Texas pine chest occupy one guest bedroom.

RIGHT: A different antique quilt covers each of the five beds in the monastic-looking dormitory designed for the grandchildren. The designer chose barn red paint to rim every window in the house, inside and outside.

larger rug to go under it. In all, five rugs and some decorative accessories were created by the designer.

With all the hay, horses and barbecues, a farmhouse requires a less formal look, especially in the dining room. Chairs around the twelve-foot-long mahogany table were covered to pick up the pattern of the sofas in a different colorway. No stranger to the art of entertaining, Reese likes to cook, so her kitchen was constructed so she could see everyone from the stove.

Light pours in through a plethora of barn red-rimmed windows, and the home's crescent shape takes advantage of lake and garden views. Windows in the four guest bedrooms remain unadorned because, the designer admits, "Mary wants everybody to get up." In the master bedroom, furnishings from the ill-fated cottage have a new home.

Throughout the house, the homeowner's collection of Texas art reflects a pride of place. It's a place where a state flag flies above a tin roof and a porch wraps around embracing all within on Mary's Farm. □

