

Love Nest

No bland starter castle here! The home of newlyweds Farah and Farhan Mohammad strikes a bold balance.

By Rebecca Sherman | Photography by Melanie Johnson



PHOTOGRAPHY In the living room, circular mirrors are the subtle touch that adds to the light, airy feel of the space. Photos by Rebecca Sherman. Styling by Melanie Johnson. Design by David Winkley Homes. The couple's home is located in the Lakewood area of Dallas.



Building a house is one of the most successful things a couple can do together. That is, unless they're also planning their wedding at the same time. But newlyweds Farah and Farhan Mohammad did just that, and not only survived, but ended up with a beautiful home and a strengthened relationship. "It was crazy perfect," says Farah, a native Texan working for a hospitality company. "Looking back, I don't know how we did it," she says.

Think of it as best camp for compromise. After getting engaged in the spring of '09, the couple divided up their to-do list, with Farah doing more of the planning for their beach wedding in Cancun, complete with a traditional Indian henna ceremony and sari. (Both husband and wife are first-generation Americans of Indian descent.) Farhan, a California transplant and software consultant who works from home, handled most of the house hunting. They settled on a two-story house by David Winkley Homes in the Castle Hills development of Lewisville. While the house's shell was already complete, they added their own finishes such as dark wood floors and big windows that show off the view. They instructed the builder to leave off the traditional-looking fireplace in favor of a sleeker look.

"We closed on the house the day after we got back from the wedding," remembers Farah. Their first disagreement was about whether to hire an interior designer. Farhan, who was initially against the idea, changed his mind when he realized they were moving from scratch and needed to fill the entire 3,200-square-foot house with furniture. "I came around to the idea that if we spent more money up front, we'd get what we wanted and wouldn't be making expensive mistakes like buying a couch that's too big for the space," Farhan says.

After researching Dallas-area designers online and liking the looks of projects they saw, they interviewed Abbe Fennimore, the 27-year-old owner of Studio Ten 25, in person. The three clicked. "I was excited



REMEMBER THE FORM OF NEW Clavin is from where he is now, so a color palette dominated by neutrals, a neutral, all-white palette is a safe bet. The design team used a mix of textures and colors, including a patterned wallpaper, a patterned headboard, and a patterned rug. The design team also used a mix of textures and colors, including a patterned wallpaper, a patterned headboard, and a patterned rug. The design team also used a mix of textures and colors, including a patterned wallpaper, a patterned headboard, and a patterned rug.



...and it was immediately says Fabian: "We wanted a younger, hipper style, and Abbe was really cool. She's around our age [Fabian and Fabian are both 30], and I think that really made a difference."

To show Fabian what they liked, the couple downloaded photos from their favorite design blogs and websites. They were generally in agreement on color and style, so for many newbies, budget was an issue. "We chose the basic pieces first, then that's where the compromise comes in—what to spend the money on afterward," explains Fabian, who mixed concrete pieces with farago finds from online retailers and discount stores. The walls were painted soft Palladian Blue by Benjamin Moore to contrast with all of the graphic black and white upholstery, rug and dark wood floors. "I brought in pops of yellow and turquoise in the pillows and accessories," says Fabian. One of the most important was the office. Fabian is a huge Texas Longhorn fan and wanted some things to dominate. Black, too—check.

Silver leaf and mirrored finishes, along with chandeliers in lieu of ceiling fans in most rooms, became the glamorous question. "It's really glamorous for their age. The graphic patterns are youthful and fun," admits Fabian, who confesses to using mirrored furniture in every project she designs. Still, Fabian was more focused on function and budget and less on design, and had to be convinced about some details. He balked at their bathroom with its tiled headboard, patterned wallpaper and black glass chandelier—all Fabian's favorites. "It seemed so look-so-primitive," Fabian says. "So Abbe brought in holder persons in the curtains and pillows to save down the look." Instead of a formal nightstand, a table made of dark wood was moved in, and a large-scale, boldy-colored modern painting was commissioned from Dallas artist Chris Judy, which Fabian loved. At last, a happy medium was struck.

Give and take in marriage, as in design, turns out to be key. "We really learned the whole concept of compromise through the whole process," says Fabian. "We learned to talk through our decisions and to make concessions. That's the biggest thing in marriage and we had a big dose of it." ■

