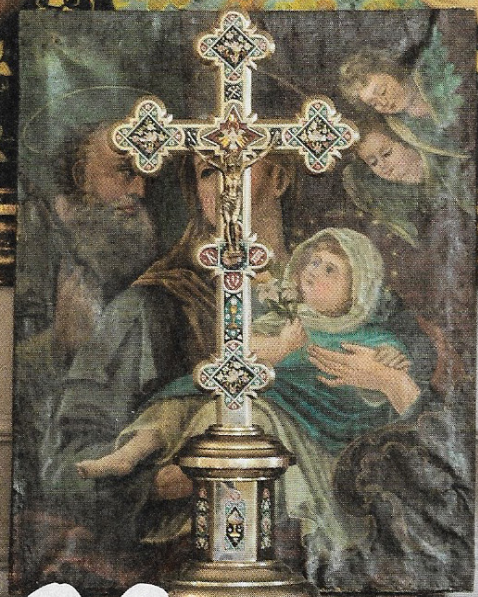
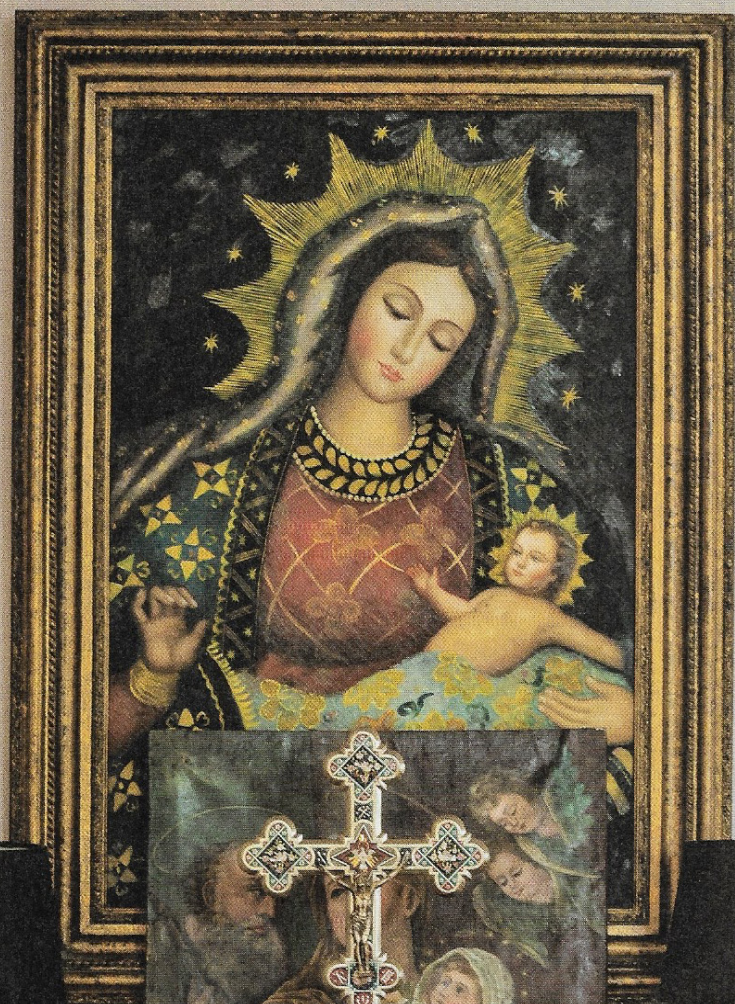


THIS 1980s HOUSE PUTS CLASSIC, MODERN AND QUIRKY—MOST OF IT THRIFTED—UNDER ONE FAMILY-FRIENDLY ROOF.



# House Blend

photos by ROBERT M. PEACOCK  
styled and words by DENISE GEE

**PERSONAL TOUCH** "I love things that are sculptural and unique," Katie Sarokhian says. The Deco-style mesh chandelier, *this photo*, reflects that. She gravitates to religious art, *opposite*, because it "reflects truth, beauty and goodness in life."







**IN BLOOM** Katie, *top left*, sits beside a gallery wall of scavenged floral and seascape paintings. "My kids love this stairwell," she says. "Paintings inspire a sense of wonder." Katie's vintage shell necklace reflects her attraction to anything from nature.

**TAKING SHAPE** The living room, *above* and *top right*, is a study in shapes. The reeded bamboo chair was a Craigslist find from sellers who shared fascinating stories with Katie. "If you bring home stories, you'll always treasure the piece," she says.

## THERE'S NO EASY

way to describe Katie Sarokhanian's style. Her Dallas home is an ever-changing mix of abstract expressionism, Hollywood glam and bohemian gothic. Or, as Katie, an artist and long-time fan of thrift stores, succinctly puts it: "It's modern, classical and a tiny bit weird."

Since moving into the home about two years ago, the Sarokhanian clan—Katie, her husband Nick and their five kids under the age of 7—has gotten a crash course in giving a 1980s place personality. It has also turned into a chance for Katie to start instilling in her kids an appreciation for old things. "I love taking my children secondhand-shopping—not to places where things are precious, but mostly to thrift stores, flea markets and garage sales," Katie says. "I delight in seeing what they're drawn to. I can see the spark of imagination in their eyes as they curiously inspect all the trinkets and treasures."

Katie recalls her own childhood in Minnesota where she shopped thrift stores with her mom not because it was cool, but because it was a necessity. "The happy memories of my childhood include the sound the antique buffet made when I opened it to find my paper and crayons," she says. "I try to remember the details and memories of my childhood home when beautifying my own home."

For Katie, that beautifying includes grabbing paintbrushes to transform walls or kitchen cabinets (they're pink!) and bringing in one-of-a-kind finds that have soul. "Choose art and furnishings that mimic life's beauty as well as its hardships," she suggests. "Introduce things that are timeless, handmade, have their own stories, their own scars. It will take time, but the result will be a gift to you as well as to those who experience it."



**IN TUNE** An old piano (situated in a wide hallway) is a prop for rescued artwork and planters. "I never buy new planters—they're always secondhand," Katie says. Olive the cat gets comfy in the Lucite chair Katie found for \$5 at a garage sale.



**WELL FURNISHED** Katie took the utilitarian edge off the kitchen by painting cabinets pink and furnishing it with unexpected items, such as an ornate mirror and antique glass-front cabinet that, sitting atop a counter, mimics a large hutch.



*"Creativity flows out of us all. Decorating a home is one form of creativity."*

—HOMEOWNER KATIE SAROKHANIAN



**COOL MOVE** Even the \$200 used fridge, left, got a makeover. Katie coated it with auto primer, painted it matte black and added brass towel racks as handles.

**FACING FACTS** A collection of busts fills an old brass cabinet, below. "Faces make one's surroundings more interesting," Katie says. To get the look of wainscoting, she painted lower walls pink.







**FIGURED IN** "I love statues," Katie says of the scavenged religious icons in her dining room. "They're quiet friends in a home." Painted to match the wall, the basic bookcase has the look of a custom built-in.

**MOOD SWING** Rich plum gives the combination dining room and den a moody vibe. The suede chairs are restaurant cast-offs that rank high with Katie because kid messes wipe off. Her trick for thrifted lamps: Add black shades for "instant sophistication," she says.





**PATTERN PLAY** Katie painted the abstract mural in her son's bedroom. "I love knowing this is what he looks at when he's daydreaming," she says. "My kids see things in it as if they were staring at clouds in the sky." In the bathroom, buffalo check wallpaper brings the zing.



**DOUBLED UP** Placed side by side, twin-size rattan headboards from Craigslist create an inexpensive backdrop for the king-size bed in the master bedroom. A collection of vintage animal hooks hang with hats. Resources, see page 110



**Q+A**

Katie's thrifting mantra: Shop often and shop creatively. Here are some of her other thoughts.

**SHOPPING TIP**

"I say it's better to visit a mediocre thrift store for 10 minutes each day than to visit a great one infrequently. Ten minutes of scanning is all my eyes need to find something grand."

**GRAVITATES TO**

"I'm drawn to design that stands the test of time—design that's not the trend of the day, but that's a lasting testament to character."

**GUILTY PLEASURE**

"Books! An antique book has a smell I can't resist."

**FAVORITE FIND**

"A large marble statue of Dante carved by an Italian sculptor in the late 1800s. The details are exquisite. It's now in my dining room."

**PARTING SHOT**

"Why don't we normally think of art for kitchens? Or bathrooms? I have paintings in both—and paintings in my closet, and paintings hanging on doors. I say art everywhere!"