



HOMING IN Bennett Design & Landscape executed the outdoors look with this Dedon line by JANUS et Cie found at Logan Gardens.

DWELL DONE! A bamboo sculpture by Daniel Adame sits in the hallway, while a bronze table from KGA Functional Art Furniture and a Cantoni recliner rest on a handwoven, Indian Stark carpet in the living room. A painting by an unknown Cuban artist hangs above the two-sided fireplace.

Modern Metamorphosis

Designer Kelly Gale Amen transforms wealth manager Todd Tautfest's home into an urban oasis of exotic charm. | *By Elizabeth Schulte Roth | Photography by Sergio Santos* |

Todd Tautfest admits he doesn't easily accept change. "I can be a stick in the mud," he confesses. So when his cousin, internationally acclaimed artist and Houston-based interior designer Kelly Gale Amen of KGA, suggested that they alter his surroundings, Tautfest initially balked. "I liked it the way it was."

Both sons of sisters from Oklahoma, Tautfest and Amen are a decade apart in age, but have been working together for almost 30 years. The designer started advising Tautfest on everything from art to architecture when he was barely out of college. "[Amen]

always said that we are defined by the objects we choose to travel through life with," Tautfest explains, "so I began to appreciate certain things and started to collect pieces I loved." Their relationship eventually morphed into one of designer/client, as Amen designed Tautfest's homes—from a Florida townhouse to the previous design incarnation of his current Morningside abode.

Amen wanted to do his signature flip, which involved, among other things, moving all of the furniture out of the house. "When you live in a space for a while, you lose the energy," Amen says. "You need to shake it up." He spent a weekend shifting things around to show Tautfest parts of his home that he wasn't even using. As the managing director of Atlanta's premier wealth advisory firm Wilmington Trust, Tautfest has to occasionally advise clients to let go and allow an expert to help them, in order to achieve the best outcome. As a result, he realized he had to do the same thing in this situation. "[Amen] has always been three steps ahead of the game, and I had to trust him." On the plus side, Amen adds, "When you take it all out and reintroduce yourself to what you already have, you realize you don't have to buy as much as you thought!"

The pair agreed on a more intimate home ambience that would include an updated TV room with a double-sided fireplace. As one of Georgia's foremost philanthropic CONTINUED...



...CONTINUED supporters, Tautfest's social schedule can sometimes overwhelm. "He wanted a place to cocoon," reveals Amen, so he warmed the space with walnut-stained walls and a butterscotch mohair seating area. To amp up the relaxation factor, he added a sleek steam shower and sauna and moved the bedroom sofa downstairs to the living room to "make it more playful, and not so grown-up," he adds. He transferred the leather-topped Beacon Hill game table from the front of the house to the kitchen, where it now provides a view of the outdoors. "It used to be the perfect single guy's house, where I would sit and eat off a TV tray," says Tautfest. "Now, I can entertain other people at the dinner table."

While Amen was busy transforming Tautfest's Atlanta environment, he was simultaneously downsizing his own home back in Houston. He had recently sold his 26-room compound and moved into a historic downtown loft. Coincidentally, this was great news for Tautfest. "I hinted to [Amen] years ago that, if he ever moved to a smaller place, I would love to help relieve him of my favorite work of art." True to his word, Amen transferred a nine-piece Michael Tracy series he bought in 1982 to his cousin to help fill his walls with brilliant bursts of color.

Tautfest's not the only one enjoying the space. His partner, Colombian actor Mateo Restrepo, recently moved in. This handsome couple loves to host smaller dinners and enjoys spending quiet time



in their cozy media room with their dogs, Ozzie and Frida. But don't assume they'll be resting too comfortably in their modified surroundings. "Since I started this process with my cousin, I can't help but look at other things I'd like to change," says Tautfest. "I'm a perfectionist." ■



NATURAL HABITAT
 Clockwise from top: A triptych by John Palmer (2001) hangs on the right, while a settee by Omar Perez and rug by Stark are in the hall and a print by SCAD artist Omar Richardson is reflected in the mirror; Restrepo and Tautfest (with dog Ozzie in the background) rest on chairs from Wicker Works with cushions upholstered in tufted fabric from Donghia at the leather-topped Beacon Hill game table; a sitting area is outfitted with Mackenzie Kente pillows, while an antique Chinese rosewood table is a prime spot for parchment balls filled with daisies by florist Aubrey Sellers.