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Night scene

Clockwise from top:
The home's shared living and dining room acts as its formal entrance. Ivy-tufted black-leather Mies van der Rohe Barcelona chairs and matching stools pair with a lacquered coffee table atop one of many Moroccan rugs (Carlos Angelini adds dazzling dialogues) for a friend's wedding. Pair of white Hansenne lounge chairs by Peter Hoell and Orly Wahrsard-Nielsen. Artwork, including pieces by Aaron Parazette and Anton Gaultney, gives the banquet environment an intriguing air. Arrows on either side of the fireplace frame Dedo mirrors and sterling Edwardian candlesticks.

A passionate backgammon player, Gordon prefers a tournament canvas from New York-based T Anthony — which he says "have just enough space for a change of clothes."

Gordon inherited the ornately carved footstool, covered in expensive velvet, from his grandparents. A sailboat model on the side table behind the living room sofa recalls summers on the East Coast.

In the den, the low seating is from West Elm. Circular carved wooden stools from Indian shops once used to grind grain, have been repurposed as ottomans and covered in local fabric. A Moroccan rug and Libbie Masterson's *Australia 2013* (artist proof), 2008, add to the exuberance of the room.

In the media room, a rattan chaise longue is a clever counterpoint to William Wegman's *WY Plaid Performance*, 2014.

The weeping willow at the border of Ryan Gordon's home perfectly encapsulates the relaxed, poetic nature of the domestic environment he has quietly crafted for the past 11 years. His 1981 town home is part of a collective of seven, most of which were designed by Houston architect Tom Wilson. Gordon's property has the largest street frontage (136 feet), and the generous front and side lawns suggest a house more than a town home. This green space creates an organic barrier for the residence while framing important elements in the home, however, predate its construction. Gordon is a fourth-generation Houstonian; his great-grandfather, M.M. Gordon, arrived in Galveston from Russia in 1890 when he was 12. After the storm of 1900, he moved to Houston and started the family business, Gordon's Jewelers, in 1905, at 808 Preston. Gordon counts his great-grandparents' rolltop desk and an ivory warrior they purchased in Hong Kong in the '80s among his favorite possessions. He also recalls an awe-inspiring trip with his grandmother, JoAnn Rich, to Thorncrown Chapel in Eureka Springs, Arkansas — a property he describes as being "like a dream". The church, designed by E. Fay Jones, is made entirely of glass and stands in the middle of the woods.

Gordon's home reveals his insatiable curiosity about all things art and design, with a heavy emphasis on art — a passion born from his involvement in the founding of the CAMH's young professional group, The Studio, and his time as board chair for the University of Houston's Blaffer Art Museum. With ample opportunity to cultivate his eye, he currently collects pieces by contemporary artists, many local, including Trenton Doyle Hancock, The Art Guys, Patrick Turk, Aaron Parazette, Joseph Havel, Daniel Fabian, Emily Sloan and Libbie Masterson.

Over the course of three separate renovations, Gordon has carved out a space that reflects his appreciation of architecture as a design element, relating to his own domestic experience. By laying dark hardwoods and painting much of the home's lower level a serene shade of gray, he has achieved a weightlessness that underscores the inherent strengths of the architecture: floor-to-ceiling sliding glass doors along the ground-story façade; voluminous spaces including the 17-foot-tall kitchen and stairwell space; and flourishes such as the living-room opening into a double-height clerestory-like ceiling shared with the master bedroom above. These juxtapose the interiors, which reflect two dichotomous themes: design-related furniture acquired through online auctions, paired with meaningful family pieces. Surprisingly, the styles harmoniously contrast — and prevent either from becoming overarching.

The one necessary addition to the property, he says, was a laundry room. He sacrificed a portion of the garage to create the galley-like service area — an impressive concession, considering his growing car collection, which includes a 1930 Ford Model A Deluxe Roadster.

Ultimately, Gordon decorates the house with history and individuality. The result is a home moored in another era, one where hospitality and sincerity were favored over perfectly fluffed pillows. His desire to create a backdrop for a life focused on people instead of things is refreshing — and perhaps the greatest testament to his architectural prowess.

Dream architectural collaboration: Designing a sailboat with a naval architect.

Currently reading: Michael Allin's *Zarafa: A Giraffe's True Story, From Deep in Africa to the Heart of Paris* as well as Mireille Broderick's *Tournesol: Matisse, Mead & White*.

Listening to: Tedeschi Trucks Band, Kings of Leon and Bonnie Raitt on vinyl.

Favorite architect working today: Shigeru Ban and Santiago Calatrava.

Your house in one word: Multifaceted.