



# Classic Meets Modern

Luis Jauregui / Architect

story CLAYTON MAXWELL  
 photography MICHAEL THAD CARTER

**L**uis Jauregui knows how to blend contrasting aesthetics. This Austin architect designs residences that are grand and strong—all columns, arches, and thick stone walls—yet at the same time inviting and not too heavy. With more than 30 years of experience, Jauregui is skilled at using doors and windows to create a strong visual connection with the outdoors, bringing the outside in and lifting the mood. The effect is one of sincerity and strength, balanced with light and cheerfulness.

In the search for an apt description of his style, the term “blend” also comes into play. Jauregui was one of the first architects to bring Spanish Colonial design to Austin. Yet he doesn’t want to be confined to any one period or category, preferring to call himself “eclectic.” “In the 70s, I started slowly pushing for Spanish Colonial architecture, something that we didn’t have in Austin. But I also think it’s appropriate here to have a good combination of various classic styles, be they French, Italian, or Spanish—these are all fitting to the Texas climate. I just finished a house that has a lot of French influence and you may say, yeah, it looks French, but it is eclectic overall.”

facing page • Luis Jauregui stands poolside at his beautiful home that showcases his architectural loves.

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Jauregui himself defies categorization. He was born in Mexico, spent all of his adult life in Texas, and his surname is Basque, one of the world’s oldest languages and cultures, completely unrelated to Spanish. The surname is a perfect fit. *Jaur* means “the lord or main landowner,” and *egui* means “the house or castle”; the two components combine to mean “the house of the lord.” “So it’s pretty appropriate,” Jauregui quips, “that I should end up building big houses.” (The homes that Jauregui builds are among Austin’s most opulent.)

Growing up in Mexico provided Jauregui with ample visual inspiration. Before he left the country at the age of 17, he lived in at least 10 different places, from Guadalajara to Tampico to Chihuahua. In that vast experience of Mexican aesthetics, it is the churches that affected him the most. “I remember the proportions and towers and huge entry doors and vaults everywhere. It all created a spiritual experience for me, with the smell of the incense, the atmosphere—not just in the cathedrals but in the small chapels, too.” The homes he designs may possess the grandeur of a church in Guadalajara, but they are warm, comfortable, and far from sacrosanct.

The missions of Texas have also fueled Jauregui’s creative fire. He has studied the missions in detail (San José is a favorite) and is drawn to the domes, the interesting use of arches, and the massiveness of the walls. He also loves the interior courtyard, a typical element of Spanish Colonial design. He often creates a courtyard-like feel by smoothly integrating the interior spaces with the outdoors.

Nothing is black and white, though. Jauregui says that while he loves the proportions of the Old World buildings, he also appreciates the clean lines of contemporary architecture—the beauty lies in the balance of elements. The famous Pritzker Prize-winning contemporary architect Luis

Barragan, also from Guadalajara, is one of Jauregui’s heroes. “I love both styles, classical and contemporary,” Jauregui explains, “and that is the conflict—in what direction do I want to go? Sometimes I really want to design something totally contemporary, and I’ve done it, but it doesn’t give me that feeling you have when you design something great. When I come up with a nice combination of both styles, more classic with some contemporary, I feel very satisfied architecturally.”

Jauregui has not only been busy building some of Austin’s finest homes, he’s been busy building a better Austin. For many years, he served on the board of Mexic-Arte museum, and he was a founding member of the Austin International Group, an organization of Hispanic leaders in the Austin community who gather socially and speak Spanish. He was active on the Austin Economic Development Commission when the fate of Mueller Airport was on the table. These are only a few of his community endeavors—he’s been a mover in Austin civic life for decades.

But again, there’s the need for balance. Jauregui has in recent years curbed his extracurricular involvement in order to devote more time to his four children. He also has been very focused on growing his successful firm, which tackles design, build, and interiors. He expanded his office to Houston five years ago—with such success that another office, this time to the north, in Dallas has just been opened.

A good deal of Jauregui’s success stems from his keen talent for integrating different elements: classical and modern, heavy and light, even work and family. And in the end, his clients are the beneficiaries of his exquisite sense of balance, for they have the joy of living in homes that comfortably commingle many influences. / CM



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