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Jessi, Jinjer, Jorja and Joslin Johnston

Living with kids isn't always easy, but Brooke and Monte Johnston have taken a light-hearted attitude and a "dive right into life" approach to raising their four girls – Jorja, 21, Jessi, 15, Jinjer, 11, and Joslin, 5. The family embraces busy schedules and sibling banter, and enjoys spending time together in their home overlooking Lake Springdale. The couple bought the house a little over two years ago and say that they knew right away that it was the perfect home for their clan.



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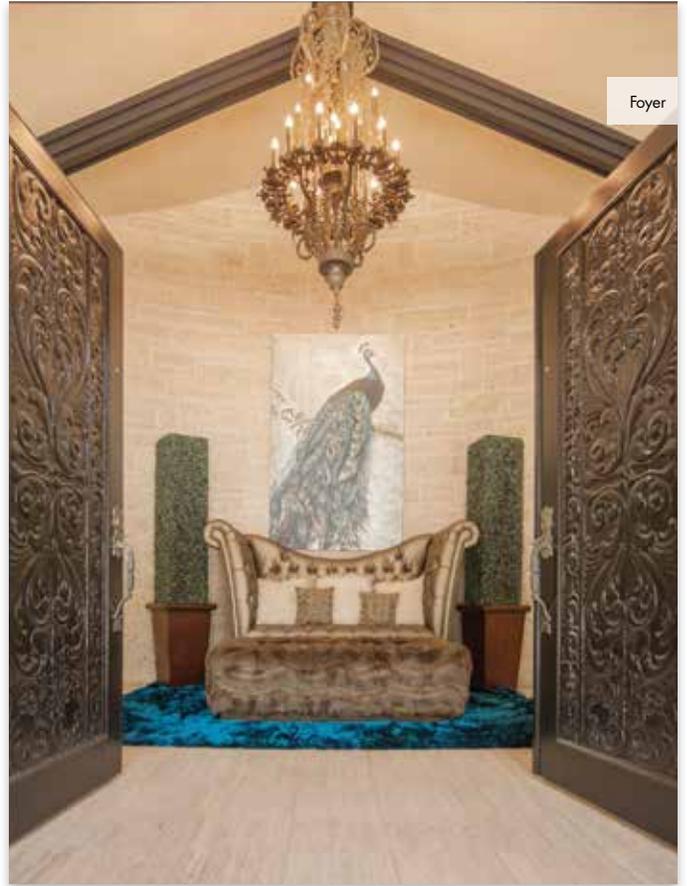
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## LIVING SPACES



Both Brooke and Monte were born and raised in Springdale and their families have strong ties to the community. "My grandfather on my mother's side had the *Springdale Morning News* and my grandfather on my dad's side was the manager at a local radio station," Brooke explains. "They had a passion for this community."

Brooke grew up in a house not far from where she lives now and says, "When I was a little girl, I would walk by and think how pretty this house was. The owners were friends with my parents and grandparents and, though I had never been inside it, when it came up for sale, I was so excited."

When Brooke finally had the chance to get an inside peek at the home, originally built in 1966, she says that she and Monte stood in awe. "We had barely stepped into the foyer, Monte paused for a minute and then said, 'Yeah, this is a good house, a really good house.' It was amazing still...just from a different era. We were immediately in love."

With past experience building and remodeling, Brooke says that she knew how a remodel could transform a home, so she was going to like the house no matter what. But they were both pleasantly surprised at what good shape it was in. "And then we figured out why...not only was it extremely well-built, but kids had never lived here!" Brooke laughs. "We sure changed that, plus two dogs."

With a remodel that altered the interior only slightly, but allowed the layout to more perfectly fit their family's needs, and a redecoration that incorporated everyone's personalities as well as represented the original design, the home became an ideal, modern family home that the Johnstons adore. "We feel honored to live in this home," Brooke says. "The previous owners, the Steeles and the Shaws, had such vision for Northwest Arkansas. It feels like owning a part of local history to me. It feels special."



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## Q&A WITH BROOKE JOHNSTON

### WHAT WERE YOU LOOKING FOR IN A NEW HOME?

We really wanted a one-story home with a large kitchen – there are a lot of us to squeeze into the kitchen and the girls all like to bake. I also wanted something that is open in the center but had enough space for everyone to spread out. This home has all of that so it works well for the girls' current ages, but I also think it's going to work great as they grow.



Craft Room



Laundry Room

### IF THE HOME WASN'T ORIGINALLY BUILT FOR KIDS, HOW DID YOU KNOW THE LAYOUT WOULD WORK FOR YOUR FAMILY?

Even though no kids had lived here, we just knew it was going to be great... especially once we figured out how to work the bedrooms. We're all close and just want to hang out in the same room most of the time, anyway, so I knew what kind of spaces to plan for. And they really enjoy the pool, which was here already. I like that it's so easy to see the pool area from inside; I can easily keep an eye on the girls. We added the cabana so we could enjoy the outdoors more.

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**LIVING SPACES**



Jorja's Room



Monte's Bath



Hall restroom featuring original countertop and sink



Brooke's Bath



Master Bedroom

## HOW DO YOU DECORATE A HOME WITH KIDS IN MIND?

First, don't have things sitting around that you can't live without. Kids are kids and, well, we all know what that means. Look for durable pieces and fabrics that wipe off easily. Otherwise, I like to have fun. I like bright colors. I wanted to keep the rooms girly and happy. I also wanted the rooms to fit their personalities.



Jessi's Room



Jessi's Bath

## WHAT DESIGN ELEMENTS WERE IMPORTANT TO YOU TO INCLUDE IN THE HOME?

We wanted to stay true to the original home and just update and make it fresh. My personal style is more modern. Our other house was completely contemporary and darker. This home is so much lighter and seems to live easier, which I credit to good design and one story. I wanted this house to be comfortable and warm. I wanted to keep as many original things as I possibly could. We kept the original tile work in some of the bathrooms and the sink in the hall bath. It gives it a vintage flair and is a bit of an honor to the original home, I think.



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Jinjer and Joslin's Room



### WHAT IS YOUR STRATEGY FOR KEEPING THE SPACES FRESH AS THE KIDS GROW?

I'm not afraid to change up paint or paper. The colors are traditional girl colors and nothing too crazy — at least not too crazy for us — so we'll update everything when that time comes.

### ARE THERE ANY ADULT-ONLY PLACES IN THE HOUSE?

Not really. It's more "adult hours." We don't have any space that isn't open to the girls. However, I'm usually pretty safe in my bathroom area. It's a nice place to escape...besides the kitchen, it's my favorite place. This house is built so well that the sound from one room to the next isn't really heard. There can be all kinds of chaos going on and you never realize it. So, I can close the door and just have some alone time if I need it. ■

## LOCAL HOME PROS USED

**Builder/Architect:** CMI Construction (home remodel), Albert Skiles Architect (kitchen design), Signature Builders (cabana and gym, not pictured)

**Interior Decorators:** Dinah Aycock, Myra Graves of On the Bright Side, Brooke and Jorja Johnston

**Appliances:** Metro Appliances & More

**Cabinets (kitchen):** Meeks Lumber & Hardware

**Carpet:** Tyler Brown of Carpet One

**Electrician:** Tom Rowe

**Fabrics:** Fabric Gallery

**Granite/Marble/Tile:** Denia Roberts of C&D Interiors (tile), New Century Counter Tops & Tile (countertops)

**Home Theater/Sound System:** Nick Pianalto of Complete Audio Visual

**Landscaping/Lawn Care:** Sod Hawg & Landscape Supply

**Lighting (new):** Lighting Emporium, Lowe's

**Painting:** Ken Johannsen

**Pool:** Krystal Klear

**Shower Doors/Mirrors:** Abram's Glass, Inc.

**Wiring/Alarm System:** Alert Alarm Systems, Inc.