

FORMER  
DALLAS COWBOY  
**JASON WITTEN**  
AND HIS WIFE,  
MICHELLE, BUILT  
A TENNESSEE-  
INSPIRED HOME  
IN VAQUERO THAT  
IS BIG ON FUN,  
FAMILY,  
AND, YES,  
FOOTBALL.

Homeowners Jason and Michelle Witten take a timeout in their gym while three of their four children—Cooper, Landry, and Hadley—play on the basketball court. “The gym was the whole foundation of the house,” explains Michelle. “It’s so hot in Texas. We weren’t used to that, growing up in Tennessee. We thought, ‘Wouldn’t it be awesome to have a big gym for them to come and play?’” Jason’s personal collection of helmets and game-day balls are displayed above.

# off the field

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**this page:**  
The Wittens like to convene in the family room for movie nights, during which they pile up on the oversized custom Lee Industries sectional. All of the drapes in the home, including these sheer panels, were designed by Michelle's friend Kirstie Carollo, who owns Bella Beach Home in Destin, Florida. "She always gets the scale right and texture right," says Michelle. A Currey & Co. "Nottaway" chandelier completes the look. The vase on the far table is from Brendan Bass.

**this page:**  
The white-oak millwork, Bliss Studio "La Grange" lanterns, and white Ann Sacks "Nottingham Honeycomb" tile backsplash create a soft, natural aesthetic in the kitchen. "I didn't want anything dark and heavy," says Michelle. "The lighter wood is casual, and I think that it feels coastal." Palecek "Stillwater" bar stools accompany the 17-foot island, which offers plenty of seating for their family of six. The cutting board and bowl are from Room & Board.



When it came time to build their dream home, Michelle and Jason Witten didn't go far. The Wittens and their four children were living in the exclusive Vaquero neighborhood in Westlake. But after adding on to their home and still craving more space, they realized it was time to build on a lot just around the corner. And they knew they wanted to do it their way. "It was super important for this to be 'us' and who we are," says Michelle.

For starters, Jason and Michelle, high school sweethearts from Tennessee, wanted to honor their roots aesthetically with farmhouse-inspired elements, like sliding barn doors, wooden shutters, exposed beams, and shiplap siding. But the Wittens also wanted to stay true to the ethos of Southern hospitality, which exudes from their down-to-earth natures. "We've all been in nice homes where you can't sit there or you can't touch that," says Jason. "We wanted comfortable and welcoming." Add a little Dallas Cowboys nostalgia and a hint of coastal Florida cool, and the house is uniquely Witten.

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## Heart of the Home

Jason Witten knows all too well the importance of giving back. He's never shied away from telling his childhood story, which was tainted with domestic violence. "I was blessed that my grandparents took us in," he says. "My grandfather also happened to be my high school football coach, and everything I accomplished in my life, I owe to him. I wanted to recognize people who did that for me and pay it forward by being involved in charities." Throughout his time as a Cowboy, Jason often volunteered with organizations such as The Salvation Army and The Family Place. After working with the latter, he noticed a specific need in shelters: male mentors for kids from abusive homes. Through his SCOREkeepers program, trained volunteer mentors are placed in six shelters across the state so that children have a positive male influence to emulate. On top of his volunteer priorities, Jason's latest career path has led him to the head football coach position at Liberty Christian School in Argyle, where he continues to mentor and lead young athletes—including his two sons—on and off the field. They often open up their home for school pool parties and football-team celebrations. "We just love this latest season that we're in," says Michelle. [jasonwitten82.com/foundation](http://jasonwitten82.com/foundation)

Jason hosts friends and business associates alike in his office. "I wanted it to be big enough to throw your feet up, and it not just be me behind a desk," he explains. To achieve that, the Wittens arranged a circle of custom Lee Industries leather chairs in a Dallas Cowboy blue with Uttermost faceted star side tables. The bookshelves behind the Four Hands "Cuzco" desk feature custom white-oak millwork and are lined with textured Phillip Jeffries "Banana Husk" wallpaper. A Ralph Lauren for Visual Comfort "Triple Arm" hangs above. The vase on the coffee table is from KUFRI.



**this page:** (clockwise from top left) A custom white-oak barn door opens into a kids' playroom adorned with a Currey & Co. "Antibes Grande" chandelier. The Barnaby Lane swing is one of Michelle's favorite finds. A large butler's pantry/prep kitchen is perfect for the Wittens' entertaining needs. Phillip Jeffries "Marfa Weave" wallpaper in Western Sands blends beautifully with the Waterstone weathered brass faucet, the Ro Sham Beaux "Adelaide" chandelier, and the Rohl farmhouse sink. The dark basket is from Nick Brock. Builder Jon Hebb dubbed the breakfast nook's fringed Ngala Trading "Urchin" leather chandelier "Dolly"—an homage to Dolly Parton. Palecek "Fritz" rope armchairs from the Kirk Nix Collection are seated around a custom acrylic and wood table. The small vase is from KUFRI.

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To do that, the couple carefully crafted an A-list team. First, they called on Jon Hebb and Neal Calhoun with SCH Builders, who are well versed in the Vaquero neighborhood—their team has worked on around 40 projects there. Plus, SCH had helped the Wittens add on to their previous home, so they knew the couple's personal style well. "They wanted tons of natural light—lots of windows that go from floor to ceiling. It's a bright, light house," says Hebb. From there, Michelle was introduced to designer Fran DeLeo of DeLeo & Fletcher Design. "She was able to take my 'all over the place' ideas and bring them all together and make it all flow," Michelle says.

Finding the right architect was crucial in order to create a big family house with a fresh, laid-back vibe. The couple met with David Stocker, principal architect at SHM Architects, and clicked right away. Stocker was tasked with designing a home that wasn't overbearing—an important note from the couple. "We didn't want you to pull in and say, 'Oh, this is a big formal home.' We aren't formal people," says Michelle. To do that, Stocker strategically placed the 2,200-square-foot gymnasium on the back of the residence, which hides the large structure from the street. "The site fell off in the back, so we were also able to find a space to lessen the scale of the gym," Stocker explains. "David nailed it," says Jason.

Michelle took the lead in selecting the furniture and fabrics for her home, with inspiration ranging from Atlanta-based designer Suzanne Kasler's portfolio to the family's favorite vacation spot of 30A in Florida. "Michelle has a great eye for design, and she is passionate about her home," explains DeLeo, who worked to marry her client's selections with just the right paint colors, trims, hardware, and plumbing fixtures. "But she's also realistic about everyday life. She has four children, so things have to be comfortable, fun, and playful."

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The primary bedroom is a serene spot for the Wittens to have a quiet moment before they start their day. A Julie Neill for Visual Comfort "Acadia" chandelier hangs from custom bleached-wood exposed beams. A custom draped table hides the Wittens' dog crates. The white vase atop is from Brendan Bass.

**this page:** (from top) In the Wittens' bathroom, a feature wall is covered in Moderno "Meander" tile from Renaissance Tile. The natural, light-and-bright palette is continued throughout with Dolomite honed marble floors and a custom halo light fixture made of antique pewter and translucent selenite crystal. The Wittens' personal cleat collection is displayed along the wall that leads to son CJ's room. The idea was a collaboration between Michelle and Judy Littrell, a designer in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Handcrafted mango-wood pendants with satin brass accents hang above. The vase on the cocktail table is from Brendan Bass.



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That's apparent in the family room, where an oversized sectional from Lee Industries is perfect for cuddling up during movie night. "I wanted a sectional that the entire family can fit on, which is hard for six people and a big husband," Michelle laughs. It's paired with a Currey & Co. lighting fixture, a couple of Lee Industries chairs, and sheer drapes designed by Kirstie Carollo, owner of Bella Beach House in Destin, Florida. Multiple playrooms are sprinkled throughout the residence, including a craft room, where the kids are encouraged to play with slime and Play-Doh. "It's a place where they can be messy and do all the things," says Michelle. Each room is livable but still beautiful, with a mix of showroom pieces, custom furniture, and Michelle's finds. (She loves to hunt for unexpected items, like the Barnaby Lane swing in the family room, which she purchased on a whim on Cyber Monday.)

And naturally, the home features collectibles from Jason's 17-season NFL career, during most of which he was a celebrated tight end for the Dallas Cowboys. "I wasn't a huge memorabilia guy," he says. "My boys thought it was pretty cool. So I kept most of it." After moving into the house in July 2020, Jason slept in the home for two nights before leaving for Las Vegas for a season with the Raiders. During that time, Michelle installed most of the keepsakes. "I didn't ask for permission from him," she explains. "He didn't want to make it about him. But it's special and important to us." For instance, Tulsa, Oklahoma-based designer Judy Littrell, a friend of Michelle's, recommended they line the wall that leads to son CJ's room with cleats. As they are suspended in the open rather than encased within glass, sometimes Michelle will notice shoelaces have been messed with. "I wonder, 'Were the boys touching them or putting them on?'" Michelle says. "It doesn't matter, because that's the feel of the house. Nothing is off-limits." **D**

