

HOUSTON
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Home for All Seasons

Care and craftsmanship in a custom builder's home showcase what he does best

WHAT'S NEW IN FURNITURE

WARMING AND REFRIGERATOR DRAWERS

MID-CENTURY MODERN COLLECTORS

SHABBY CHIC IN THE WOODLANDS

not too shabby

formal goes fun in this family home in the woodlands

by mary chavouatie
photography by janet lenzen

Step into Helen Stroud's home and you'll know at the doorstep her three greatest loves...family, pets and comfortable living. You will also soon learn that she adores her shabby lifestyle, *Shabby Chic* that is. A wife and mother of five children, seven dogs, seven cats, three chickens, a painted pig and a couple of horses (that she thankfully remarks are not living in her home!) wouldn't it be any other way. Her eight-bedroom home, designed by Patrick Carnochy, her Rice grad brother, is warm and delightful and a perfect example of Rachel Ashwell's painstaking art known as *Shabby Chic*. ▶

Formal meets comfort in the Stroud living room with its classical references, classic lines, generous windows and touchable textures. "These people who prefer living rooms are certainly," observes Helen. "The seat my and spouse, you know the familiarity of home."





Helen Nantz leans on the bed in a daughter's bedroom on all-weather. Helen is picky about the items that clutter her family's beds. "Some of them would be wet dog and go flat in a week," she says. Her cat found a lot of them under the bed, and all them through her sleep.



Along the English hallway, only the kitchen floor a favorite Shabby Chic by Rachel Ashwell chair.



"I wanted a touchable, friendly home where nothing is off limits. I pored over books and magazines for years, and I found that European houses, no matter how big or grand, all had rooms that were eminently livable and unpretentious. European homes have comfortable sofas and chairs, beautiful tile tops and lots of art—either paintings, sculptures, china collections or whatever," says Helen. Thirteen years ago she discovered Ashwell's Shabby Chic design and line of home furnishings and told her husband "I have to do this" and has since loved every addition.

The Strand's living room is perhaps the best example of "formal meets comfort." A baby grand piano, adorned with one of many cherished photos, stands toe-to-toe with pristine white, slip-covered sofas—the same sofa covers that get tossed into the family washer when Popsicle stains or muddy feet make their mark. A casual sisal rug serves as floor covering beneath Helen's matching European painted chairs.

It's a perfect blend of comfort, durability and style as the room is well utilized by family, friends and pets, being a major thoroughfare as the outdoor pool.