



## Notable Features + Amenities

As early as the 1930s, the architect John F. Staub explored the avant-garde architecture of Style Moderne. Emerging first in Paris in 1925, the new genre offered an eclectic co-existence of traditionalism and modernism. Staub's first foray into Style Moderne was the Robert D. Strauss house (1937) in River Oaks where, according to the architect Howard Barnstone, Staub's traditional symmetry was "abstracted through glass block and Stripped (simplified) classical detailing."<sup>1</sup>

Staub's ventures into Style Moderne, referred to today as Mid-Century Modern, were few but impressive. In 1957, he designed this exquisite residence at 2005 Claremont Road in River Oaks for Mr. and Mrs. George Peterkin. The resemblance to the Strauss house was clear, but Barnstone observed that the Peterkin house was softer, "less assertive" and "more relaxed."<sup>2</sup>

Dr. and Mrs. James McMurrey purchased the house from the Peterkins. Staub's daughter-in-law, Alice York Staub, and Odette Hemenway McMurrey designed European-inspired gardens with crushed-gravel patios and paths. The gardens remain justly celebrated for their rare specimens of camellia, azalea, mock-fruit trees, and subtropical trees.

The present owners have cherished the home's refined architecture, notable gardens, and famous, Staub-designed serpentine wall, a treasured landmark along San Felipe Road. Outstanding features include 10-ft ceilings; framed floor-to-ceiling picture windows; rich hardwood parquet and plank floors; bifold and pocket doors; an imported marble fireplace; rich paneling; and Staub's signature, stunning ironwork.

In addition, the owners have made significant upgrades to electric, plumbing, and HVAC systems; updated the kitchen; provided copious storage; and created a pair of modern, lavishly appointed full baths for the first-floor primary suite. Of note is the home's commercial-grade HVAC system, a private-residence rarity. The Peterkins installed a commercial electrical system (3-Phase), and subsequent A/C replacement systems installed since continue to benefit from its efficiency.

A pea gravel pavement motor court bordered by boxwood parterres presents an inviting approach to the house's white semicircular arched entry portal. Inside the wide foyer, an unfettered vista travels across the enormous formal rooms into the sunroom and out to the renowned gardens.

The ballroom proportions of the contiguous living and dining rooms may be halved by a range of folding doors that divide the space when desired. Both rooms have hardwood parquet floors, soaring ceilings, and views of the sunroom and gardens through floor-to-ceiling picture windows. An original, imported marble fireplace enhances the living room, and a pivot door in the dining room swings open into the butler's pantry and kitchen area.

The sunroom was originally an open-air, Pennsylvania blue stone terrace which Staub had glazed soon after the house was completed (~1959). Three enormous skylights augment the room's natural light, and glass doors slide back for access to the crushed-gravel patio and gardens. Behind the gardens, the heavily wooded grounds of the MFAH DeMenil house museum provide a scenic, park-like landscape.

A side hall travels south from the foyer past the staircase and full bar to the kitchen and service area. The full bar includes a sink, icemaker, and generous cabinet storage. The streamlined kitchen features stainless steel countertops; stainless-steel SubZero refrigerator and freezer; a Wolf gas cooktop; Wolf wall ovens; and abundant storage. Behind the kitchen, the service area includes the laundry and utility rooms.

A second hall travels north from the foyer to the powder room, library, and sumptuous primary suite. Covered in elegant vintage gilded wallpaper, the powder room provides a vanity cabinet and a water closet with pocket door. The library offers rich paneling; a wood and gas fueled fireplace; cabinets containing a television, video and sound system; a full-length bay window with garden views; and book/display cases.

The secluded primary suite includes a spacious, serene bedroom that overlooks the gardens through a bank of tall windows, and a pair of full baths. One bath includes the refurbished vintage white porcelain sink-on-stand; a porcelain tile floor; mirrored walls and cabinets; a pair of deep, custom-fitted, step-in closets; a seamless glass and sea-green tile shower with bench; and a heated towel rack. The second bath has a hardwood floor; a free-standing claw-foot, remote-controlled air tub positioned beneath a window; and a long wall of deep, custom-fitted closets with mirrored doors.

The wide staircase landing on the second floor features a row of storage closets and the walk-in mechanical room that encloses three HVAC units. A pair of airy bedrooms offer hardwood floors and en suite baths with refurbished original tile floors and sinks-on-stands.

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### Sources:

1. Barnstone, Howard, *The Architecture of John F. Staub. Austin and London: University of Texas Press, 1979, p. 216*
2. Barnstone, Howard, *The Architecture of John F. Staub. Austin and London: University of Texas Press, 1979, p.292*