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HABITAT

A Family Compound with High Style

A very DIY family crafts its own sprawling world of cheerful irreverence.

By Amara Holstein • May 1, 2013



IMAGE: JORDAN SIEMENS

A five-foot-tall metal owl with glowing eyes greets you at the Gallagher residence. Inside, a surprising world awaits: a jumble of coats drapes from a jaunty metal fish, and laser-cut wooden letters above proclaim, "You Dropped a Bomb on Me, Baby."

The thread that pulls all these details together is a unique aesthetic—part retro-mod, part funky-eclectic, part underwater theme, all unabashedly playful. Gretchen and Tim Gallagher grew up together in Southern Oregon, and both studied art in college.



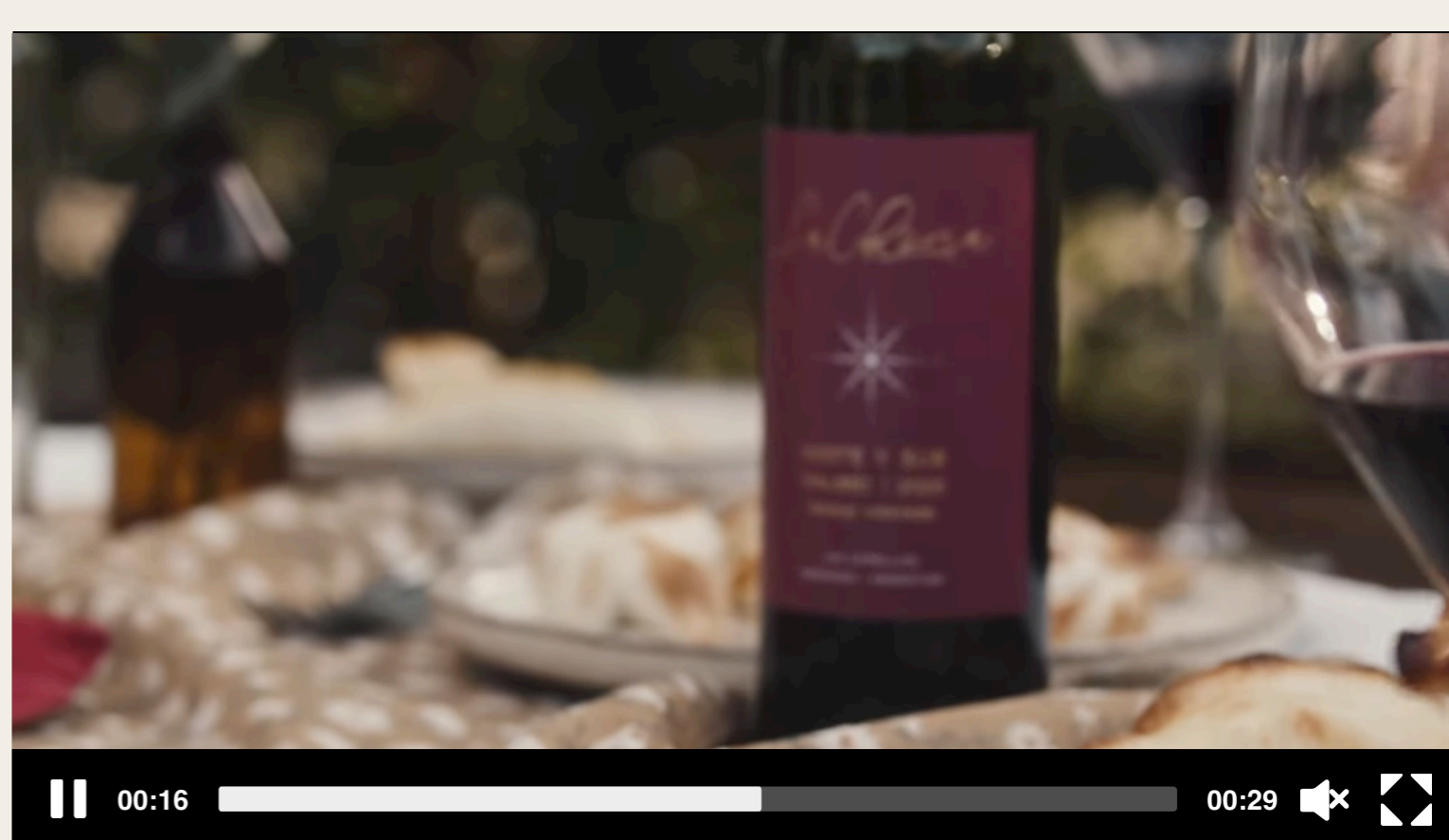
Color, pattern, and texture run wild in the Gallaghers' house, from the wall of printed metal scales that Tim hung in the living room to the back patio illuminated by a steel fire pit, the knitted lampshades in the dining areas, and the inspirational adages throughout.

IMAGE: JORDAN SIEMENS

From the outside, the house is an innocuous 1950s wood-shingled ranch. But for a metal skull over the front door (and that owl), it blends seamlessly with its suburban Northwest Hills neighbors.

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Advertisement for La Chona, featuring the text "For the love of family... For the love of friends... For the love of good food and wine... Por puro amor" and "Argentine Tapas and Fine Wine Tasting Room Grand Opening | May 2023".



Over 12 years, which included three phases of remodeling and the addition of three children, the Gallaghers radically transformed their home's interior, nearly doubling the overall area to 3,500 square feet.

The family shared a tiny guesthouse (formerly a detached garage a short walk uphill) during the remodels, all five family members rotating through one bathroom.



In the bedrooms and bathrooms, words pepper the walls: a tongue-in-cheek welcome to the master suite, the nickname "Chop", and parental admonishments in the kids' bathroom.

IMAGE: JORDAN SIEMENS

With the help of a neighbor who owns a printing company, as well as tools and designers from his own firm, Tim applied his artwork to every conceivable type of material, from the monsters and undersea creatures printed on the plywood sliding doors to the living room wall covered in overlapping layers of 1,200 metal scales.

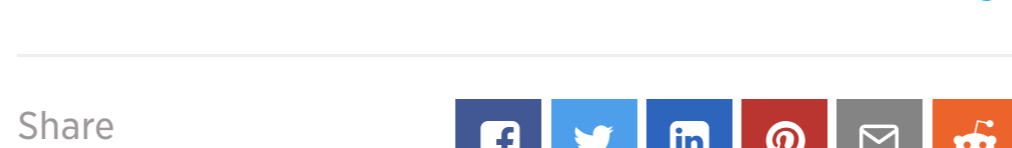
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It doesn't stop at the back doors—the Gallaghers transformed the entire acre site into a veritable arts and sports playground. The master suite opens onto a sequence of a bocce court, a horseshoe pit, and a putting green.

"The house is an extension of our family motto," Tim explains. "Do good. Be good. Kick ass."

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