

MORGANTE WILSON ARCHITECTS TRANSFORMS A LOWER-LEVEL CHILDREN'S PLAYROOM INTO A MOROCCAN-INSPIRED LOUNGE THAT HOUSES AN EXTENSIVE COLLECTION OF GRATEFUL DEAD MEMORABILIA.

# Folk Flair

BY DALE GUNNERSON  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY  
MICHAEL ROBINSON



“

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#### BOOKCASE

Built by Suzanne on Custom Woodworking, the bookcase contains a secret passage to the lounge that is accessible by pulling a specific book. It's a collection of McGaugh's 1960s and '70s Grateful Dead posters hangs to the left.

#### LOUNGE

In the lounge, a luxurious chaise longue sofa with French wallpaper is covered in a heavy fabric extends from wall to wall.

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naly McGaugh was a freshman in college when his fraternity brothers at Cornell University first introduced him to the Grateful Dead—he's been a fan ever since, having attended about 55 concerts before the band disbanded in 1995. What inspires such devotion? “As I went to more and more shows, I realized that it was a tremendous gathering of people of all different stripes who were really accepted,” he says. “That was very appealing.”

McGaugh's collection of framed 1960s- and '70s-era Grateful Dead concert posters line an entire wall in the lower level of his Ravenwood home. Push a specific book in the nearby built-in bookshelves, and the door swings open to a hidden lounge that houses more of McGaugh's memorabilia. “It's like something out of a movie,” he says.

The secret passageway was the brainchild of McGaugh, but was brought to life by Fred Wilson, of Morgante Wilson Architects ([morgantewilson.com](http://morgantewilson.com)), who collaborated with firm partners Elissa Morgante, John Potter and K. Tyler to transform what was once a playroom into a loungey recreation room—a place to work, relax and listen to music. “We created this cross between a Moroccan lounge and a men's club,” Morgante says.

The designers gamed the space and touched every surface, incorporating new hardwood flooring and cladding the lounge's domed ceiling with brick. Walnut columns with laser-cut panels house light pendants, an ingenious solution to the low ceilings and lack of natural light. They integrate precisely with the built-in shelving, which includes a desk and display boxes lined with an antique mirror.

A metal Moroccan-style flush mount pendant calls attention to the herringbone pattern on the brick ceiling in the lounge, where layered rugs play off the patterns in the custom wall-to-wall sofa's French mattresses and lively pillows. The room's patterned wallcovering is punctuated with pieces from McGaugh's photography collection alongside outsider art and other mementos. “It raises questions as you look around because everything is so unique,” Morgante says. “It's about layering textures and stories.”

In the other room, a weathered bar with an Arabesque antique mirror backplash creates a beautiful focal point, perfectly accenting the Venetian plaster ceiling. Nearby, a dashboard hangs on linen upholstery, a clever solution for entrance mats. “You don't get an opportunity to do something this out-of-the-box very often,” Morgante says. “Everything about this project was totally fun.”

While McGaugh has found himself working in the space much more than he would like, he still makes time to use the space as he originally intended: lying up with a good book, sipping on a cocktail and listening to music. “I love this space,” he says. “When you close the door, you feel like you're in a different world.” ■