

House of BLUES

An L.A.-born artist finds a home—or his family—and his new label—in a leafy Williamson County development.

BY KRISTIN LUNA. PHOTOS BY SHANNON FONTAINE.







For many Nashvillians, the flood of 2010 was an event that symbolized loss. But for Kevin “Keb’ Mo” Moore and his wife, Robbie Brooks Moore, it also signaled a fresh start.

The three-time Grammy-winning blues and Americana artist had spent nearly 60 years in Los Angeles until Robbie, a fellow musician he met at an AT&T Wireless store back in the early 2000s, suggested they give Nashville a try. Robbie had worked at Southwestern Publishing Group in college and fallen in love with the city, maintaining close relationships with friends still living in town. Not one to cross his wife, Kevin eventually conceded.

“We wanted to move our son somewhere not so...crazy. It was between here and Portland, Oregon. We kind of had to pick here because of the music and the location. I wasn’t really down with [coming to Nashville] at first, but mama [Robbie] wanted to go,” Kevin teases. “Surprisingly enough, when I got here, I fell right into it. It was like all my friends were here waiting for me.”

The Moores and their then-three-year-old son Carter, now eight, moved into their spacious Franklin digs three days before the floodwaters swept through the area, leaving mass destruction in its wake. While their new home, built in 2005 and perched high in The Links at Temple Hills, went untouched, many of Kevin’s instruments—which were stored at Soundcheck Nashville on the banks of the Cumberland—did not. The few that survived complete annihilation are now on display in the front music room and living area of the couple’s three-level home.

After the waters retreated, the Moores unpacked and life regained some sense of normalcy. Then it was time to tackle the daunting task of making over the 6,100-square-foot space. Instead of consulting an interior designer for the project, Robbie, who has no formal design training but is admittedly an HGTV fanatic, decided to do it on her own. As Kevin embarked on local musical pursuits—engaging in cowrites with a number of Southern >>>



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The artwork: The rooms on the main level are filled with eclectic pieces that Robbie sourced from local artists like Ron York, Brian Nash, and Leiper's Fork's Anthony Scarlati, who framed a large photograph that's mounted above the fireplace in the living room. "I saw this photo of the horse, and I don't know why but I cried," Robbie says. "It just hit me. I said, 'Anthony, please, I have to get this blown up really big.' And he did that for me. He's fantastic."



The studio: Robbie jokes that each member of the family has his or her own level: Carter gets the upstairs, she has the main floor, and Kevin spends the majority of his time in the basement studio. "The house is too big for us; however, it was one of those things where I walked in and thought, space-wise, it's just... perfect," Robbie says. "It's like we live above the shop. Kevin's got his whole world down there, and we have the record label and there's space for storage, a studio, inventory, everything. Part of the beauty of the new setup is that we can have a separate life upstairs while people are coming and going downstairs."

artists and placing more emphasis on Americana tunes—she got to work on the home. The bottom level, formerly a five-car garage, office, and in-law apartment, is where the most dramatic transformation occurred. The Moores lowered the ceilings, added hardwood over the concrete floors, and installed acoustics; as a result, they now have their own plush recording studio, lounge, and office with outdoor access.

While Kevin continues to release new music—his 12th studio album, last year’s *“Kevin was with other labels for so many years that we started to research what it would be to do it on our own—the more we dug in, it just seemed like we should try it.”*

BLUESAmericana, garnered three Grammy nods, and he cowrote a track called “Remedy” on Zac Brown Band’s latest effort—he and Robbie also have set their sights on other projects, including starting their own label, Kind of

Blue Music, for which she serves as CEO. (Since they’ve been together, Robbie has also appeared on every one of his albums as both a vocalist and writer.)

“Kevin was with other labels for so many years that we started to research what it would be to do it on our own—the more we dug in, it just seemed like we should try it,” she says. “So I just dove in and figured it out.”

The 2,500-square-foot Kind of Blue studio is a significant upgrade for the Moores, whose entire house in California was just 1,700 square feet, with a backyard garage from which Kevin wrote and recorded.

“We had the peaceful sound of the 405 and the 10 wafting through our house,” Robbie says of their time in L.A. That background noise has been replaced by the symphony of birds and other woodland creatures that pass through the couple’s well-manicured property, which no doubt will continue to be a haven for the Moores—far from any devastating floodwaters or buzzing interstates—as they renovate the remainder of the home.

“Everyone in Nashville has been so welcoming of us,” Robbie says. “It’s been a good experience in every way.”

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