

summer 2004

# atomic ranch

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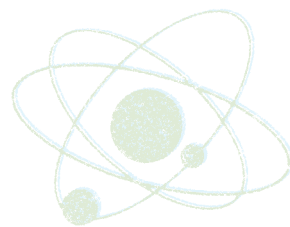
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In this Palm Springs home, vintage rules: The red Saarinen Womb chair and ottoman, mustardy Nelson couch and chair from Herman Miller, side tables, lamps, Kagan glass-and-wood coffee table and Frederick Weinberg "Jitterbug" sculpture exude desert cool.



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Publisher

**Jim Brown**

Editor

**Michelle Gringeri-Brown**

Art Director

**Nancy Anderson**

Logo Design

**Janet Rollins**

Advertising

**Linda Teixeira**

Advertising Designer

**Bernice Guevarra**

Editorial Assistant

**Cheyenne Wortham**

Web Design

**David Murillo**

Copy Editor

**Vickere Murphy**

Midcentury Design Consultant

**Bryan Forward**

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**Publishing Office**

917 Summit Drive

South Pasadena, CA 91030

323•258•5540 p

323•259•0685 f

[editor@atomic-ranch.com](mailto:editor@atomic-ranch.com)

[www.atomic-ranch.com](http://www.atomic-ranch.com)

**Advertising Office**

3661 Sawtelle Blvd.

Los Angeles, CA 90066

310•737•1910

[atomicranch@aol.com](mailto:atomicranch@aol.com)

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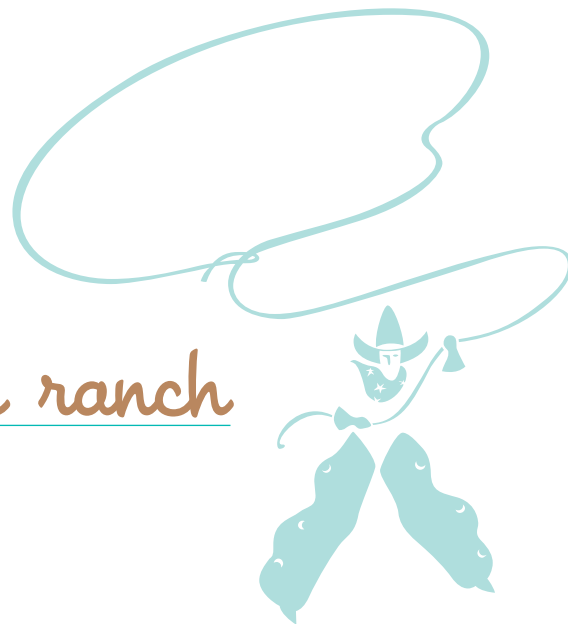
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**THE MAGAZINE FOR THE REST OF US**

## meanwhile... *back at the ranch*



# h

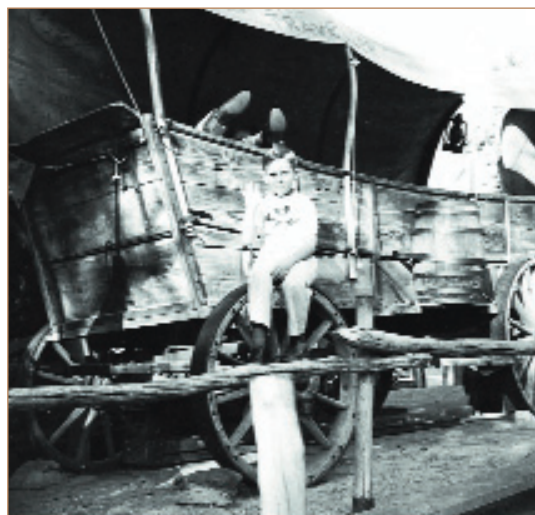
ow did you find your atomic ranch? (And I don't mean this collection of paper and ink in your hand, but rather the home that you live in and love.) There are the lucky few who knew the style and sought it out; I admire them and they are way ahead of the game. But I think for most people, home selection is a matter of budget, availability and proximity to work and/or schools—pretty basic house-hunting parameters.

After you move in and realize you can survive the mortgage, then make a few upgrades, the curiosity kicks in: What do I have here? Why do I like my home so much? Why does it give me this great feeling of pride and satisfaction? If it's a postwar home, you'll find that you're a member of a really big club that never holds any meetings. (Which might be just fine for some people.) Midcentury marvels were built all across the country but receive scant recognition; for the most part they are taken for granted.

This Atomic Ranch, the one in your hands, will explore the results of the housing boom of this country's most exuberant era—the great awakening that occurred after the wars and Depression of the 20th century. All we ask is that you come to us with an open mind. Within the vast arena of midcentury modern there are many different styles and no one has an exclusive lock on good taste. Good ranches, like good people, come in all shapes, styles and colors.

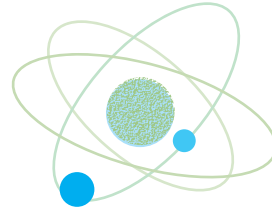
One's love of midcentury cannot be judged solely by the size of your bank account; just because you don't have classic vintage furniture doesn't mean you love your house any less. In these pages you will see both iconic examples of postwar design and some unabashed kitsch—it's all part of the mix because we don't want to take ourselves too seriously. We will cover all the widely recognized ranch types, but also bring to your attention houses and interior furnishings you never knew existed or perhaps dismissed; we are inclusive rather than exclusive. Come with us; it'll be fun.

*Jim Brown*  
Publisher



Our relaxed publisher visits Knott's Berry Farm.





# modernwisdom

\* I think you've found a real niche in the wider world of midcentury design/architecture—one that goes beyond sterile pictorials and high-end obsessions and brings real people into the mix as owners, collectors, restorers, etc. There's definitely a place for this more accessible approach, and I'm sure you'll build an enthusiastic readership.

**Peter A. Rogers**

*Williamstown, Mass.*

\* Just bought your magazine and I really liked it. Can't wait for the next issue, especially the feature on the house near the Salton Sea.

Our place was originally a ranch house built in 1949. In 1966 a man named Virzintas hired Richard Neutra to convert the house into two apartments and build a penthouse on top. It has been a labor of love restoring and maintaining the property, which is the same thing I sensed in the faces of the people living in the homes of your first issue and in your words as the publishers. That's the vibe I suppose I identified with and wished to share with your like-minded readers—people who truly appreciate how gratifying life can be in a well-designed space. Whether it be from a well-known architect or not, from this era or one gone by, good design principals that take advantage of an environment's assets while mitigating its deficiencies will continually enhance the lives of its occupants and will always be in "style."

Thanks for publishing a truly cool mag.

**Mark Stovey**

*Studio City, Calif.*

*Check Home Page (pg. 22) to see Mark's house.*

—ar editor

\* I read about your new magazine in the newspaper; very interesting. But I have to admit that I'm a skeptic. To me, many tract homes of the midcentury are an architectural blight. I drive through these neighborhoods throughout the San Gabriel Valley and just shake my head at the cookie-cutter boxes built in the '40s

and '50s. For the most part, they have no character, charm or aesthetic appeal. They're ugly.

I live in the northern part of Azusa where many of these "atomic ranch" homes are reasonably appealing compared to the junk that's in the southern portion of the city. Part of the issue relates to the economic demographic of the neighborhoods. When residents have more money, they spruce up their houses, and the less these dwellings look like the mass-produced tract junk of the midcentury the more appealing they are. Many of the poorer neighborhoods in Azusa are comprised of '50s-style tract homes, and they're a real blemish for our community.

There's a reason that the old bungalow and Craftsman homes are so popular today: they're beautiful. They have character and class. The term "craftsman" is appropriate because the homes were indeed designed and built by architects and tradesmen who were skilled and dedicated to their craft. They took pride in their work. I'm not an expert, but it doesn't take a genius to see that many of the so-called "atomic ranch" homes were just cheap junk.

So the premise of your magazine intrigues me. I'm anxious to pick up a copy when it comes out to see how on earth these houses could be celebrated.

By the way, I saw the exhibit at this year's L.A. County Fair featuring a '60s house interior. Being that I was born in the mid-'50s, the exhibit brought back a lot of memories. Some of the furniture looked like it came right from my home when I was a kid. It's a nice place to visit, but I certainly would not want to live there again! I guess I could see how some eccentrics might enjoy decorating their home or a room in their home with a retro style as a pure novelty, but I can't imagine the tastes of the mainstream, civilized culture finding much appeal in the architectural bankruptcy of the midcentury American tract housing.

Food for thought.

**Dan Simpson**

*Azusa, Calif.*

*Any "uncivilized eccentrics" out there who care to weigh in? —ar editor*

\* Just received the inaugural issue of Atomic Ranch. What a spectacular introduction. It doesn't look or feel at all like a first issue. It has a style and substance that make it seem fully formed. With this start, the next issues can only be spectacular.

**Dave Boulé**

*Torrance, Calif.*

\* I received my first issue of Atomic Ranch, and I've thoroughly enjoyed it. The layout is awesome, the photography is beautiful and the homes are great. Though I don't live in a ranch or a modern at this time, I am really interested in purchasing this style of home. I can't wait for the next issue; I wish I didn't have to wait three months.

**Chris Allen**

*Lafayette, Colo.*

\* Bravo! Finally there is a magazine that speaks of both the ups and downs of living in a midcentury home. As a longtime subscriber to those "other" shelter magazines, I find it refreshing that Atomic Ranch expresses not only the joys of owning a classic home, but also reveals the challenges most homeowners experience when they move into their vintage abode—such as outdated appliances and electrical [systems] and even asbestos. It is through honest publications such as this that we can truly learn how to tackle these problems while keeping these homes as original as possible.

**David Greer**

*Modlin.com*

*Denver, Colo.*

Write us at [editor@atomic-ranch.com](mailto:editor@atomic-ranch.com) or send a note to Atomic Ranch, Publishing Office, 917 Summit Drive, South Pasadena, CA 91030. We'll print the good ones.

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# ina Family Way

Cindy Morrow

had no interest in showing us their pedigreed furniture or cool collectibles. It's not that she and her husband, Clay, don't have some interesting things, it's that "stuff" isn't the point of their home. For the couple and their young son, Ever, the A. Quincy Jones-designed Eichler in Thousand Oaks, Calif., is all about the neighborhood.

The Morrows were happily ensconced in a midcentury five-level home in Los Feliz near Hollywood, but with the advent of their first child, they decided they needed a safer neighborhood, better parking, more level streets, good schools, a larger single-level house—in short, a family neighborhood. Their friends were aghast to learn they were considering moving an hour away to ... outer suburbia.

"I was really excited about building something," Clay says. "We were very interested in prefabricated housing," Cindy adds, "but there was almost no information available; now you see prefab modern housing in magazines." In the end, they didn't find any affordable land that suited their needs.

So the family moved into a rental in Thousand Oaks. "There was no way I was going to move here without renting first," asserts Cindy. They had friends who'd loved growing up there and were moving back, which was an added incentive. Ocean breezes, clean air and visible stars at night helped seal the deal.

*text* Michelle Gringeri-Brown

*photography* Jim Brown







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There are about 125 homes built by Joseph Eichler in surrounding cul-de-sacs. Their five-bedroom home went up in 1964, and they bought it from the original owner. The Morrows postponed their move-in date to allow the seller her last wish: to die at home where she had raised her family and lived for almost 40 years.

The scariest the house ever got was orange and brown low-pile carpet, which the Morrows took up. Other than needing cleaning and painting, the house was relatively unscathed. "We knew that it was potentially great because it had almost no '70s remodeling done to it. That was a huge plus," Cindy says.

And what's wrong with 1970s design? "The Italian '70s stuff is cool," Clay explains, "but the avocado [kind of] grandma's house ..."

## Floor Challenges

The tile under the carpeting was damaged and needed to come up, but then the adhesive that remained was another challenge. Neither wood nor carpet over radiant heating seemed right, and the slab had cracks and stains once Cindy finished removing the tile adhesive with solvent. (The couple vetoed the idea of sanding off the adhesive due to concerns about airborne asbestos.) They decided to have a new self-leveling 1/8"-thick cement coating poured over the existing slab.

"The floor was kind of a disaster," Clay concedes. "We had to stain it darker than we





The colorful furniture in the office was built by a friend. The Morrows use the lightbox for their animation work.

wanted, the texture is different from room to room because the people who did it didn't have experience with this particular product, and with the animals it shows every hair." (The couple has two dogs and an insane cat named Todd.)

"We originally thought it would be a very easy floor to clean, but it's extremely porous. On the plus side, it's cheaper than hardwood floors," Cindy says, "and a little more expensive than tile; considering that we had to cover 1,800 square feet, we were able to do it at about half the price of wood."

"The other good alternative we were looking at was terrazzo," Clay adds, "but it's really expensive."

"Floors, roofs and wood paneling are always the topics among Eichler owners," Cindy concedes.

## All About the Lifestyle

Both are storyboard artists in the animation industry, and Clay commutes on the train to Burbank every day while Cindy works from home. The move out to the suburbs was in part motivated by the desire to find housing that could be supported by one salary during childrearing years.

"Across the street, all of the families are basically us with a 2-year-old boy," Clay observes. "There are things the city brings that you can only get in the city. We used to live right next



to Thai Town and we still go back to L.A. to eat at our favorite Chinese restaurant. There's a give and take [to living here]."

The Morrows have watched many of their friends get priced out of the home buying market in Southern California (\$350,000 fixer-uppers in iffy neighborhoods). They decided not to have a big-deal wedding, and both sets of parents gave them money toward closing costs in lieu of financing five-figure nuptials. They got married in city hall and rented a roller rink for the after party.

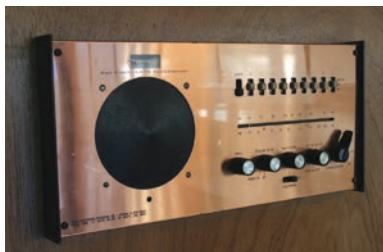
"We can't thank them enough, because that gave us the opportunity to get started," Cindy says. "In making the choice between a wedding and a home, I would always choose a home. We couldn't afford the house we bought in 1998 today."

Cindy likes that there are two wings in their Eichler, and that their children's bedrooms will be apart from the master bedroom. She also cites the enclosed family room that's open to the kitchen as a plus, and appreciates that it's separated from the "clean rooms"—the living and dining rooms. And with the house wrapping around the atrium, the feeling of outdoors is brought into all the main living areas. "The atrium is just another room in the house. Ever plays there, and the animals love to go out and lie on the warm concrete," she reports.

Cindy also notes the Japanese architectural influences, particularly the aggregate entry floor in the living room. "It's normally the first thing to go when people remodel these homes. My grandfather's house in Japan had an aggregate floor as well, where you'd

The couple replaced the rotted beams in their atrium roof although they weren't original to their house. "We love the shadows and they definitely give the sense of being in a contained space," Clay Morrow says.





The kitchen of the 1964 Eichler is virtually original. The low table next to the range swivels and is a great spot for kids to snack or do projects. The vintage intercom is to the left of the sink, just out of view.

take off your shoes before entering. It's a subtle transition to the inside of the home.

"These houses were designed to make you feel like there weren't neighbors around you," she concludes. "The atrium glass makes it private, yet open to the house, and there are almost no windows on the sides of the house that face the neighbors."

## Learning Curve

"We had looked at a house that was so much worse off," says Clay, "that I naively thought this one was going to be a cinch. I was into keeping what was here and sprucing it up a little bit. But there was more to it than that."

"Pretty much everything is specific to this house: the sliding glass door screens are on the inside and if any hardware is destroyed, your only option is to go on the Internet to see if someone has one. You can't replace it unless you take the entire door or window structure out and put something in that won't match. There are a lot of things that can go wrong that seem like they shouldn't be a problem—but they can become huge problems."

A good example of working on an Eichler: "We wanted to build some storage on the side of the garage, and wanted it to look like the siding on the house," Clay says. "You can buy the material up north, but it's a lot of money. Our neighbor has a jig because he's going to reside his house, but it was a full eight-hour day just striping 20-something 4' x 8'





sheets of plywood before you could even think about the job that you're going to do."

Other issues: The house has a low pair of sinks in the hallway outside the bathroom in the kids' wing. "The bathrooms aren't exciting to me," Clay confesses, "even if they were in perfect condition. They feel dated and '50s in a '60s house; the hardware is bland and undesigned." In the kitchen, the space for the refrigerator is one inch too narrow for a contemporary built-in, Cindy reports with chagrin; she's itching for a good replacement solution for their white department-store appliance.

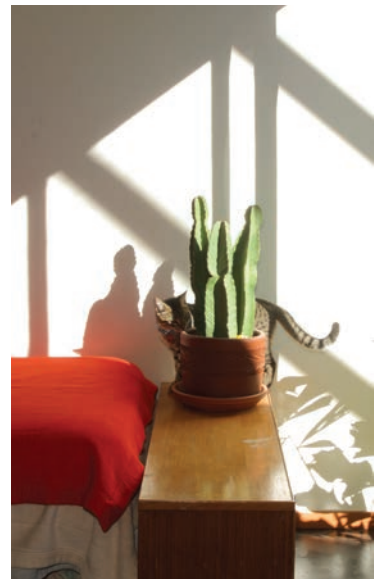
Both the Southern and Northern California Eichler websites provide support in the form of other home owners' various solutions and mistakes. "It's amazing with those who own virtually the same home the variety of diehard people who have completely opposite ideas," Clay says.

## Their Interior Views

"We're not fans of houses that don't look lived in," Cindy says, "with all that perfect, expensive furniture. Clay and I both feel that there's too much good design to only have things that were built in 1964."

Almost everything they own has come from a thrift store, an antiques store on sale, eBay, as hand-me-downs from friends or old college furniture. The couch in the family room

Goodie-Girl relaxes in the master bedroom, which has a sliding glass door leading to the backyard play area and the pool.







and the Persian rug in the living room are the only things they purchased for this house.

"I like the fact that we don't have everything by a designer, either vintage or reissued," Cindy says. "I like that our furniture is a mix of different eras. We might have a modern couch, but it's sitting next to a Scandinavian side chair or a table from 1940 with an inlaid tile top. If we like something, we get it; it doesn't matter who made it or where it came from."

"There's nothing in the living room that we wouldn't replace if we found something we like better," Clay adds. Their dining room is given over to his music and a bumper pool table from his grandmother's house in Minnesota. His fantasy money-is-no-object purchases run to art work: "I love sculptures, wall reliefs, mobiles for a house like this; plants and rocks are our cheapest sculpture [right now]."

The couple has been together for 11 years, and have yet to own a bedroom set, Cindy points out. "I'd like a really nice headboard and bedside tables, but it's never a priority on

our list." In a dream scenario where Clay had the time, he'd help design and build bedroom pieces that were "obviously influenced by mid-century design but are contemporary and aren't just treading water. Just going to a store and buying a living room or bedroom of reissued fur-

niture doesn't have the right feeling. That seems forced and impersonal," he says.

"I don't think these homes were designed to be ultramodern," Cindy offers. "They're too rustic."

"Too suburban," Clay counters. "You can make them classy, and you can probably make a whole Eichler neighborhood something really elegant now, but my feeling is that they're more modest [than that]."

While DSL, cable TV and air conditioning would be nice, for the Morrows design is secondary to lifestyle.

"We may not have extravagant vacations—we still haven't gone on a honeymoon—but we do have a beautiful house and a son who we love," summarizes Cindy. "On top of that we don't have to worry if one of us gets laid off. There's a good school where Ever will go, and he has his buddies down the street. We have the whole package." ✱

For resources, see page 63.

There are about 125 homes  
built by Joseph Eichler  
in surrounding cul-de-sacs.

# home *page*

## *Littleton, Colo.*

Our home in Arapahoe Hills—the sister neighborhood of Arapahoe Acres—was the brainchild of builder Edward Hawkins and Czech-born architect Eugene Sternberg. The houses blend European modernism and the Usonian style. Our kitchen is very Eichleresque and we have a Saarinen table with Tulip shell chairs in the dining area of our open floor plan. We have been collecting modern furniture for the last 15 years and are thrilled to finally have a home to fill with our growing collection.

**Frank Sarcia & Jim Eveleth**

## *Pasadena, Calif.*

Growing up in my parents' 1957 house felt somewhat like being one of the Brady kids. We all roamed the neighborhood, playing all sorts of games together and swam in each other's pools. The house was open, light filled, contemporary and rated high on the cool chart; it was my father's pride and joy. My mother hosted many parties, serving countless delicious casseroles—it truly was a period of optimism and fun. We are all thrilled that the midcentury style has been rediscovered and is finding new appreciation today.

**Anne Hutton**

## *Kings Point, N.Y.*

I spent my teen years in this house and my mother, Ruth Lynn Marx, still lives there. Designed much like an Eichler, it is part of a group of 23 homes in Kings Point all built on the same plan by Alfred Levitt and his sons in the late 1950s. It has a covered carport, a slab floor with radiant heating, a central core with an all-steel kitchen and two bathrooms, and the other rooms are arranged in a circular pattern around the core. Each home has a different roofline; my mother's has a cathedral ceiling in the living room with clerestory windows. It is a very special ranch.

**Roberta Marx Delson**

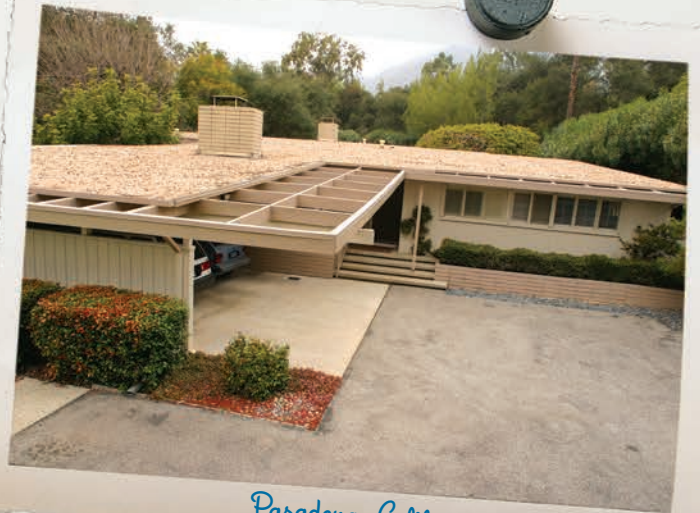




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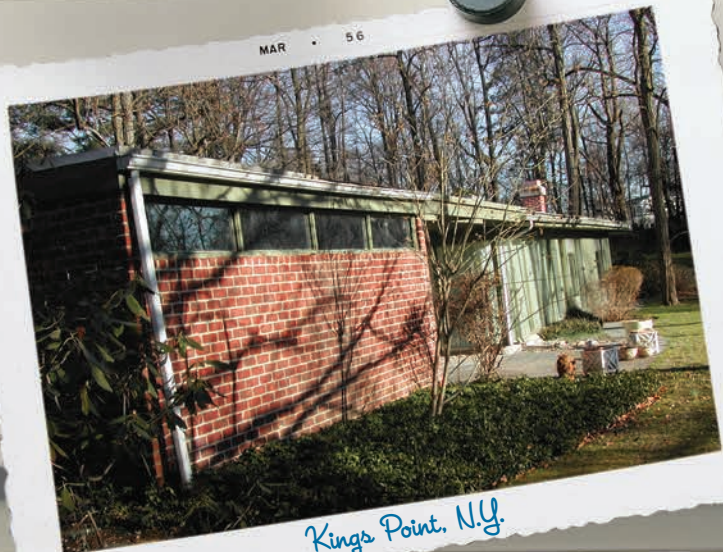
Pasadena, Calif.



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MAR • 56



Kings Point, N.Y.



Studio City, Calif.



Houston, Texas



Palm Springs, Calif.







# home<sup>2</sup>page

## Houston, Texas

Our 1959 house in Memorial Bend is by William N. Floyd, an architect who designed hundreds of Houston houses during the postwar era. We're slowly filling it with modern pieces since we love their look. Over time, I've become more obsessive about maintaining the original features like the push-button light switches and aluminum windows. Our most recent purchase was for our "office"—an indestructible Goodform rolling chair for my wife. It goes well next to my Saarinen Series 70 swivel chair.

**Michael & Selena Brichford**

## Studio City, Calif.

Our Richard Neutra redesign of a 1949 ranch was pretty neglected when we bought it, especially the outdoor area. The good news was that it hadn't been monkeyed with too badly, either: almost all of the original kitchen and bath fixtures, mosaic tile work, built-in cabinetry, Douglas fir tongue-and-groove ceiling, etc., had remained intact. None of it was even painted over, which seems to be the scourge of older architectural properties. After more than two years of living here, we still shake our heads and soak in the beauty and tranquility that the home provides, even in the midst of a dense urban environment.

**Mark & Rhonda Stovey**

## Palm Springs, Calif.

Our weekend house was once Jack Webb's (Joe Friday from "Dragnet"), and his biography says that Joan Crawford, Eva Gabor and Dick Van Dyke were frequent guests. We've named the bar the "Joan Crawford Bar" since we figured that was where she hung out. As for our taste, well, we lean toward fun, eclectic and joyous (and perhaps a bit of the kitschy) rather than austere, formulaic or severe. We love color, and we love bargains—and that has been our guiding principle.

**Joseph Hahn & David Brinkman**

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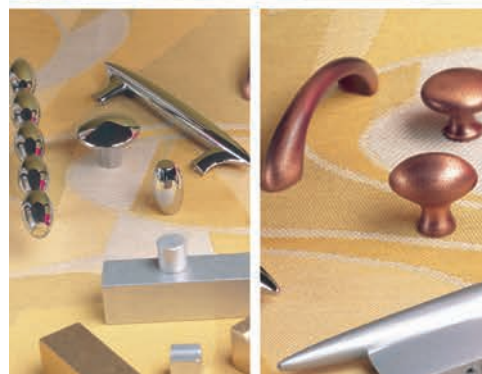


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# Salton Sea

It could have been the next Palm Springs ...  
but for that funky aroma.

text Michelle Gringeri-Brown

photography George Mann

In 1964, retired vaudevillian George Mann was pushing 60 and had a couple of career irons in the fire. In between working for Hollywood glamour photographer Peter Gowland, Mann would photograph scenics for the stereoptic viewers—a more sophisticated version of a kid's Viewmaster—he had placed in restaurants across Southern California. The machines showed mildly





# "SEA, AIR HEALTHY"



Mann's day-in-the-life  
shots  
capture the optimism  
of the time





# AND SUN FOR DESERT LIVING”



risqué girly shots in 3-D, as well as tourist draws like Disneyland and Pacific Ocean Park that not everyone had a chance to visit.

A few years later, Mann would land some higher-profile gigs, appearing in “Bedknobs and Broomsticks” and “Cold Turkey” in 1971, and playing the character King Vitaman for the Quaker Oats cereal company. His creativity took other avenues as well.

“George also made spin-art machines,” recalls Mann’s son, Brad Smith. “They created ‘art’ by spinning a motorized platform while you dropped fast-drying lacquer paint on a glossy piece of paper. In about 1964 I spent several days with one of my friends and George at the L.A. County Fair helping customers make their own paintings on about 10 of the machines. It was a lot of fun.”

The teenage Brad would accompany his father on some of the photo trips to keep the 3-D machines stocked with new images. “George loved to travel, particularly by car,” Smith says. “He enjoyed people and he would make friends quickly as we traveled. He shot photographs just about anywhere he went.”

Among the locales that Mann captured with his stereo-image camera was the Salton Sea, a uniquely weird spot in California’s Sonora Desert. Below sea level by some 200 feet, the Salton Sea was a manmade mistake.



In 1905, the Colorado River burst through irrigation channels south of Yuma, Ariz., and for more than a year the river poured into an ancient lake bed, consuming towns, farms and the Southern Pacific Railroad line. By the time levees were built in 1907, the new lake covered almost 400 square miles. Agricultural runoff contributes concentrated salts to the lake, making it more saline than the Pacific Ocean today. That salinity combined with scorching summer temperatures has resulted in epidemic fish and bird die-offs, contributing to the Salton Sea's ecological woes—and fishy smell.

But back in the '50s, developers hoped to turn the area into the next Palm Springs, although the real thing is just 30 miles away. The Salton Sea State Recreation Area was



once boaters from  
31 states competed  
in the  
Salton Sea  
500-Mile Boat Race





dedicated in 1955, and Salton City was subdivided and expected to attract wealthy sun lovers with their stirring motto, "Sea, Air and Sun for Healthy Desert Living." Today the area attracts RV-ers and birders who come to see the four million migrating birds that visit the lake daily during the winter.

Mann's day-in-the-life shots capture the optimism of the time: subdivide and pave the desert, build some simple ranch houses, truck in palm trees, coin a snappy name for your plot in the sand—Salton Sea Shores, Marina Villas, Salton Riviera—and Dino and Frank and Jerry will come. The tony resort didn't happen, but back when Mann preserved it on film, the Salton Sea seemed like a dream with a future bright and bold. b



PHOTO BY DIANNE WOODS

Retired vaudevillian and photographer George Mann played the character King Vitaman for the Quaker Oats cereal company.



The late George Mann's archive of photographs includes black & whites of fellow performers W.C. Fields, The Three Stooges, Ronald Reagan, Jane Wyman, Lon Chaney and many more from his vaudeville days, as well as pinup shots and hundreds of period color images, some of which will appear in upcoming issues of this magazine. The George Mann Collection is overseen by Brad Smith and Dianne Woods, a Berkeley, Calif., photographer.

To order archival art prints from this article, contact Smith and Woods at [brad\\_smith@earthlink.net](mailto:brad_smith@earthlink.net).

# cool|stuff

## TIDDLY WINKS

Even if you don't really need a whirligig pink flamingo, a tiki nodder or a wind-up Nunzilla, Archie McPhee is stuffed with irresistible kitsch. For those outside of Seattle, the online store ([www.mcphee.com](http://www.mcphee.com)) is almost as good. Their Winky Populuxe coasters are a steal at \$5.59 for a set of four. The 3-D atomic design is sure to induce nausea in your drunken friends, or send your parents off to the optometrist.

Like continuity in your life? The Populuxe pattern comes in a coin purse, shower curtain, footstool, notebook and wrapping paper (from \$5.50 to \$59.95). Check them out at 2428 NW Market Street; 425•349•3009.

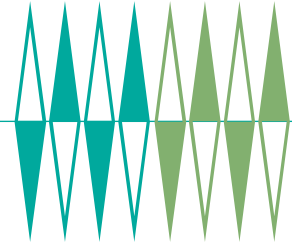


## RANCH-CENTRIC

For those who like their ranch houses shaken, not stirred, *Updating Classic America: Ranches* is full of 21st-century ideas. The architect/landscape architect author duo, Louis Wasserman and M. Caren Connolly, show 20-plus homes that offer the "quality living experience" to be found in ranch houses while encouraging owners to update.

The 202-page book has attractive photos that focus on house interiors, and while the authors' text leads you to believe that they're not necessarily ardent ranch fans, they do present various homeowners' challenges and how they were solved by the design teams. Informative floor plans showing before and after give renovators a range of ideas on ranch expansions. The interior design runs the gamut from traditional to modern, with many eclectic mixes included. *Updating* lists for \$29.95 from Taunton Press, at booksellers nationwide.





## MOD COLORS

"Move to the suburbs" for "up-to-date convenience, bright optimism" and "1950s charm" touts the Sherwin Williams Company on their new Suburban Modern paint palette color charts. They give a mini history lesson—"The smaller stature of suburban modern homes allowed them to be painted in brighter, more unique colors ... often edged in white trim. These whites had a golden cast due to linseed oil in the formula"—and show colors from their Preservation Palette that work well in ranch and modernist houses.

Yeah, there are combos like Harvest Gold, Avocado and Super White in the exteriors schemes, but they look fresh and new again, not the has-been colors that are running jokes. Feel daring in your bedroom? How 'bout a Chartreuse wall, Classic French Gray trim and sexy Pink Flamingo as an accent? Find a local dealer online at [www.sherwin-williams.com](http://www.sherwin-williams.com) or call 800•4SHERWIN.



## ECO FRIENDLY

Employee-owned Columbia Forest Products of Portland, Ore., has an alt to boring or inappropriate counter surfaces. Eco Colors, a line of tinted particleboard panels, has a transparent, zero-emissions UV-cured acrylic finish on both sides that shows off its interesting composite texture. It comes in taupe, zinfandel, charcoal, straw, natural and olive (shown). They recommend it for cabinet faces, table- and countertops, furniture, workstations and more.

Various Columbia Forest products—hardwood veneers, flooring and plywood panels—are stocked at Home Depot and Lowe's, but check [www.columbiaforestproducts.com](http://www.columbiaforestproducts.com) for locations that carry the newer materials. They are also marketing Woodstalk, a formaldehyde-free substrate plywood made from wheat straw, a product normally destined for landfills.

# more cool | stuff

## L.A. GEAR

From futurist props for “Blade Runner” to modern furnishings really isn’t such a crazy leap: that’s the career path that the partners at L.A.’s Modern Living made. Their showroom looks like a modernist’s fantasy digs—if your house were huge and Aunt Gert left you a pile of dough.

In among the high-end items we can dream about (and save up for) are some moderate pieces like Cassina’s Hola chair, available in fabric or leather starting at \$575. Its sexy profile would look equally great teamed with a vintage Nakashima trestle table or around a \$99 IKEA Salmi table. Visit them virtually at [www.modernliving.com](http://www.modernliving.com) or personally at 8775 Beverly Blvd.; 310•657•8775.



## DISHY

If you’re dining at a period table and lounging on vintage chairs, why not eat off of midcentury dishware? “Starburst” by Franciscan/Gladding McBean & Co., introduced in 1954, captured the futuristic look with its atomic motif designed by George James. The earthenware line includes plates, divided serving bowls, mugs, salt & pepper shakers, teapots, casseroles—50 shapes in all.

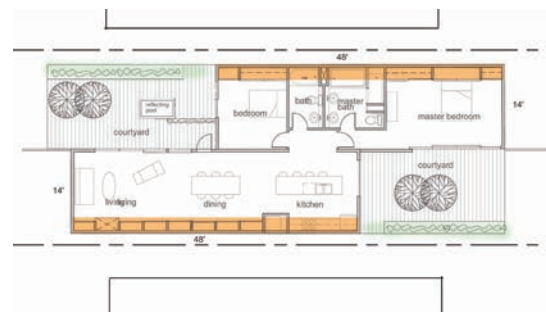
Readily available on eBay, prices range from \$10 for a round salad plate to \$75 or so for a teapot, depending upon the enthusiasm of other bidders for certain items like this crescent-shaped salad plate. Erskine Wood of Planet Oranj in Seattle carries an assortment of condition-vetted pieces at somewhat higher prices, and runs special sales through his online store, [www.planetoranj.com](http://www.planetoranj.com).



## COOL KIDS

Kevin and Jeffrey Kelly of Jeeto! are proud to say they're design-centric when it comes to their line of kids' clothing and wall art. "I think that the children's market has put a lot of emphasis on designing things that are simply functional," says Jeff, the artist behind the creations. "I personally wanted to find something to dress my kid in that I, as an adult, would wear."

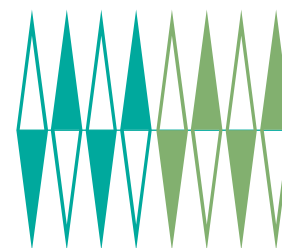
Twelve designs—including a hippo, skateboard, fish, hammer or the rocket ship and "Jeeto!" in Japanese seen here—are available in infant onesies and baby and children's T shirts. A few styles come in adult sizes, too, for that Jeeto!esque family experience. Prices online start at \$14.95; visit [www.jeeto.com](http://www.jeeto.com) or call 818•347•1905.



## FAB PREFAB

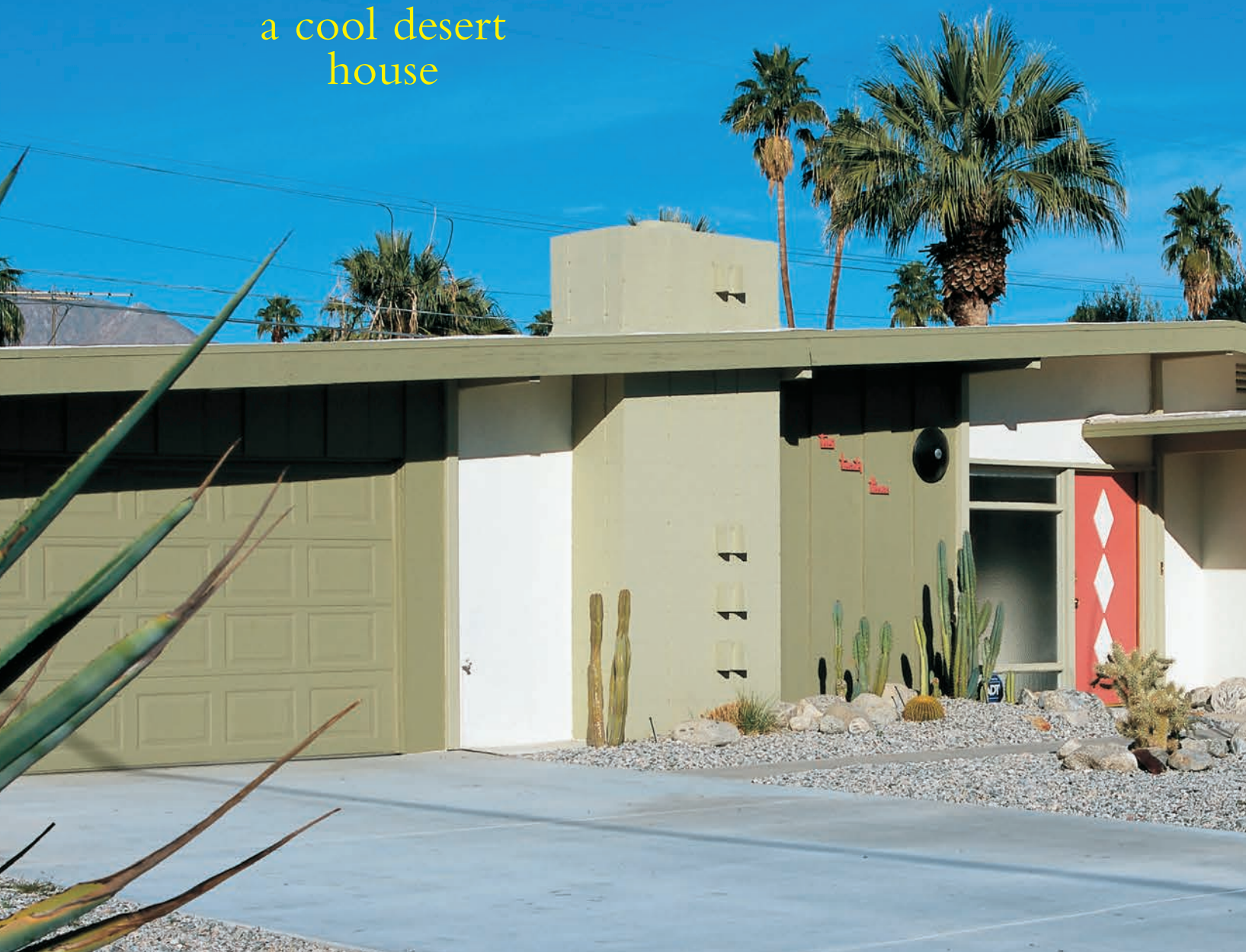
Interest in prefab is burgeoning, and architect Michelle Kaufman has her own take, the Glidehouse, based on design principals of the '50s modernist ranch home. She says it "offers an affordable, low-maintenance, well-designed green housing alternative" to high-end custom homes.

First, the affordable part: Glidehouse comes in three sizes, from a 672-square-foot one bedroom that runs \$80,000 and change, to a three-bedroom, 1,560-square-foot model for around \$187,000. The exterior walls are made of cor-ten steel, which is maintenance free, and the green-living aspects include cross ventilation and natural lighting through sliding glass doors and operable clerestory windows. Kaufman encourages homeowners to consider solar, geothermal or wind generators to eliminate or greatly reduce the cost of utilities. She is putting the finishing touches on her own Glidehouse prototype in San Francisco, and says, "If it can be built here [with the Bay area's strict building codes], it can be built anywhere." Visit [www.mkarchitecture.com](http://www.mkarchitecture.com) or [www.livemodern.com/glidehouse](http://www.livemodern.com/glidehouse).



# Homemaking on a Hairdresser's Budget

Sweat equity  
and good timing  
net Nick  
a cool desert  
house







*text* Bromley Davenport

*photography* Jim Brown

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## Nicholas

Lorenzen got lucky with his 1958 Alexander house in Palm Springs. First owned by a Canadian plumber as a winter home, then used as a rental from the '80s on, it only needed a minimal makeover.

"Structurally it was in good condition, and just needed refreshing," says the hair cutter, who's in his 30s. "With a little bit of paint, cleaning up the yard and fixing the pool, it looks brand new again."

Lorenzen had lived in Miami for a few years and loved Art Deco, but "always gravitated toward '50s









stuff.” He moved to Palm Springs and discovered the area’s great architecture, which he found to still be affordable.

“I stayed with a friend two blocks over and fell in love with the neighborhood; I actually bought the same floor plan that he has. Back then it was shabby: every other house had a For Sale sign, there were houses with bars on the windows,” Nick recalls. “It reminded me of Miami; when I first moved there, things looked terrible, but it was a great location and great architecture. In Florida I didn’t buy anything and all of the prices went up and all my friends did really well, so I saw another potential Miami. Since I’ve lived here, my block has completely turned around; it’s beautiful now.”

The 1,200-square-foot, three-bedroom, two-bath house has a combined dining/family room/kitchen that opens onto a covered patio and a pool. “The wall of glass and open floor plan make the house feel like one giant space,” Nick says. “Even though it’s a small house, people are always shocked that it feels so big. I count the outside—the covered patio seating area—as part of my home, too.”

Nick did most of the work himself, except for the really big stuff. “I did everything on a hairdresser’s budget, one project at a time over five years.” The scope included a sprayed-foam roof, a new fence,



painting, cleaning up the pool, redoing the floors, landscaping and replacing the broken-asphalt driveway with a smaller cement one. The original plumbing was still sound, as was the electrical system.

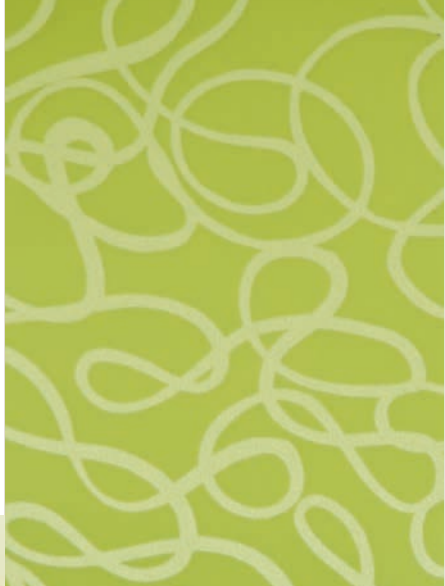
"Underneath the carpet was years of linoleum and whatever flooring trends had been in in the last 50 years," he says. "We took it all off down to the original concrete and then did a topcoat and polished the surface."

Nick grew up in a '50s modern house in Southern California, and his aunt and uncle had a home with a sunken living room, an aluminum Christmas tree—the whole nine yards.

"I love Eichlers, too," he says. "I would have been equally happy in one. And there are other great architects' homes out here, but after seeing an Alexander and then going house hunting with my real estate agent, the other houses didn't seem as open and airy. This had the fireplace, the high ceilings; the other







Clockwise from upper right, a few of Nick's favorite things: a collection of vintage house mags that guided him on furniture choices and placement; the snail-shaped Kagan coffee table; sputnik lamp; details of his flirty dinette table; some of his lamp and glassware collection; and the light-hearted pattern on the dinette chairs.





Furnishings include various lamps, like the distinctive sculptural Majestic Z-lamp in the master bedroom, which also has a reproduction Nelson bed, Saarinen side table and Eames shell rocker.



modern houses seemed kind of choppy and not as grand. Alexanders have a lot of style for such a little peanut. My father called it a 'God-damn dollhouse'—my parents didn't like it when I bought it."

Alexander Construction, a father-son firm credited with doubling the size of Palm Springs in the late '50s and early '60s with its pioneering modern ranch houses, built affordable second homes. The company's architect was William Krisel of Palmer and Krisel, and one of his techniques was to vary the roof treatments, front facades and lot orientation of his homes in a given development. Nick's "Enchanted House" tract is no exception.

"The whole neighborhood looks different from the street," he says. "The rooflines are different—butterflies, peaked in the middle, on others the roof jets up toward the pool with double sets of glass—but inside they are all exactly the same, though some have flopped floor plans. The Alexanders also varied the rockwork and brickwork on the fronts so they look like custom homes and not like you're in a tract. It's interesting to see how many different versions they did of [basically] the same thing."

"Alexander homes are very similar to Eichlers," says Courtney Newman, the owner of ModernWay, a Palm Springs midcentury vintage store and a member of the local architecture preservation group. "But I think Alexander had a building process that was far more streamlined than Eichler's, and therefore made a lot more money on each home. Alexander had very specific and tight neighborhoods, but always was careful to situate each home for maximum views."

Since they were designed as second homes, it's a little hard to cope at Thanksgiving, Nick reports. "I think the kitchens were mostly meant for fixing cocktails and appetizers, barbecuing, going out to eat. They're definitely built around entertaining: they flow well for partying by the pool. And there's not a lot of closet space—you just needed enough room for weekend clothes, maybe."

Now that the block is gentrified, a TV personality lives on the street, and film industry people have bought in recent years. Nick credits his neighbors, many of them San Francisco and L.A. apartment dwellers, with turning the area around. Now the tract is a mix of original owners, Canadian snowbirds and new transplants.





He was also a bit of a pioneer when he bought his furniture and collectibles before midcentury was really a big trend. “A friend called it ‘1960s hell’ and couldn’t figure out why I wanted it; a year later, it seemed to really hit big. I just bought it because I loved it.

“When I was bringing the furniture home, my parents said, ‘Sorry if we can’t get excited about this. We couldn’t wait to get rid of this [same] furniture; it reminds us of when we were young and struggling. We hated it and couldn’t wait to see it go,’ ” he reports wryly. “But now that they see it all together, my parents both love it.”

Nick left no source untapped when he was hunting down midcentury pieces: vintage stores, thrift stores, eBay, consignment shops and a friend who’s a dealer. “There’s a lot of good stuff to find out here. Two of my favorites are Palm Springs Consignment and ModernWay.”

Of the collectibles, Nick is most fond of a line of “eggheads” by LaGardo Tackett produced by Schmid in the late ’50s. “They’re very cool things. The faces are kind of Fred Flintstone-style, and they say things like ‘Et tu Brute’ on a Caesar look-alike and ‘What? Again tonight?’ on a hung-over face. Another says ‘Sex’; they were sold through *Playboy* magazine in 1958 and ’59.” The eggs come in two sizes: a larger cookie jar and a smaller stash jar with a cork on the bottom.

Other favorites among his many great items are a Majestic Z lamp, a Vladimir Kagan snail coffee table, a George Nelson sofa and chair with original upholstery that came from the home of a Herman Miller employee, and the 1947 dinette set from his aunt’s mother-in-law. This latter set survived several moves and a flood, and still sports amazing vintage upholstery—a light green background with a Silly String pattern in silver and contrasting black insets. No worry about walking into someone else’s house and seeing its twin.

Nick enjoys the growing appreciation for Palm Springs’ modern architecture and with it the neighborhood restorations seen around town. “I love it maybe even more than when I moved here. What’s nice is that there are other people like me who have this common interest.”

Courtney Newman agrees: “Palm Springs has probably the highest concentration of midcentury modern homes of any town in the country, if not the world. The commercial property has not been as fortunate, as civic leaders still have not recognized that the trend of modernism has truly saved the entire city. But the huge influx of people buying and restoring houses out here has not slowed down one bit and it’s amazing as you drive down a residential street and go back in time.”

If these homes weren’t enchanted before, they’re definitely entrancing now. ✂

For resources, see page 63.





The office includes a Swan chair by Jacobsen, a reproduction Nelson daybed and a vintage Nelson bench. In the guest bedroom is a Bertoa chair, an Alexander Calder-motif bedspread and two Carlo of Hollywood paintings.



# Luscious LUSTRONS

*An enthusiastic group  
of homeowners  
thinks their all-steel houses  
have a  
magnetic personality.*

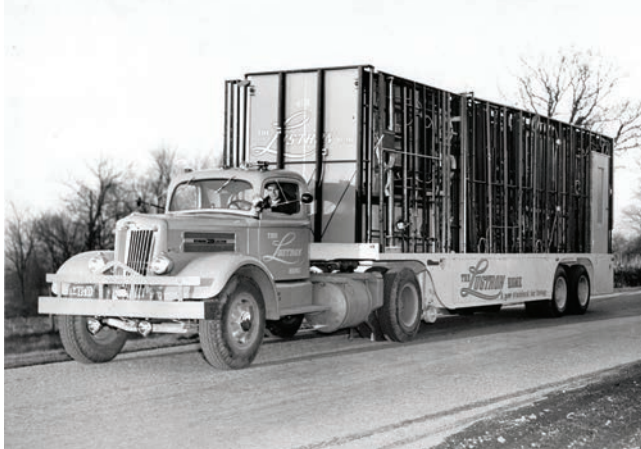
*text* Josephine Goodwin   *photography* Gene Hamilton and Andrew Cutraro

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This spring Stephanie and Michael O'Neal threw a big bash for their friends, complete with Lipton onion-soup dip, '60s canapés, a fab centerpiece from Stephanie's *Joys of Jello* cookbook and, of course, retro cocktails. Their consorts—a mix of artists and midcentury architecture fans—were partying in the O'Neals' all-metal house in Des Moines, Iowa. That's right—steel frame, walls, ceilings, roof, built-in cabinets, the whole kebob—some 3,300 parts put together with 4,000 nuts and bolts.





The trucks that brought the prefab homes to a site were loaded in reverse order at the factory. Due to the weight of the steel components, trucking to the West Coast was economically prohibitive. Above, this publicity shot of Carl Strandlund ran in a 1948 Columbus newspaper. Three bedroom versions and models with garages followed the first 1,000-square-foot Lustron designs, but by then the company was already in trouble.



The O'Neal house and some 2,500 like it were built in a factory in Columbus, Ohio, in 1948–49 out of porcelain-clad steel just like a bathtub or a White Castle outlet. But far from being cold and tinny, the Lustrons are cozy little 1,000-square-foot homes whose owners are just as zealous as any Eichler, Ain or Alexander home owner.

"When we first ran across our Lustron, our furnishings were mainly '50s kitsch, and they looked right at home here," Michael says. "Since then, we've collected more mid-century modern furnishings, and they too look great in a Lustron."

## A Better Mousetrap

Carl Strandlund was the brains behind the Lustron home. He worked for a company that manufactured clad-steel gasoline service stations, and at the end of World War II he designed a basic prefabricated house out of the same material on a suggestion from Washington that steel and funding would be available for such an endeavor. The lack of new-home construction during the Depression and wartime material shortages, coupled with millions of returning GIs, meant the U.S. was facing a severe housing shortage. Families that had been willing to live in tight multigenerational quarters now wanted their own piece of the American dream, and the housing industry went into overdrive to meet the need. Strandlund proposed to produce 100 all-steel houses per day, and the government helped fund his factory set up in a former aircraft plant in Columbus.





**THE KITCHEN**—Left side view. Note the convenient “pass through” to the dining area, the big work counter and the built-in cabinets with sliding doors. And how easy a porcelain enamel kitchen is to keep clean!

“There’s a pleasant surprise in store for you when you step across the Lustron threshold into the bright and cheery living area. This is your first inkling of the charm and simple beauty of the Lustron interior,” read the late-’40s promotional brochure. The kitchen is smallish at 6’ x 7’, but the living room is a generous 14’ x 16’ and the master bedroom has three closets and a built-in vanity in its 12’-square space. The asphalt tile floors, cement slab and aluminum windows were the only non-steel elements.

Alex James has a unique perspective on the Lustron story, although he’s never lived in one. As a young man of 29, he worked in the Lustron factory from 1947 when it opened, to 1950 when the company went bankrupt. Manufacturing the houses was based on assembly line methods much like Henry Ford’s, and one of James’ jobs was smacking the roof trusses with a ballpeen hammer to test the strength of the welds. The factory had 3,000 employees with 23 acres of presses, furnaces and high-speed welding machines designed to turn out a house every 14 minutes, 23 hours a day.

“Quite a few of us who were hired by Lustron were quite familiar with assembling Navy SB2C Helldivers and Scout bombers, and we were fascinated by the same method being used to assemble an all-steel home,” say James, now 86. “The plants were huge, and much machinery was needed to make the parts. We had an enormous machine that stamped a single bathtub out of a sheet of steel in one drop of the hammer.”

Although Strandlund’s idea was innovative, his business acumen might have been better, according to James. “Almost half of the \$37,500,000 government loan went into the installation of the expensive and intricate machinery that needed to be used to assemble and produce the Lustron homes,” he says. “Sad to say that too much of the balance went into a huge promotional campaign to convince people of the advantages of owning a Lustron. To put it very simply, too much was spent trying to sell the house and not much was left to produce them.”





Clockwise from upper left, the dining room built-in at Michael and Stephanie O'Neal's home houses all kinds of vintage treasures. Lustron bathrooms were furnished with typical '40s fixtures and petite tubs made specifically to fit their dimensions. Two more views of the O'Neals' Des Moines residence: their tree-shaded lot and the couple relaxing in the living room on a George Nelson Sling sofa. Other midcentury pieces include an Elliptical table and Aluminum Group chair and ottoman, both by Charles Eames for Herman Miller. Mabel, the cat, is of a more recent vintage.

## *Almost a Success*

The one-story ranch houses had two bedrooms, a small front porch with a distinctive angled support column, four large picture windows and radiant heating in the ceilings. There were built-ins—canted kitchen cabinets with sliding doors, a vanity in one bedroom, living room bookcases, a pass-through to the kitchen—pocket interior doors to save space, and most compellingly, Lustrons were advertised as never needing painting, vermin proof, fireproof and three times stronger than stick-built homes when faced with tornados and other weather drama.

There was even a combined dishwasher/clothes washer in the Lustron kitchens, though it didn't do either very well, apparently. Warm air radiated down through the ceilings, and you simply hosed down the exterior instead of re-siding or painting it. It never needed reroofing, either.

Between 1947 and 1948, Lustron received orders for 20,000 houses. But Strandlund's projected 100 homes a day never materialized: at the height of production, his factory could only manage 26 a day and 50 was the break-even point. Instead of costing \$7,000 per home, they ran \$9,000 to \$10,000, and back orders steadily mounted. Soon Lustron was losing \$1 million a month.

The unusual homes met with other problems: labor unions were concerned about losing jobs to factory-built housing, FHA financing was slow, and political lobbying and power plays in Washington all contributed to the company's defeat. Despite agreeing to underwrite some of the start-up costs, the government refused to approve Lustrons for





Exteriors include John and Joanne Hardin's Dayton, Ohio, home, upper left; a shot of Kathryn Welch and Joe Williams' house in a Lustron-rich neighborhood in St. Louis, Mo., upper right; Peter Rogers and Paige Carter's Williamstown, Mass., home, which ably withstands heavy snowfalls, lower right; and a brilliant blue model with its first landscaping just starting to fill in.

G.I. Bill buyers, and Strandlund was turned down when he went back to the government for a second loan. By the time the company was forced to declare bankruptcy, just shy of 2,500 homes had been shipped from the factory and erected in 36 states.

## Midcentury Mavens

Paige Carter and Peter Rogers live in a gray Lustron with a green roof in Williamstown, Mass., an old mill town about three hours from Boston. Paige bought the home before meeting Peter, and thanks to their Lustron he is now planning to go back to school for an MS in historical preservation. For her part, Paige has opened a shop specializing in clothing, furniture and housewares from the 1940s through the '70s in nearby North Adams.

"The house is in good condition, but also a work in progress," Rogers says. "Things like stripping wallpaper get done when we have the time, initiative and money. Our décor is an interesting, ever-evolving—if sometimes cluttered—mix of midcentury stuff that complements the Lustron design."

The couple is working on compiling info on their house for a National Register of Historic Places nomination, and will be attending an upcoming June conference in Columbus, where Lustronians meet every few years. This year features enthusiasts speaking on preparing a National Historic Trust nomination, the ins and outs of repairing or disassembling a Lustron, tours of nearby Lustrons and the ever-popular Lustron magnets.





This page, Williams and Welch's home: The recessed vanity in the bedroom backs up to the living room bookshelves and creates closets on both sides of the dressing table. Kathryn's Hawaiiana draperies are similar to those in the vintage brochure photo, opposite page. The couple pose with their 1966 Plymouth in the driveway.



Joe Williams and Kathryn Welch of St. Louis will be attending the conference. They rent a Lustron on a street with seven others, though three or four have been resided with aluminum or otherwise substantially altered. The couple are self-proclaimed "kitsch hounds": they seek out old motels with vintage neon, visit roadside attractions like the "House on a Rock," go to drive-in theaters in their 1966 Plymouth Fury, collect ballsy furnishings, play miniature golf and go bowling. It's only natural that they ended up in a Lustron.

"I immediately said, 'This is it—this is where I want to live,'" Welch, a psychotherapist, remembers about first seeing their two-bedroom home.

"Lustrons are a good example of mass production making style affordable," adds Williams, who is a film reviewer for a St. Louis newspaper. "They're like a budget Frank Lloyd Wright, and a great neutral palette display for our sort of loud midcentury furniture and Hawaiiana. We feel like we have something that's swank and stylish. It's a status symbol that never needs roofing, an idea ahead of its time."

Like most Lustron owners, Williams and Welch get asked the same things over and over: Is it hotter/colder than a typical home? Is it noisy in a hailstorm? Is it dangerous in a thunderstorm? The answer is 'No' to all. "The first impression I want to dispel is that Lustrons are cold and unwelcoming," Williams says. "If you weren't told it was an all-metal house, you might not know."

## Hometown Ties

Joanne and John Hardin bought their Lustron in the company's hometown of Dayton four years ago. Their choice was based less on the cool factor and more on practicality.

"Our former house had small closets and was on a hill with street parking," says John. "My wife had specific things she wanted when we were looking to buy a new home: big closets, a level yard and a driveway close to the kitchen. We found all those features in our Lustron. And I am saving time and money by not having to paint, either, inside or out. Just soap and water clean the walls!"

It's the little things that count for the Hardins: Joanne appreciates the laundry area on the main floor, and the bar that was installed to hang shirts fresh from the dryer. John hangs pictures from sheet-metal screws, and one wall of their dining room is covered



*Lustron* offers money-saving built-in features, modern conveniences and permanence. Maintenance cost is absolute minimum. A truly "engineered" house creating a new standard for living.

with magnetic letters, which they first bought for children of friends, but are now played with by adult guests. They were featured in an article in the local newspaper, prompting the daughter of the original owners to contact them with photos of the home's early days.

Today there are about 1,800 Lustrons still standing. Nostalgia buffs and pragmatic owners aren't the only advocates of these distinctive houses. Sixty Lustrons on the Quantico Marine base in Virginia are slated to be sold and moved, and the Recent Past Preservation Network is rallying to save them. Susan Molloy of Snowflake, Ariz., a member of a community of people disabled by severe allergies to just about any new construction material or chemical you can think of is desperate to see at least some of those Lustrons brought to the Southwest as affordable housing.

"Porcelain steel houses with no carpet, adhesive, paint, formaldehyde, clinging cleaning or laundry perfumes, designed never to need insecticide treatment, that are flat with a wide front door for our wheelchairs—what other model exists of accessible shelter for people disabled by chemical and electrical sensitivities?" she says. "Short of high-end, custom-built homes, these Lustrons may be the closest to safe shelter many of us will ever see—and we want them."

Once billed as "The House America's Been Waiting For," Kathryn Welch says their Lustron feels modern today, more than 50 years after it rolled off the assembly line. "I like the open floor plan, the sleek design and the overall vibe of the house. It's comfortable and calm in some way that I can't explain. I have never lived anywhere else that fit me so well." ❀



Thanks to Alex James, the profiled Lustron enthusiasts and documentary filmmakers Bill Kubota, Ed Moore and Bill Ferehawk for images and ephemera from their personal Lustron archives.

For resources, see page 63.



# help! for your

## the issue:

Boy, we sure could use your help! The bathrooms and kitchen in our 1954 house need period-appropriate, functional lighting and we can't seem to find out what that translates to. Have you come across anything worth sharing?

*Jennifer and Dan Harrison*



Modernica bubble lamp

### let there be light!

One of the most essential, yet most elusive elements in creating the perfect space in a 1950s-era home is correct lighting. To effectively pull off the atmosphere that the architecture was meant to communicate, there has to be symmetry in style, both in the physical appearance of the fixtures and in the illumination they create. Also, most '50s modern ranch homes weren't wired for the lighting we demand in our homes today. Combine those hurdles with the potentially exorbitant expense of retrofitting your home to meet the lighting of your dreams and you've got a real challenge on your hands.

### tackling problem areas

The kitchen has been elevated to a status rarely imagined during the postwar era. Instead of an area of utility and necessity, it has become a family gathering spot and focus for entertaining. Today kitchens need far more lighting than was planned for 50 years ago and, unfortunately, this is where midcentury homes can fall flat in serving our needs. To retain the originality of period kitchens and baths while increasing lighting, there are many options—both inexpensive and not. Here are some possible solutions:

### kitchens

Except for rare cases, there may be just one or two lighting fixtures in the kitchen of the '50s home, as it was simply where food was prepared and not much else was needed from it after the dishes were dried at night. Consider:

**under-cabinet lighting:** Involving an electrician and some expense, installing flat strip fixtures under the cabinets is an easy way to give more task lighting without changing the appearance of the kitchen at all. They also add a new mood to the kitchen at night when used alone.

**track lighting:** Track lighting can be the most cost-effective and easiest way to increase illumination in a kitchen area. Either free floating and fed from a wall source, or mounted directly over a ceiling electrical source, there are endless variations of fixtures and lighting types to fill the kitchen with new life. Try the "Trac-master Classic" line from Juno, available at most lighting supply houses.

**change out existing fixtures:** Just because it is old and came with the house, that doesn't mean you have to suffer with it. Seek out fixtures that will give more light than what you currently have. There is a new line from



# midcentury marvel

from *Bryan Forward*

Rejuvenation called "Atomic Age" with numerous choices for pendant lighting, like the Kerby, and Schoolhouse Electric's Julliard ceiling mount is also a good choice for a deco-influenced home. For the perfect light over the dining-area table, the George Nelson-inspired bubble lamp line offered by Modernica and their retailers is pretty hard to beat, both in price and quality.

**complete lighting plan:** If your budget allows you to redo the kitchen lighting altogether (perhaps as part of a bigger project), install fixtures that will be the least invasive to the architecture and will essentially vanish. Recessed ceiling cans are the smartest way to inconspicuously give yourself the lighting that your kitchen needs. But don't forget to diversify to keep it looking period correct: incorporate pendant lighting or wall- or ceiling-mount fixtures too.

## bathrooms

Even more neglected and forgotten were bathrooms. Simply a color-coordinated utility room for taking care of the body's needs, not much thought was given to illuminating the baths of the era. Today, it is where we spend much more time than our home's original owners did, and therefore need it lit appropriately. The Harrisons might consider these choices in their baths:

**natural light:** In both of these bathrooms, add mirrors to the walls to not only disperse the available natural lighting, but give the rooms new life and dimension. Large, full-wall mirrors by themselves can make these baths much more enjoyable and bright.

**new lighting:** In the bathroom with the long beige tile countertop, the wall-mounted vanity light can be an easy location for retrofit ceiling lights. This would give room for a taller mirror over the sink and increase the overall illumination. I would recommend three globe pendant lights over the sink and counters to really brighten the room. In the other bath, capitalize on the existing can light by adding one more on each side of the sink. Leave the square recessed fixture for a period look, or replace it with another round recessed light or even a heat lamp (check with a reputable electrician and local building codes as the latter may require new wiring and a dedicated circuit).

Remember, do your homework, let your passion take you in a style direction and choose lighting that harmonizes with the rest of the house and your furnishings to create a unified, composed interior.



Got a question for our experts? Write us at [editor@atomic-ranch.com](mailto:editor@atomic-ranch.com) or Atomic Ranch, Publishing Office, 917 Summit Drive, South Pasadena, CA 91030. Send some pix!

Bryan Forward is the principal of Forward Design Group, a consulting company specializing in interior, exterior and landscaping design in the midcentury modern aesthetic. Contact him at [www.forwarddesigngroup.com](http://www.forwarddesigngroup.com) or 760•533•1950.

For resources, see page 63.



Kerby



Julliard





# coming up in **atomicranch**



Toys for grownups and kids  
in a split-level ranch



Retro with a capital R



A vintage Eichler  
family scrapbook

## where'd you get that?

### in a family way pg. 8-16

Eichler enthusiasts' websites: [www.eichlersocal.com](http://www.eichlersocal.com); [www.eichlernetwork.com](http://www.eichlernetwork.com).

### salton sea pg. 27-31

To order archival prints of George Mann's work, e-mail [brad\\_smith@earthlink.net](mailto:brad_smith@earthlink.net).

### homemaking on a hairdresser's budget pg. 38-47

Homeowner's recommendations for Palm Springs  
midcentury shops: ModernWay, 2755 N. Palm Canyon Dr.;  
760•320•5455 [🍷](#)  
Palm Springs Consignment Co., 497 N. Indian Canyon Dr.;  
760•416•0704

### luscious lustrons pg. 51-57

Websites: The Lustron Home, an all-encompassing  
site crafted by Michael O'Neal:  
[members.tripod.com/strandlund](http://members.tripod.com/strandlund) [🍷](#)

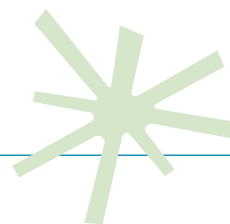
Learn more about the documentary film  
"Lustron: The House America's Been Waiting For"  
at [www.lustron.org](http://www.lustron.org) [🍷](#)

Read about midcentury preservation at The Recent Past  
Preservation Network's site, [www.recentpast.org](http://www.recentpast.org) [🍷](#)  
Order a copy of Alex James' book, *An Employee's  
Perspective of the Lustron Home*, by e-mailing him at  
[ajames7910@aol.com](mailto:ajames7910@aol.com) or calling 614•263•6108.

### help! for your midcentury marvel pg. 58-59

Lighting resources: Trac-Master Classic series from Juno;  
[www.junolighting.com](http://www.junolighting.com). [🍷](#)  
Kerby Atomic Age pendant from Rejuvenation \$110 as  
shown in brushed nickel; 888•401•1900;  
[www.rejuvenation.com](http://www.rejuvenation.com) [🍷](#)  
Julliard with hand-painted shade from Schoolhouse  
Electric \$158 as shown; 800•630•7113;  
[www.schoolhouseelectric.com](http://www.schoolhouseelectric.com) [🍷](#)  
Saucer bubble lamp line by Modernica beginning  
at \$225; [www.modernica.net](http://www.modernica.net).

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**Sublime Stitching** 49  
www.sublimestitching.com

## architecture & design

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760-533-1950  
www.forwarddesigngroup.com

**Lami Design/Gregory LaVadera** 19  
856-662-4909  
www.lamidesign.com/plans

## auctions & galleries

**Dolphin Promotions  
& Jacques Caussin** 17  
708-366-2710  
www.dolphinfairs.com

**Orbit Gallery** 24  
201-945-8900  
www.orbitgalleryspace.com

**Wright** 26  
312-563-0020  
www.wright20.com

## bookstores

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www.digmodern.com

**Hennessey + Ingalls** 35  
310-458-9074  
www.hennesseyingalls.com

## good works

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www.pawdsquad.org

**Rug Mark** 25  
866-RUGMARK  
www.rugmark.org

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800-676-1214  
www.delmarcoshotel.com

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562-627-1001  
www.kramerproperties.com

**Liz Johnson Dilbeck Realtors** 61  
323-225-4529  
www.lizsellsla.com

**Orbit In** 49  
877-99-ORBIT  
www.orbitin.com

**Paul Kaplan Real Estate** 17  
760-285-8559  
www.paulkaplanrealtor.com

**PortlandModern - Bob Zaikoski** 61  
503-248-4663 x169  
www.portlandmodern.com

## kids

**Happy Laugh** 60  
619-239-6075  
www.happylaugh.com

## midcentury vintage

**Boomerang for Modern** 49  
619-239-2040  
www.boomerangformodern.com

**designsmithgallery** 49  
513-421-1397  
www.designsmithgallery.com

**GOMOD** 25  
www.gomod.com

**Good Eye 20th Century Interiors** 18  
202-244-8516  
www.goodeyeonline.com

**Modern Vintage Furniture** 24  
949-722-6776  
www.modernvintagefurniture.com

**ModernWay** 17  
760-320-5455  
www.psmmodernway.com

**One Home** 49  
720-946-1505  
www.onehomedesign.com

**Out of Vogue** 19  
714-879-6647  
www.outofvogue.com

**Penny Lane** 24  
323-222-1200  
www.penny-lane.com

**Retro@home** 19  
510-658-6600  
www.retroathome.com

**Sonrisa Furniture** 48  
800-668-1020  
www.sonrisafurniture.com

**Springdale** 24  
269-756-9896  
www.springdalefurnishings.com

**Vermillion** 62  
305-893-7800  
www.galleryvermillion.com

## modern furnishings

**Henry Hall Designs** 50  
800-767-7738  
www.henryhalldesigns.com

**highbrowfurniture.com** bc  
888-329-0219  
www.highbrowfurniture.com

**Hive** ifc  
866-mod-hive  
www.hivemodern.com

**Kerf Design** 17  
206-954-8677  
www.kerfdesign.com

**Mod Livin'** ibc  
888-833-2884  
www.modlivin.com

**Otto** 19  
714-526-3142  
www.shopotto.com

**White Furniture Industries** 62  
212-966-6711  
www.whiteonwhite.com

## other house stuff

**Bauerware** 25  
415-864-3886  
408-288-5184  
www.Bauerware.com

**Contemporary Cloth** 24  
866-415-3372  
www.contemporarycloth.com

**fabulux inc** 35  
718-625-7661  
www.fabuluxinc.com

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www.themarmoleumstore.com

**Matthews Fan Company** 1  
847-680-9043  
www.matthewsfanco.com

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888-401-1900  
www.rejuvenation.com

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www.schoolhouseelectric.com

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www.sublimepalmsprings.com