

fall 2006

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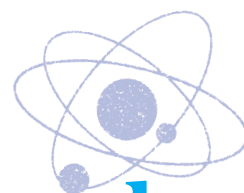
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cover

The living room of a 1960s Eichler with operable clerestory windows has a Richard Diebenkorn original anchoring an Eames shell chair and a sofa compact, a marble-topped Saarinen table and a Peabody chair by Selig. Arne Jacobsen Series 7 chairs surround a Jacobsen table with a circa '50s Murano blown-glass lamp overhead.



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meanwhile...back at the ranch

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or the last three years, we have been telling the stories of homeowners finding and rescuing their ranches, but ironically, we have been placidly living in a 1920s bungalow, sheltered from the travails most of our subjects experience on their way to domestic contentment. After four short months, we have successfully emerged from the multi tasks of readying our old house for sale, finding our new dream in far away Portland, Ore., actually selling our beloved home, packing, moving and then unpacking, all the while producing this issue on schedule. I feel like I've been through the "cotton/sturdy" cycle of our stacked Kenmore. I also now have a much greater understanding and appreciation for everyone who has gone through this process.

The initial decision to move was difficult, since almost my entire life has been spent in Southern California. Family, friends and work were all located in the Los Angeles area, and we had a charming house in a good neighborhood. But the relative success of Atomic Ranch and telecommuting gave us the ability to take our jobs to a new location.



I think Superman wore cowboy boots and pajamas.

In getting the house ready for showing and sale, I was reminded of some home improvement projects I had not completed, as if I had let the house down during my ownership. Preparing meant culling through years of accumulated stuff, multiple yard sales (sorry, I mean estate sales) and many trips to the off-site public storage, just to give the house an appearance of roominess. The whole act of making your house presentable is a bit of a sham; there is no way one could live in such a cleaned up and cleared out condition, always ready to exit for a Realtor and prospect. The sale itself went quickly, and then it was our task to pick the best offer, which also included the desire to entrust the house to the ones who would love and care for it the best.

I learned the difference between U-Haul's cube and small box, and I'm so glad they came out with the shorty wardrobe to complement the grand wardrobe—aren't you? Each box I packed held memories and demanded choices. In the end I think I kept most of my things in an attempt to limit my feelings of loss. By the time pack-out day came, with one last round of digital photos, I was finally ready to move on, at peace with leaving the first and only house I'd ever owned. Our Realtor, Maggie Navarro, put it very wisely when she said that we are just the caretakers of our homes; you own it for a while and then you pass it on to the next person.

My melancholy was replaced with elation when we arrived at our new house, a 1952 traditional ranch set in an almost idyllic neighborhood of Portland. We are carefully observing and listening to the hints our house is giving us so that what we do now honors and complements its original intent. It's a big responsibility. But through the upheaval, I can see that we found a wonderful home in a great neighborhood. Looking at the morning views out our windows, with the light coming off the hardwood floors, this place is beautiful and soothing, just like a home should be.

Jim Brown
Publisher



modernwisdom

✱ This is a follow-up to the letter from Laura Wright about Holmes Run Acres, Va. (spring 2006). It is a very special place, having been constructed in the early 1950s in a remote Wash DC suburb, where most houses pretended to be Colonial. The Acres houses were all variations of a single contemporary design, and the floor plan designated for each lot was selected and sited to fit the terrain and preserve the most trees—a most unusual concept, even today.

The Acres received national publicity in the 1950s for its modern design and exceptional execution. My family bought a house there in 1956, at which time I attended Annandale High School, where the teams were the Atoms, the yearbook the Antenna and the newspaper was the A-Blast. We had an atomic school to go with our atomic ranch house!

Linda Bayer Allen

Huntsville, Ala.



✱ While renewing our subscription, we thought we'd share a photo of a kid's go-kart we saw on a lawn in our Eichler neighborhood. Talk about cruising in style! Keep up the good work.

Peter and Jennifer Buenrostro

Palo Alto, Calif.

✱ I am an owner of a 1962 ranch-style home in Austin, Texas, in the Rollingwood area. I grew up here and my parents live just blocks away in a 1950s ranch. It has a great quality of life and, until recently, was made up of predominantly 1950s and 1960s ranch-style homes. Because of its proximity to downtown and Town Lake, many people are moving to this area and tearing down the ranch homes to put in McMansions. Currently, there are at least four ranch homes that have been torn down and we are waiting to see what will go in. Typically, people are paying between \$350,000 and \$450,000 for these homes just to tear them down.

A few owners, however, have kept the structure/facades of their homes and have done internal remodels or additions, helping maintain the original feel of this neighborhood. Though close to downtown, these homes were originally built as country or weekend houses for people who lived in the most original parts of Austin.

We purchased our home last year and, at our neighborhood women's group, I have had to defend our choice to have purchased a ranch home that we are not going to tear down and, in fact, that we appreciate and truly love. In light of my recent plight in defending our ranch, yesterday a friend gave me a copy of your magazine. It is great!

I'm sure what is going on in our area is not an isolated event, but it is interesting and perhaps you've considered featuring similar phenomena in other areas. After seeing your magazine, I only wish now I had photos of the homes that have recently been torn down to submit in comparison to what will inevitably be built.

Karla Basham

Austin, Texas

We wish we could say yours is an unusual story, but you're right, this is the situation in most parts of the U.S. (See the next letter for a link to a great house being sold as a teardown.) For interesting tales from

continued on page 10

morewisdom

other cities, and straight talk from preservation professionals, read the neighborhood preservation chapter in our Atomic Ranch coffee table book.

—ar editor

* I didn't know who else to contact about this. I love your magazine and I love this home, so I think the two of you should meet. Perhaps a buyer can be found. <http://tobybelt.blogspot.com/2006/06/sunset-hills-tear-down.html>

Stephanie Recht

Online

* My wife, Carrie, and I live in the Olympic Manor neighborhood of Seattle. Developed in the mid-'50s, nearly every house is an atomic ranch with a beautiful view of Puget Sound. We got lucky when looking for our house, since it was on the market for only nine



hours. It has floor-to-ceiling windows, a Roman-brick fireplace, exposed beams, really cool Honeywell Tap-Lite light switches and wood floors. We added some of our '50s furniture to top off the 1950s feel.

I saw a home-built clock in a past issue and it prompted me to send you pictures of a clock that I built last summer. It is inspired by a model that I saw on eBay a couple of years ago and resembles a "Star Trek" symbol on its side.

The main piece is made out of paduak, a very hard

wood with a deep red color. The clock face is curly maple and the dowels and number indicators are made from walnut. It took me a week to lay out and build this 42" modern clock and I have received multiple requests to build them for hire. But this is a one-off and a labor of love for our house.

Patrick Wylie

Seattle, Wash.

* We just moved into our dream ranch and we owe Atomic Ranch some thanks for that. We found our realtor, Bob Zaikoski of Portland Modern, through your magazine. Thanks so much for putting out such a great publication. It is a fantastic resource and exciting to see real homes that have been updated/renovated with real budgets. We all know that a home can look amazing with a zillion dollar budget, but it is more interesting to see what people are able to do on a real budget. It is very inspiring and refreshing! We tell all of our "mid-century" friends about Atomic Ranch!

Kelly Wolstencroft

Online

* Just wanted to say I love the magazine. My husband and I have just purchased our first home, which happens to be a 1950s ranch. We love it and are trying to bring it back to what it once was.

We found this great museum: http://connections.smsd.org/nieman/el/all_electric_house_tour.htm. They have the actual house that was built by GE in the 1950s to showcase all their "modern" technology. It has been fully restored and is truly amazing!

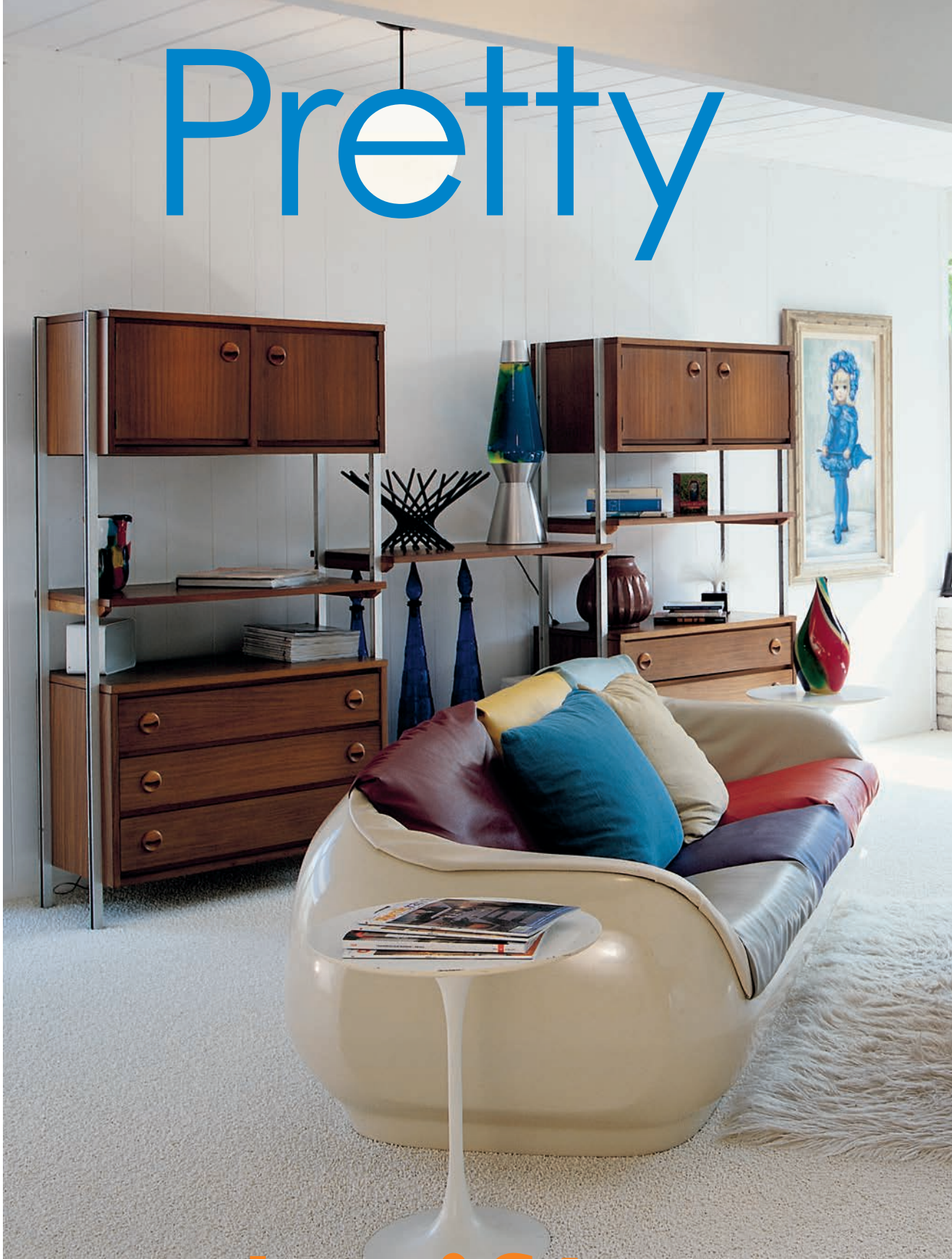
Liz Billet

Johnson County, Kansas



Write us at editor@atomic-ranch.com or send a note to Atomic Ranch, Publishing Office, 3125 SE Rex St., Portland, OR 97202. We'll print the good ones.

Pretty



Thrifty



This Eichler has thrift-store gems and a Disneyland fridge



Patrick Quiroz came to modernism through middle school. Though he lived in a “regular” postwar house, he walked through Joseph Eichler’s Fairmeadows tract to get to his junior high school in Orange, Calif. He remembers that the families of friends who lived there seemed to all be artistic—writers, photographers, musicians, college professors, eccentrics. “It was a different set of people who were attracted to these houses than the typical tract-home family,” he says.

In the white carpeted den, an early ‘70s plastic couch is believed to be made by Vectra. Quiroz reupholstered the cushions himself, noting the piece came with “plaid orange and brown, very ‘Man of La Mancha’ fabric.” The Bertoia Diamond chairs were found at a garage sale and the teak storage unit was \$20. The boomerang-shaped table is by Dixie Gail Hall Studio.

text Michelle Gringeri-Brown *photography* Jim Brown



Quiroz and Baringer have an exotic collection of African and American cacti and succulents in their entry atrium. Euphorbia, organ pipes, Pacypodium and crown of thorns are among the striking specimens.

The kitchen still has its original Thermador cooktop and oven, and a prized GE Americana refrigerator from Disneyland's House of the Future (see sidebar). The rack near the refrigerator is French. "All of the French and Italian coffeehouses and bars in the '50s and '60s had these racks for hats, umbrellas and coats," Quiroz explains. "I almost bought one in Paris once but I couldn't figure out how to get it on the plane."





Adjacent to the kitchen, a Burke table and chairs set from a thrift shop sits near a wooden wall unit that came with the 1964 house; it is labeled "Regner Christiansen from Denmark."

Today he lives with partner Steve Baringer in a four-bedroom, two-bath Eichler in Orange's Fairhills neighborhood. The home is rumored to have been the sales office for the tract, and Quiroz was told the atypical den off the kitchen once displayed architectural models for the various floor plans.

"These Eichlers are well sited. A lot of them don't get full sun into the house," Quiroz comments in explaining that their house isn't blazing hot even in the summer. "In the Fairmeadows tract there are a few models that have dramatic sloping roofs; you can tell they thought those out according to where the sun was. Some have morning light instead of setting sun [exposure], which would have been way too hot."

In the house for 10 years, the pair only had to do cosmetic upgrades to eliminate the rental carpet and vinyl flooring. Damage from the carpet tack strips in the living room means Quiroz won't be leaving the cement slab exposed permanently; he's thinking of flagstone, slate or pebble-and-epoxy flooring. One area where they've invested lots of time is in landscaping the property, with the resulting yard looking like a slice of Hawaii with its palms, hibiscus, bromeliads and giant bird-of-paradise plants lining the pool.

Snap It Up Early

Quiroz was one of the smart ones who started buying midcentury furniture back in the '70s at yard sales and thrift stores. "I always appreciated modern design, architecture and art," he says. "Midcentury was one of the better periods in history for art and design." His maiden purchase was a French reverse-image lamp celebrating Bastille Day. "I was really attracted to it: it looks like a big bowling ball on little metal legs with a typical '50s shade. I bought it at a yard sale for \$5."

One of his first collections was early 1900s Bauer pottery, which he liked to plant with cactus and other succulents. "The glazes are really nice—rich reds, turquoises, blues, yellows, oranges." Quiroz jumped forward several decades for his furni-



Simple shelving holds Quiroz's collection of studio pottery, and above the fireplace is an Oceanic mask. The thrift store coffee table has an Italian mosaic glass top with encircling brass bands around the edge.



This Eichler is definitely one with its landscape. The front yard's blooming red and white plumerias, dwarf bananas, palms, liriop and ferns are all about six years old. In the back, the existing giant bird of paradise plants are 30 feet tall, and the homeowners have added pocket plantings of bamboo palms, bromeliads and cycads to soften the expanse of concrete decking.

ture, and once had five garages jam-packed with Heywood-Wakefield and more kitschy '50s pieces.

For a guy drawn to colorful art and objects, selecting a house that was basically a white box was akin to moving into a gallery. Ah, the chance to fill a 2,500-square-foot house with studio pottery, numerous Eames designs, midcentury glass, original artwork and iconic vintage pieces ...

"I could be a packrat; I tend to overdo things," Quiroz admits. "I could become obsessive-compulsive like some of my neighbors." Luckily, Baringer performs the function of acquisitions editor to keep the household from looking like a museum or storage unit. "If I sneak something in it will disappear. I'll ask about it and Steve will say it didn't work and it's now hidden away somewhere. He has a good eye and likes things kind of austere.

"These houses look great with nothing in them, because then you can concentrate on the beams and the posts and the way the rooflines are, the way the lines intersect and work together," Quiroz continues. "The more stuff you have, the more it detracts from that."

The living room's vintage distractions include an Eames sofa compact and fiberglass shell chairs, one with a new rocker base from Modernica. A Peabody chair by Selig was found at a thrift store years ago, and there are five more Eames chairs in the garage, including one with dowel legs. "It's interesting to see the escalating



prices of some of this stuff," Quiroz says. "It's nice that people appreciate it more now and that there's a resurgence of interest in the craftsmanship of the furniture."

Less is More

A Case Study shelving unit from Modernica is about the only reissued piece they have. "Original ones are \$15,000 to \$20,000 and their legs are usually bent and rusted," he says. "The Modernica pieces are well made and they have all kinds of different sizes and conformations, as well as desks."

In addition to iconic and generic midcentury furniture, Quiroz has collections that include decorative glass, studio pottery, espresso makers and outsider art, specifically of the clown variety (see sidebar). But now at the point where he doesn't need more stuff, he only purchases reasonably priced items in as close to original condition as possible.

"Even if it's perfect, I really don't have the space for it," he admits. However Quiroz continues to enjoy searching out, but not necessarily buying, artwork. "It's part of life. It's great to see something new and different you haven't run across before in a book or in person. I keep my eyes open."

Still, he claims his stuff doesn't own him and that they could divest themselves of their home and its contents at any time: "I'd really be happy with a hammock between two coconut palms in Hawaii," he says wistfully.

"If the
construction
and materials are
true to the original,
I think it's a
good idea to
make reissues."

The “Atoms for Living”
kitchen featured
an ultrasonic dishwasher,
microwave oven
and a
space-age refrigerator—
a 1957 GE Americana
with a drawer freezer
on the bottom,
an icemaker and
a built-in front shelf
with a back-lit panel.



Future Fridge

The Monsanto Chemical Company's House of the Future, designed by MIT works from all-synthetic materials, first opened at Disneyland in June 1957. The three-bedroom, two-bath fiberglass pod had a racy mirrored ceiling in the bedroom and a computer, or “personal calculating machine,” as well as starkly modern furnishings. The “Atoms for Living” kitchen featured an ultrasonic dishwasher, microwave oven and a space-age refrigerator—a 1957 GE Americana with a drawer freezer on the bottom, an icemaker and a built-in front shelf with a back-lit panel.

After some 20 million visitors marveled at its futuristic design, the house closed in 1967 and its contents were discarded or put in storage. Twenty-two years later, Patrick Quiroz got a tip from a friend who worked for the theme park that the refrigerator had been donated to a charity.

He found out the details and was standing outside the thrift store when the truck pulled up. One U-Haul rental and \$150 netted him an appliance with a provenance to impress the “Antiques Roadshow” folks. The fridge has followed Quiroz to five residences, still works perfectly and looks as pristine as the day it came out of the GE factory.



See the GE Americana in its Disneyland setting, along with tons of great period kitchenwares, in *Atomic Kitchen*, available at atomic-ranch.com.

"Some of the '50s and '60s modern Italian design was so unique and well thought out. Everyday functional things like kitchen utensils and cleaning appliances were beautifully designed."

Sparkling Espresso Clowns

Among the furniture, studio pottery and original artwork in Patrick Quiroz's 1964 Eichler are three very different collections: espresso makers, decorative glass and clown paintings. They all seem to have to do with his Italian mother.

Her family worked the traveling carnival circuit in Italy, which Quiroz thinks might have given him a special interest in clowns. "Circuses and clowns have a certain aura. They're just silly," he says of the framed paintings he displays in the laundry room off the kitchen. "I picked them up because they were inexpensive and kind of weird. I have probably a dozen more in the garage." He finds the paintings at yard sales and swap meets, and says one was even done by a prison inmate. And no, as a kid, he didn't find clowns to be creepy.

The genesis of the espresso makers is a bit more straightforward: when he lived in Italy as a child, he liked the futuristic designs of the coffeepots and the whole bohemian/beatnik vibe of coffeehouses. He has European and American ones in brass, stainless steel and aluminum, mostly dating from the 1950s through the '70s. And then there is the decorative glass, which is displayed here and there throughout the house. It includes pieces from the Italian glass capital of Murano in Venice, as well as generic cobalt '50 vases, a Blodjet bottle, and a blocky red vintage piece from Milano.

His advice to those contemplating a midcentury item they really love but that doesn't seem to fit into your current house? Buy it. His boomerang table spent 15 years in various garages before finding a home in his den. 🧙



KRISANA



text and photography Randy Sorter et al

vintage images courtesy
Nellie Stasica and Val & Elaine Senter

Like many of her postwar siblings across the nation, Denver's Krisana Park recently celebrated 50 years of Modernist living. In honor of this milestone, the residents threw a neighborhood-wide party, complete with a historical exhibit, live 1950s-era entertainment, vintage cars, "celebrity" greeters and a tour of nine midcentury homes.

Tucked quietly away in a busy southeast subdivision, Krisana Park was built by H.B. Wolff & Company. Brad Wolff, part of the original builder team, still resides in Colorado and was an honored guest during the celebration, where he provided many details about the little-known tract's early years.

PARK turns the big five-0

Neighbors
encourage
preservation
through
appreciation



Jim Brown (3)

How To Plan a Modern Event



Gary Stefanski



Have a vision—ours was a home tour with a 1950s twist to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Krisana Park. Vintage cars were parked in driveways, Jell-O sculptures displayed in the homes, and TVs and DVDs tuned to “Leave It to Beaver” and “Rawhide.” Each residence on the tour had volunteer 1950s character greeters—Dale Evans and Roy Rogers, Aunt Bee and Opie, the “Three Mouseketeers” and Ozzie and Harriet. Neighborhood kids used sidewalk chalk to write 1950s “graffiti” on the streets—things like “I Like Ike,” “Cool Daddy-o,” and “Buy S&H Green Stamps.” Our event raised funds for PlatteForum, an innovative Denver youth arts center.

Here's how we did it:

- Start at least three months out; a longer lead time is better.
- Create and distribute a neighborhood survey. Describe your proposed event and ask residents to give feedback. This is your chance to find others who would like to be involved, generate additional ideas and see who would be willing to have their home on the tour.
- Make sure the core organizers love modern homes and are fun and enthusiastic; you will be spending a lot of time together.
- Schedule frequent meetings; it's an opportunity to put on your sassy apron and pearls and serve Kool-Aid, Twinkies, fish sticks and meatloaf—and don't forget the Tang.
- Create committees to select the houses for the home tour, produce the program and invitations, find entertainment, get the word out, enlist volunteers, sell tickets, etc.
- Have your tour home selection committee contact owners to schedule visits at least two months before. We had nine homes, and they ranged from those that were in original condition to ones that were totally done in a 1950s theme, and others that were just gorgeous renovations.
- Design the program to include local sponsors, information about the houses, history of the neighborhood and a map so folks can easily find the homes. Designate a check-in area on the map.
- Collect photos from original owners or the local historical society. We were lucky enough to also find marketing materials for Krisana Park that were used to create an informative exhibit.
- Have a debriefing meeting where you congratulate yourselves on how swell the home tour and celebration was. Maybe this is the time for something a bit stronger than Tang ...

—Dana Miller



Making Hay

In approximately 1950, developer H.B. Wolff (Brad's father) spotted a thriving alfalfa field owned by Christian and Ann Noe. The elder Wolff, along with 30-year-old Brad, developed a vision of a completely preplanned, Modernist neighborhood. To honor the Noes, they decide to name their new development Krisana Park—a combination of the Noes' first names.

The following year, H.B. Wolff & Company paired up with the architectural firm of Gratts & Warner, which specialized in contemporary homes. During his career, "Frenchie" Gratts designed more than 500 residential homes in the Denver area, as well as several commercial buildings at Lowry Air Field, and his partner, Edwin H. Warner, was a local home consultant and designer.

Before constructing any homes on the newly purchased land, Brad Wolff and his father discussed the details of their futuristic development. "At that time, there were new homes being constructed in California known as 'California Contemporaries,' and this sparked our interest," recalls Wolff. "I remember my father and I decided that I would travel to California to get a better look at these modern homes."

Spending more than a week in Southern California, he became enthralled with the designs of popular postwar residential real estate developer Joseph Eichler. After returning home to Denver, Wolff quickly began developing his own version of the California Contemporary, altering it only slightly for Colorado's climate. "In order to avoid broken water pipes, we had to move the washer and dryer units from the carport to the kitchen," he remembers. "This is basically the only alteration made to the original design."

Denver Contempo

The 177 homes in Krisana Park had modern floor plans, waxed Philippine mahogany paneling, wide roof overhangs and easy-upkeep redwood siding. The large, floor-to-ceiling windows offered views of the spacious lanais and the best of indoor/outdoor living. Marketed as "The 3-D Contemporary House Designed for Colorado's Climate," they sold quickly for \$15,950.

"We originally built a model home and first showed it to the public during a home show held at Denver University sometime around 1953 or 1954," recalls Wolff. "The carport, although a distinctive California addition, was a new idea to Denver home-





Original Krisana Park homeowners John and Betty Thompson are happy to see the new-found appreciation for the neighborhood.



Laura Landwirth loves her home, above, because its design provides privacy while promoting views of the patio and yard. "The mahogany paneling and wood floors give it an organic, warm feeling," she says.



buyers. The plate glass windows were also new and quickly appealed to buyers."

Original homeowners John and Betty Thompson purchased their Krisana Park home in 1954. "For an extra \$150, you could have an optional automatic dishwasher or water heater installed," John remembers. "At the time, the price was quite reasonable. Betty and I immediately fell in love with the modern design and still feel the same way today. We love our home and neighborhood just as much today as we did 50 years ago.

"When they first started building Krisana Park, they [began] on our street," he explains. "We were among the first to move in." The newly built homes came with a free tree (usually a flowering Hopa crabapple), but little else in the way of land-



Left, two views of the author's home, featuring Mies van der Rohe's Barcelona collection. Above, the home of Geoffrey Fowler, who comments, "I enjoy my retro-style home because it lends itself well to creative interior design."

scaping. Thompson chuckles as he recalls having to purchase a truckload of manure from a local dairy farm down the road. "There weren't any lawns at all when we moved in—just dirt yards. I ended up using a whole truckload of fresh manure on our yard. Our lawn sure did grow, but the aroma was quite strong."

Today, the lawns of Krisana Park are flourishing and the crabapple trees bloom brightly among towering blue spruce and majestic oaks. The landscape has changed a bit over the last 50 years, but the homes and the type of people who love them have remained the same.

"The people who live in midcentury homes seem to be cut from a different mold," says Dana Miller, who was instrumental in putting together the 50th anniver-



Susan and Art Ammann say, "After many moves over the years, we and our modern furniture have come to rest in our second midcentury home. It brings us full circle."



"I love living in Krisana Park," Tracy Larivee says. "When you drive onto our street, you truly feel as if you were stepping back into the '50s. There aren't many neighborhoods that give you that feeling these days."

sary celebration for Krisana Park. "I think it takes a certain type of person to really appreciate the architecture and history of these postwar homes."

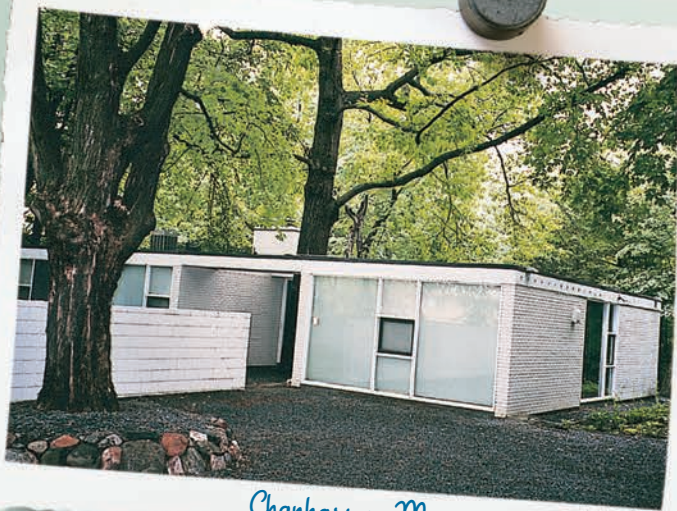
The September 2005 Krisana Park celebration brought an entire community of midcentury homeowners together to reminisce about a bygone era. The event was so well received that plans are in the works to make this an annual occurrence. But you don't have to wait for the official tour to get a glimpse of this unique, Eichler-inspired neighborhood. Drive by anytime and take a trip back to the '50s on the streets of Krisana Park. 🍰

Randy Sorter is a licensed professional counselor and an artist who has lived with his partner, Randy Morris, in Krisana Park for three years. His work is sold online at abstractionsart.com.

Tour Krisana Park when you're next in Denver: Street perimeters of the tract are Louisiana (N), Florida (S), Filbert (E) and Dahlia. For a virtual visit to another H.B. Wolff home, see "A Long, Low Wolff Whistle" in issue no. 9, available at atomic-ranch.com.



Eureka, Calif.



Chanhassen, Minn.



Cleveland, Ohio



homepage

Eureka, Calif.

When we decided to check out of Southern California, we proceeded to shop the West for interesting architecture and affordability, with location as a secondary consideration. Our search brought us to Eureka, in magnificent redwood country, and this great 1959 modern ranch reminiscent of an Eichler. Our interest in local modern architecture led to creation of a website about this house, other interesting local homes and a variety of modern topics: eurekamodern.com.

Tim & Mary Wetzel

Chanhassen, Minn.

Our house was designed by noted architect Ralph Rapson in 1959 and is just under 2,000 square feet. It features floor-to-ceiling windows, black terrazzo floors and round acrylic skylights. Rapson is probably best known for the Guthrie Theatre in Minneapolis and was one of the original participants in the Case Study house program. With a wonderful lake view and lots of trees, it truly is a magical setting.

Matt Tibbetts

Cleveland, Ohio

Of all the objects in our 1959 split level, the Danish candlesticks huddled along our mantel give us the most pleasure. The difficulty in finding matched pairs of candlesticks prompted a better solution: celebrate their diversity! The wraparound fireplace is made of aqua-tinted brick and natural sandstone. When we pulled up the carpeting in the foyer, we were thrilled to find matching aqua terrazzo. Our house was owned by the developer, so he put in exposed fir joists in the living and dining rooms, and walls made of thick lath and plaster. We've thoroughly enjoyed our quiet, airy home since 1992; it suits us perfectly and feels more modern with each passing year.

Mark & Christine Zust

Put your home on our fridge; send in a high-resolution photo or sharp snapshot and a couple of sentences about your cool pad for our next issues. See contacts page 3.

postscript

updates on past articles

Tom Bartkiewicz's Baton Rouge article in no. 10, "The Houses that Hamilton Built," touched on Gentilly Woods, a postwar subdivision in New Orleans built by W. Hamilton Crawford. Tom paid a recent trip to New Orleans to see how the tract fared in Hurricane Katrina. Here's a brief snapshot of what he experienced:



In this picture you can see the water line and the spray painted FEMA markings indicating condition and what's to be done with the house.

Some owners are returning. Here you can see FEMA trailers used for temporary housing while they repair their homes.



Norman Adams, the owner of the "hyper" Eichler showcased in no. 9, received a historic preservation award from Palo Alto Stanford Heritage for the restoration of his 1954 home. Architect Mark Marcinik, who was responsible for the renovation, also had one of the green features of the house—the grass and Pacific Pavingstone driveway, which reduces rain runoff—highlighted in the May 4, 2006 edition of the *New York Times*. Resources for water permeable driveway products mentioned in the article include invisiblestructures.com, prestogeo.com and hanoverpavers.com.



These look to have been on higher ground and did not suffer serious flood damage. You can see that the houses held up quite well to high winds; it was the flooding from the levee breaches that caused the heaviest damage.

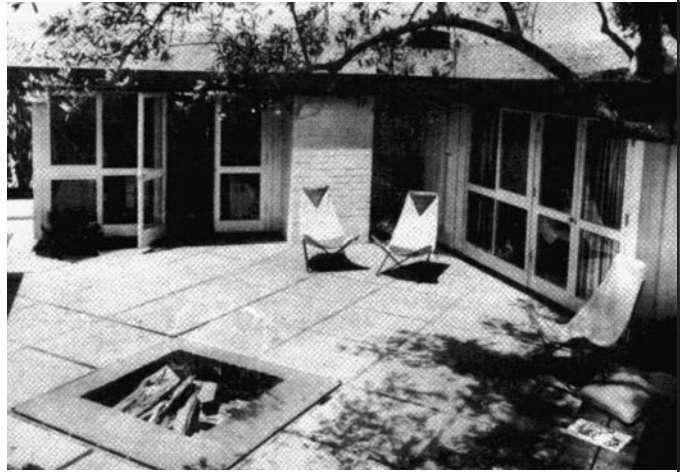


You can see a flood-damaged car is still in the carport of this Gentilly Woods home. There are signs posted throughout the neighborhood from companies who will purchase properties. Many owners have taken their insurance money and sold their houses, never to return.



This shows the dichotomy of what is happening in the neighborhood. On the corner is a flood-damaged house and van, with the waterline visible on the siding. The owners in all probability are not returning. Next door is a house that has already been repaired, with a FEMA trailer in the front yard. One represents hope, the other despair. ☹️

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On the Edge



Perched on the cliffs of
Camelback Mountain in Phoenix,
one couple resists supersizing
their '60s ranch.

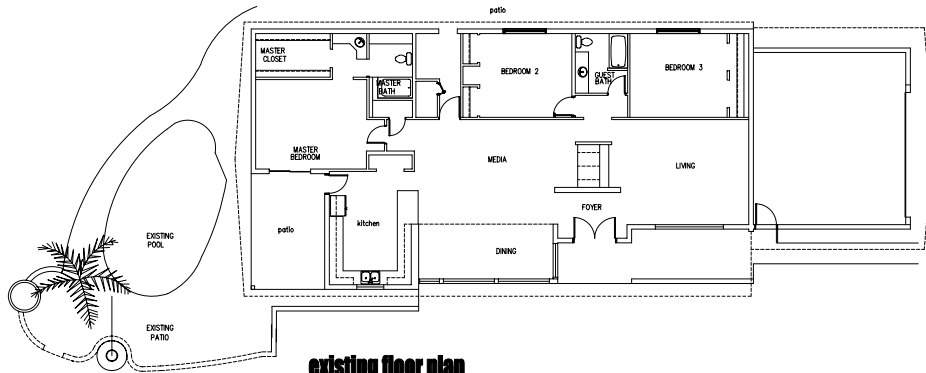
of

text Michelle Gringeri-Brown

photography 2C imagery



Modernism



existing floor plan

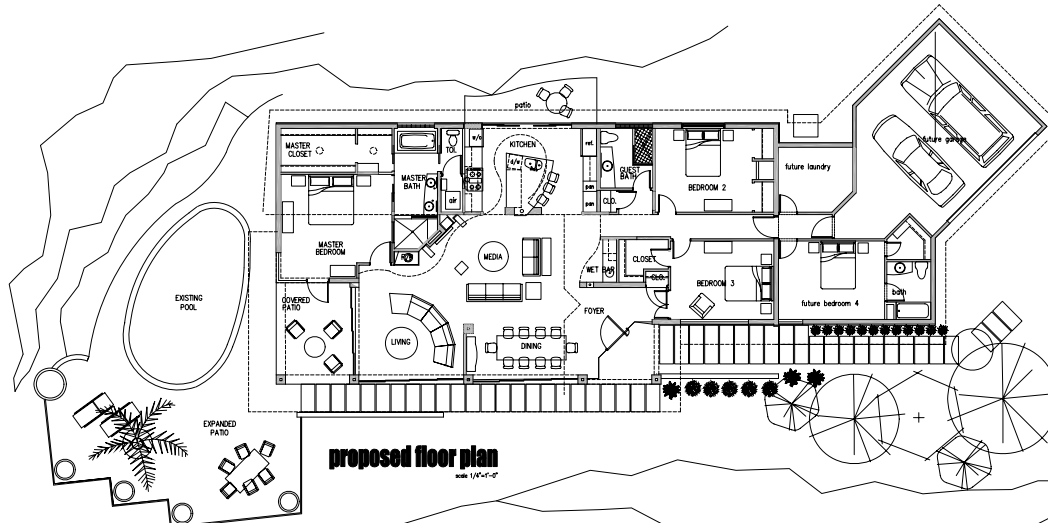
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south elevation

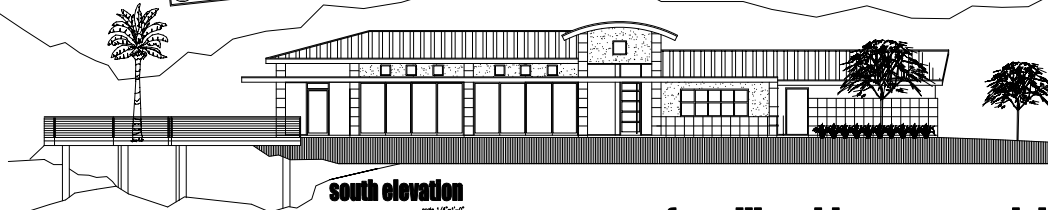
scale 1/8"=1'-0"

ferrulli residence - remodel



proposed floor plan

scale 1/8"=1'-0"



south elevation

scale 1/8"=1'-0"

ferrulli residence - remodel





“I used to sit on the patio and stare at the view because I couldn’t stand to look at the house,”

Tino Ferrulli says about his family’s ranch house. “Whoever built it liked architecture, but where I felt they fell down was the kitchen: it was at the front of the house and it probably had a 3’ x 2’ window—there were no views to speak of.”

And those views of downtown Phoenix and eastward to Mesa are pretty spectacular. Ferrulli and his wife, Alyssa Harrison, wanted to keep the good stuff but more fully enjoy the attributes of their Arcadia neighborhood’s striking setting. They contacted Jacques LeBlanc and Jackson Huggins of Realm Design.

“The concept was to take a ’60s ranch house that didn’t really respond very well to its natural setting and try to modify it to capture city views,” architect LeBlanc says. “The strange part to us was the house had no bearing to the site it sat on. It was like someone took a floor plan for some other

lot somewhere and just plunked it down on a mountainside without any thought about which rooms should be where. Everything we did was to reconfigure the primary living spaces to capture those amazing views.”

The house was in good condition, but in addition to turning its back to the vistas, it was an absolute sauna in the summer. The seven- and eight-foot ceilings annoyed Ferrulli, and the marginally functional kitchen had big-box-store cabinets, laminate counters and parquet floors. “We lived in the house for almost two years to get a handle on what we wanted to do,” the homeowner says. “In working with Jacques and Jackson, they helped us kick it to the next level, yet they were all ears when it came to what we were looking for and how we wanted to maintain the structure of the house.”

“The economy in Phoenix has been very strong and

“This ranch house
lent itself to being
a little of what it was

&
a lot of what it could be.”

people want to make sure they don't under build,” LeBlanc comments. “The Ferrulli house is one of the smaller ones in this neighborhood, an area in transition. There aren't a lot of houses with great historical character, so there have been teardowns and expansions. I'd say they range from 1,600 to 7,000 square feet.”

The plan that emerged kept the footprint the same, although 800 square feet of living space was gained by annexing the existing garage for a bedroom/gym and a laundry room, bringing the ranch to just over 3,000 square feet. The former living room became another bedroom, now used as an office. The kitchen was moved to the back of the house where a bedroom was previously, and a new two-car garage built at an angle. The family, which includes daughter Kylie, 11, and two largish dogs, hunkered down in roughly 400 square feet while demolition and construction ensued.

LeBlanc and Huggins decided that the whole front should have sliders that opened up, so all of the glass in the home was replaced, and plumbing and electrical systems were redone as well. Ceiling height was kept as is in the bedrooms but cranked up to 11 1/2 feet in the public areas. The asphalt shingle roof was changed to standing-seam metal and the front entry reoriented under a modified barrel-roof pop-up. There were a few surprises, both bad—roof joists that arrived about a foot too short—and good—original cement block previously concealed by drywall.

“We'd planned to blow the area near the fireplace out,” Ferrulli says, “but we thought the block work was too fantastic so we changed the plans to save it.” Cement block was also found inside the garage and in the master bedroom. “We tried to save elements like these and to take the rest of the house back to what it was always intended to be,” he explains.

The role of an architect or designer is to facilitate good



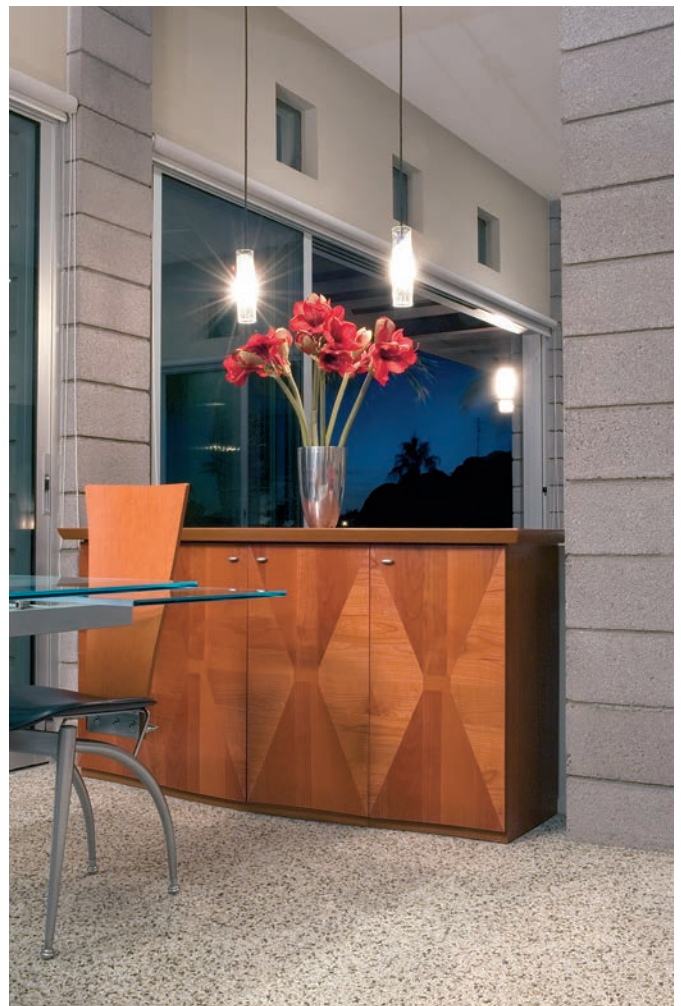


Alyssa concentrated
on the color scheme
both inside and out—
21 different colors in all.

design while listening to a homeowner and encouraging him or her to take bigger risks. “They had more of a vision for the view than we did going into the project,” Ferrulli acknowledges. “We knew we wanted to pull the views in, but I don’t know that I would have had the intestinal fortitude to put that much glass up on my own. The one thing I told Jackson and Jacques all the way through was, ‘Here are the things I like and I want to make sure that that happens, but I don’t ever want to stop your creativity, so let’s talk every step of the way.’ ”

A challenge of living on Camelback Mountain is that lots are surrounded by rock outcroppings. To expand the narrow deck surrounding the existing pool, Realm Design developed a cement deck extension that cantilevers out over the canyon with two supporting piers. Addressing the blasting Phoenix summer heat and the sizable new expanses of glass, a steel and perforated metal awning was designed to shade the windows.

“Arizona gets pretty harsh. It’s always a toss-up between



balancing views and natural light against solar orientation and gain,” LeBlanc says. “We have to be conscious of where we’re placing glass and how those openings are protected, or if they’re not, how to provide that protection. In a house without a view issue, we can design to avoid windows in vulnerable orientations. At Tino and Alyssa’s, the view was south and west. We had to get a good quality insulated glass system, put insulating film on the glass and add the shade structure. The Ferrullis also installed mesh roller blinds that allow you to see out but cut out 85 to 90 percent of solar gain.”

Alyssa Harrison concentrated on the color scheme both inside and out—the structure, awnings, interior paint, roof—21 different colors in all. “The interior of a home has to reflect your tastes for you to be comfortable in it,” Ferrulli comments. “For us, the trick was trying to blend contemporary and still not make it feel homey and not cold.

“That’s where I struggled the most with this whole project. I was worried that this would be so contemporary that it would feel commercial. It’s just the opposite, though. For instance, the flooring is just pebbles; it’s got a real outdoorsy, beachy feel. It’s nice when you have all of the sliders open—the house seems to flow right outdoors; you don’t feel a huge transition.”



Although the terrazzo counters were problematic to install—some of the cabinetry was damaged by the water involved in the process—the Ferrulli household likes how they complement the pebble and epoxy flooring. They found that the textured floor is great on bare feet as well as kind to their elderly arthritic dog.



Our specialty has been focusing on the whole midcentury modern world, so we've worked a lot with 50s and 60s ranches. We always see them as great challenges as we try to adapt them, rather than tear down and start over, LeBlanc says. But not every ranch house was designed to respond to today's lifestyle. They were built during a different time and people didn't live the same way they do now. We go into a project with the thought that they have all of this great character and livability, but some ranches need to be rethought a little bit. We try to respect the architecture.

After months of construction upheaval, Tino, Alyssa and Kylie thoroughly relish their modern digs. This ranch house lent itself to being a little of what it was and a lot of what it could be, Ferrulli says. We just love going home it's an absolute resort. 🌵

Hotel Valley Ho: A True Arizona Hot Spot

Las Vegas was unquestionably the desert playground for the rich and famous in the 1950s, but for those who wanted their days in the sun without all the glitz, there was only one place to go: Hotel Valley Ho in Scottsdale, Ariz. Built in 1956, Valley Ho played host to the top stars of the day: Marilyn Monroe, Betty Grable, Ingrid Bergman and Cary Grant to name a few, as well as infamous Rat Packers Sinatra and Martin. Even Robert Wagner and Natalie Wood celebrated their marriage there with a reception in 1957. Luckily for fans of midcentury modern design, Westroc Hospitality just spent \$80 million to bring the Valley Ho back to better-than-original glory.

The hotel features 194 rooms that remain in their original row arrangement, since the hotel was designed as a motor court to allow the guest to drive right up to the room in his Cadillac Eldorado Biarritz. There's also a new, 37-unit condominium wing available for those who want to come home every night to a '50s abode, a la June and Ward Clever.

Frank Lloyd Wright influences can be seen in many areas of the hotel's design, particularly the lobby. A long, sweeping bar is the center of the universe for drinks and conversation, while Trader Vic's Polynesian restaurant dispenses mai tais and puu-puu platters just like it did decades ago. Don't look for uppity dishes at Cafe ZuZu; we chose the tuna noodle casserole, which tasted home cooked, sort of like mom used to make.

Seven wings cover most of the 10-acre Hotel Valley Ho property in the heart of downtown Scottsdale, within walking distance of art galleries and popular restaurants. A pool area with cabanas and a bar attracts sun worshippers and snowbirds from all over.

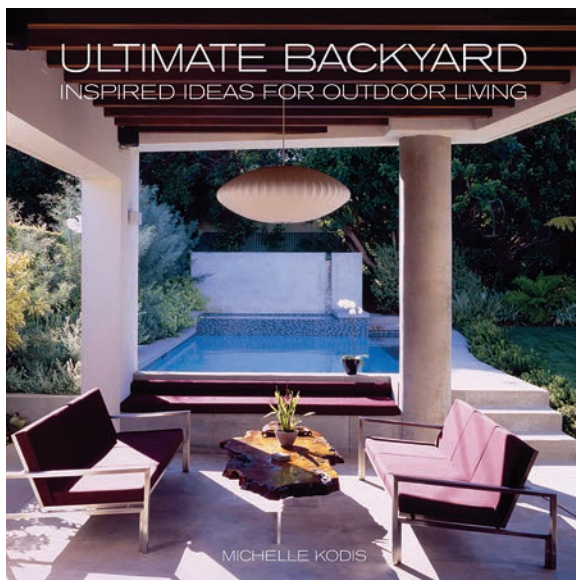
The classic rooms with modern conveniences start at \$289 a night for a standard room during high season. Hotel Valley Ho, 6850 E. Main St., Scottsdale, AZ 85251; 480.248.8000; hotelvalleyho.com.

—Team Killeen

Ooold friends of the Ranch, Scott and BJ Killeen are both approaching their midcentury years, so freelancing for Atomic Ranch was a natural fit. The automotive photographer and writer have been a team for over a decade, and work to support their overwhelming desire for shelter and food.



COOL|stuff



Outside Help

Ideas for midcentury-appropriate landscaping can be few and far between if you're looking for something that's not geared to a desert climate.

Ultimate Backyard: Inspired Ideas for Outdoor Living from Gibbs Smith, Publisher can help.

While several of the homes are plenty upscale—particularly the Hearst Castlesque pool in Florida and the Arizona megabuck compound—they include doable ideas from Wyoming, Oregon, Washington D.C., Texas, New York and more.

The 192-page hardcover book is organized into outdoor rooms, indoor/outdoor connections, water features and overall landscapes, from a wooded Vermont lodge to typical suburban plots. \$39.95 at booksellers everywhere.



Rock Dock

Integrate your iPod into your postwar interior with a speaker set Buster Poindexter would dig. Specktone Retro is made of high-gloss piano lacquer wood and has a 28 watt output, 4" subwoofer and two 3" drivers to pump Sleater-Kinney through your neighbor's wall. Choose classic green and brown, black or Like a Virgin white and silver. The suggested price is \$149.95 at Apple, CompUSA, RadioShack, Staples and other stores. Drool at speckproducts.com/specktone/index.html.



High Art

Confirm your friends' suspicions that your pet obsession has reached a new zenith with affordable artwork for your midcentury pad. Pop Art Pet digitally enhances a photo of your dog, cat, ferret or lizard into a comic book, er graphic novel-style original canvas, with prices beginning at \$60. Other choices channel Mr. Warhol and they offer coasters, mouse pads and magnets, too. Visit them at popartpet.com



Cuppa Joe

Whether you like your java classy—the stainless steel six-cup Mia coffeepot (\$59)—or cutesy—the Mukka Express cappuccino maker (\$89), here in pink but also available in b&w cow print or polished aluminum—Bialetti has you covered.

Famous in Italy for developing the ubiquitous octagonal aluminum stovetop coffee brewer 70 years ago, they also sell nifty tools, gadgets and brightly colored pots and pans. Retail locations at bialetti.com, or buy online at bialetticafe.com.



homes

OF MODERATE COST

new
edition

hughes howell

House

We get some interesting submissions from our readers, and a fat envelope from Jack Powell was a real prize. “I have been passionate about modernism since 1957, when I saw my first Eames chair at the opening of the Eastland Shopping Center in West Covina [Calif.]; long story short, your magazine really speaks my language,” he wrote. “Like Joe Barthlow [a previous contributor], I, too, have a collection of original ranch house marketing materials just crying out to be published. This material seems like it would be right up your alley.”

Indeed. The manila envelope was full of copies of pre- and postwar house plan brochures.

When we called Jack to thank him, he confessed to a wide-ranging appreciation for midcentury finds, from Nelson clocks and acrylic furniture to vintage menus and matchboxes. Wondering how best to share his nifty collection of ephemera with readers, we thought we’d just let them speak for themselves.

Hunting

text Michelle Gringeri-Brown

the new Celotex book of homes



20 charming homes
of moderate cost

PRICE 25 CENTS

EVERETT McNEIL



SIDEWALLS	contrasting roof		blending roof	
	SLIGHT CONTRAST	STRONG CONTRAST	SIMILAR COLOR	DIFFERENT COLOR
RED OR MAROON	ROOF—Silver Blue Blend TRIM—Gray or White 	ROOF—Cedar Green Blend Mediterranean Blue Blend Silver Gray, Shell White TRIM—Light Green, Light Blue or White 	ROOF—Terra Cotta Red Blend Spanish Red TRIM—Gray or White 	ROOF—Coral Blend Walnut Brown Blend Bronze Blend TRIM—Beige, Gray or White
BUFF, CREAM OR IVORY	ROOF—Pacific Gray Blend Silver Blue Blend Gray Slate Blend TRIM—White or Blue 	ROOF—Evergreen Mediterranean Blue Blend TRIM—Lighter shade of roof color or Yellow 	ROOF—Walnut Brown Blend Bronze Blend TRIM—Brown, Green or Green 	ROOF—Coral Blend Terra Cotta Red Blend TRIM—Rust or White
GREEN	ROOF—Walnut Brown Blend Gray Slate Blend Black TRIM—Buff or Gray 	ROOF—Terra Cotta Red Blend Spanish Red TRIM—Green lighter or darker (than walls) or White 	ROOF—Cedar Green Blend Evergreen TRIM—Buff, White or Yellow 	ROOF—Pacific Gray Blend Silver Gray, Shell White TRIM—Gray or White
BROWN	ROOF—Pacific Gray Blend Gray Slate Blend TRIM—Light Gray, Yellow or White 	ROOF—Cedar Green Blend Mediterranean Blue Blend Silver Gray, Shell White TRIM—Light Green or White 	ROOF—Walnut Brown Blend Bronze Blend TRIM—White, Cream, Light Blue or Light Green 	ROOF—Coral Blend Terra Cotta Red Blend TRIM—Beige, White or Light Rust
WHITE* OR LIGHT GRAY*	ROOF—Walnut Brown Blend Spanish Red TRIM—Tan or any light color such as yellow 	ROOF—Mediterranean Blue Blend Black, Cedar Green Blend TRIM—Lighter shade of roof color or Gray 	ROOF—Pacific Gray Blend Silver Blue Blend TRIM—Gray or any light color 	ROOF—Coral Blend Gray Slate Blend TRIM—Any fairly light color

* Because white or light gray has no definite hue it is used with practically any roofing color. Sky and foliage become more important in color plans using white as a basic color.

CELOTEX HOUSE NUMBER 21

FEATURES: Contemporary flat-roof plan . . . Spacious living-dining room with window-walls at front and rear . . . Central hall for direct access to all rooms . . . High bedroom windows permit greater use of wall space for furniture placement . . . Cross ventilation in all three bedrooms . . . Built-in wardrobes in two bedrooms . . . Vanity lavatory in bath . . . Convenient tool and storage room at rear of carport.

ESTIMATING DATA

	PLAN 1	PLAN 2
Living area	1,088 sq. ft.	1,151 sq. ft.
Cubic footage—house	17,932 cu. ft.	11,798 cu. ft.

PLANS 1 and 2: Porch area, 60 sq. ft. Carport area, 287 sq. ft.

Living-dining room overlooks garden terrace.

Celotex, an insulation manufacturer, developed a series of homes that featured their products, including Celo-Rok gypsum wallboard and Celotex asphalt roof shingles. A page of thumbnails helped guide homeowners considering contrasting or harmonizing exterior color schemes.

WALLS AND CEILINGS

Celotex Insulating Interior Finishes are ideal for

- completing unfinished rooms
- building rooms in waste attic space
- modernizing old rooms

Many a thrifty home buyer—with one eye on the budget and the other on the future—will have his builder complete only those rooms immediately needed, leaving finishing of walls and ceilings on one or more rooms to be done later. He may plan to have the contractor return for this work, or he may do it himself in his spare time.

For speedy, easy application, low cost, distinctive appearance, and comfort . . . there's no better material than Celotex Insulating Interior Finishes. In new rooms, simply apply furring strips as a nailing base for the panels. For modernizing old rooms, Interior Finishes may be applied by adhesives and nailing right over existing walls and ceilings.

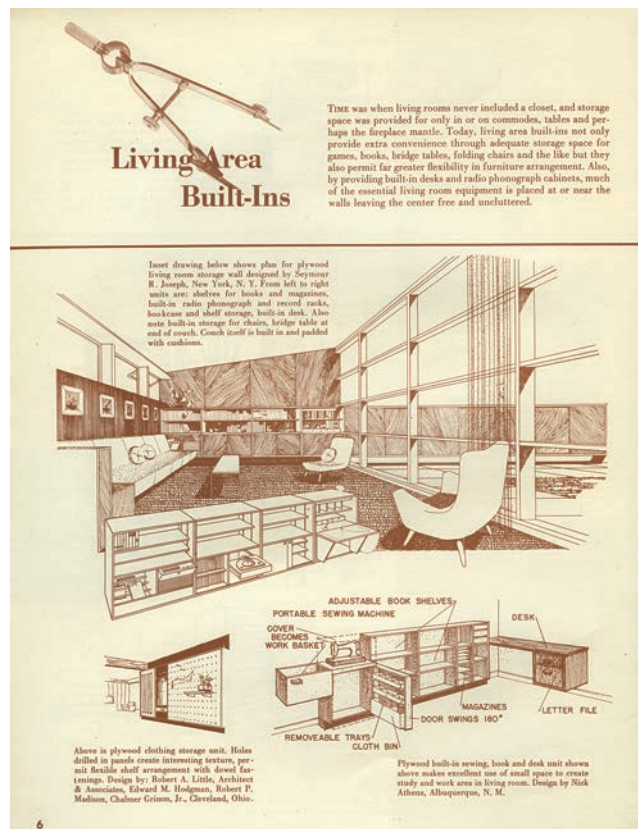
In the gay "All-purpose" room below, walls are Ripple Blend Finish Plank. Ceiling is square White Tile Board.

Celotex wood Starter Strips make application easy and insure accurate alignment. The strips permit you to start application of Tile Board at center of area. Use on furring strips or on solid backing.

Over solid backing such as gypsum wallboard or old plaster, Tile Board is applied with adhesive and supplementary nailing.



Hello Ethan Allen! Who hasn't been in this home at one time in their lives? As the Harnischfeger P&H Homes brochure said, they had "styles and plans for every taste, need and budget." The Wisconsin-based company used prefab, factory-built components.

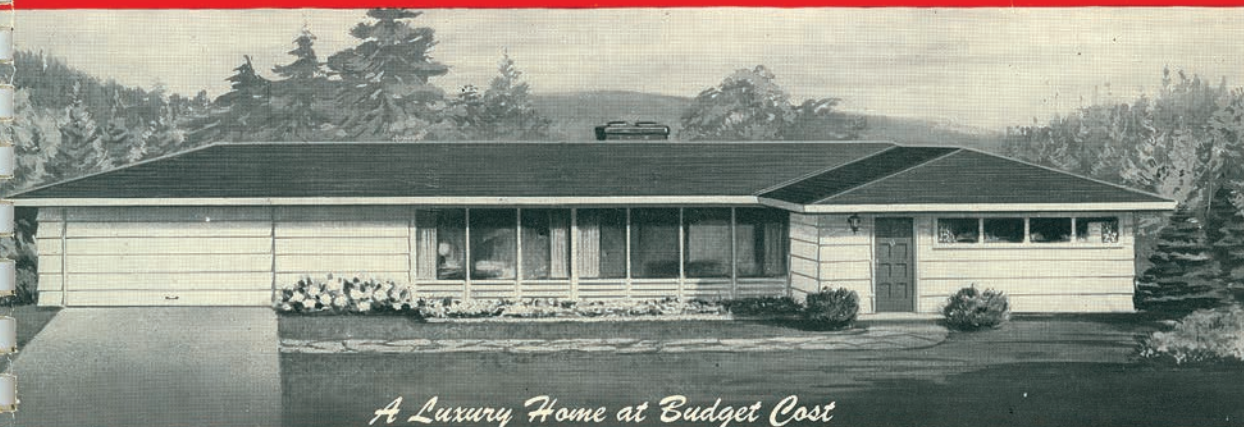


A 1951 portfolio from the Douglas Fir Plywood Association gave homeowners great ideas for modern furniture that "contributed convenience and livability to today's homes. ... Given enough properly designed built-in storage units, not only can everything be stored neatly and out of sight, but there will be far more actual living space left over," it promised.

POPULAR MECHANICS *Build-it-yourself*

RANCH-TYPE HOUSE

By Tom Riley • BUILDER OF THE ORIGINAL HOUSE
AT PORTLAND, OREGON



A Luxury Home at Budget Cost

YOU CAN BUILD MODERN HOME YOURSELF AND SAVE THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS. COMPLETE STEP-BY-STEP INSTRUCTIONS, DETAILS, DIAGRAMS AND PICTURES SHOW HOW TO BUILD THIS HOUSE AT LEISURE. N

Build It Yourself Beat the High Cost of Home Building • Build It Yourself With the Help of These Popular Mechanics Books and Plans



1½ Story Frame House With Garage and Breezeway

Build It Yourself for Only \$8000
This beautiful modern home, with breezeway and garage, is planned for all materials, including heating, plumbing and electrical work and some outside labor. It is 1½ stories, basement and second floor. It has an unusually large amount of good usable living space that can easily be increased to meet the needs of a growing family. The house itself is 25' - 8" x 28' - 11" (breezeway 20' - 10" x 12').

Illustrations in Actual Colors
Your Home and How to Build It Yourself \$3.00. Complete Set of Plans \$12.50. Book and Plans \$14.00. Duplicate Set Plans \$5.00



Concrete Block House

Build It Yourself for Less Than \$4500
Popular Mechanics Concrete Block House is 20' - 8" deep by 25' - 8" wide. It has 474 square feet of comfortable living space—living room, two bedrooms, modern kitchen, utility room, bath and three closets. Ceiling, hot air heating, gas or oil, hot or cold in hot water less than \$4500 including all materials, plumbing, painting and electrical equipment and simplified instructions that anyone can follow.



Concrete Block House Book \$2.00 • Complete Set of Plans \$12.00 • Book and Plans \$12.50 • Duplicate Set Plans \$5.00

POPULAR MECHANICS PRESS • CHICAGO 11

The "Ranch-Type House" was "dedicated to the man who is willing to do things with his own hands and who desires more of a house than just a shelter. ... With the aid of one friend, former salesman Tom Riley did all the work, excepting only the fireplace and such other jobs as excavation, which naturally require some additional help." Published in 1951 by Popular Mechanics Press, the spiral-bound book showed how Tom, his wife Vinita and the aforementioned friend constructed this fine ranch house for \$7,500 in "the highest cost year of the U.S. history!"

You'll fall in love
with Harnischfeger P&H Homes...



Life as depicted in this 1956 Harnischfeger P&H Lakeside Home included modern furnishings with traditional window treatments and artwork. Note the dentist's office angled shelf for displaying your many magazines.

Vintage home plan books, particularly those that use photographs, are invaluable for re-creating missing period details.



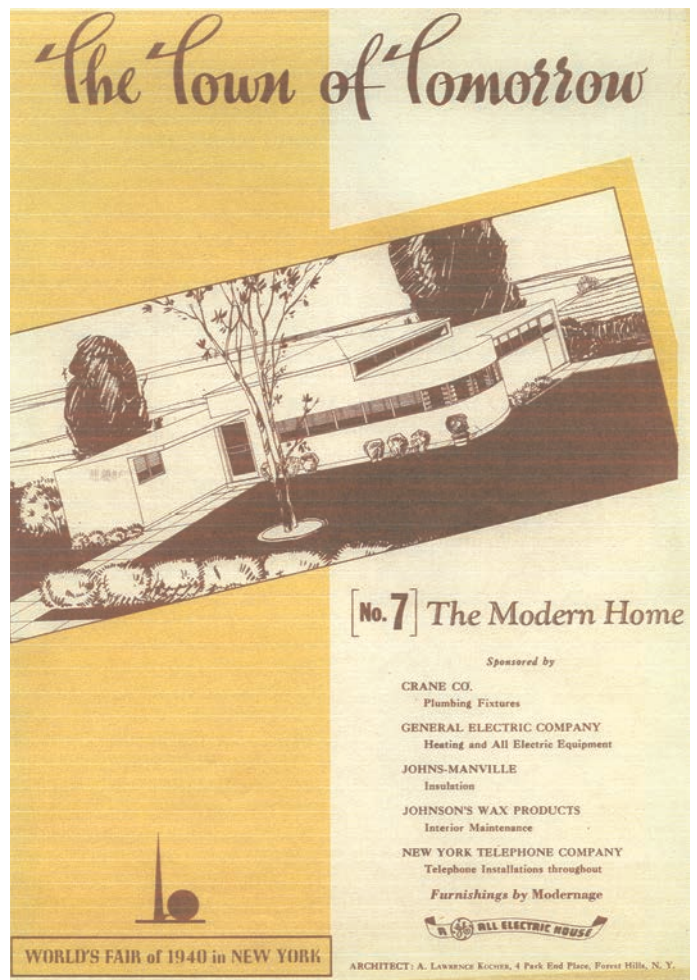
are distinctive

A home with a flat . . . from the car port . . . to the home-widening low brick wall. This Innwood home uses an overhanging cornice to fend off the prying sun . . . and just the suggestion of a fence to enclose the porch . . . truly up-to-the-minute styling.



The brochure for an Albertson, Long Island, development called Hillside Terrace touted their \$12,000 price tag, which included the lot. The 1951 house had a full basement, a choice of plaster, sheetrock or hardboard walls, and asbestos cement shingle siding. The picture window in the living room at the rear "enables the owner to develop and enjoy his own view—in privacy," the copy writer noted.

"The Town of Tomorrow" was showcased at the 1940 New York World's Fair and, in addition to this Streamline Moderne forward-looking model, also included "The Minimum House," a flat-roof brick home, and the melodious-sounding "Dual Duty Home," a boxy hip-roof ranch. 📖



Jack Powell and family
at Disneyland back
in the day.





Remarkably similar to an Eichler, this Robert Rummer-built home on the outskirts of Portland, Ore., has a soaring gable roof in the main living area. Original aggregate flooring off the atrium sliding glass door and the newly revealed cement slab are extremely practical during Oregon's wet weather.



If it looks
like an Eichler
&
quacks like an
Eichler,
maybe it's a
PDX
Rummer.

Per- fect Fit

text Josephine Goodwin

photography Jim Brown



andra Cho and Brian Miller's search for the perfect house is a bit of a Goldilocks tale. In the past 10 years, they've lived in a Sears kit home, a Craftsman bungalow, an English Tudor and a huge Mediterranean McMansion with 20' ceilings. They also toyed with building new, and the one style they both agreed on was some form of timber frame. Somehow, each past house was too something or not enough something else—too small, too dark, too noisy, not in a real neighborhood—leading to three major renovations. And each move brought more square footage until now, when they seem settled in their 1967 Modernist Rummer in Beaverton, Ore.

"After living in the Mediterranean house for a couple of years, I took for granted how important the light is in this gray climate," says Cho, who works in high-tech sales. "On an overcast day, a lot of homes feel dark, but in our Rummer, you still feel a sense of natural light, which has a huge impact on our moods. When we walked into this house—even with its light-blue carpeting, painted paneling, wicker basket lights and blue laminate everywhere—it had just the right balance of roughness, yet a modern feel."

PNW Eichler

The couple's interest in Rummors came from their exposure to Eichlers in San Jose. They were unaware of anything similar in greater Portland, but discovered Rummors, and through Bob Zaikoski of Portland Modern, found a close to original A-frame mid-century in 2004.

In the four years Zaikoski has been concentrating on MCM real estate, he's seen the select, small pool of buyers interested in these untraditional homes expand exponentially. "Buyers tend to be younger, often creatives from Nike or Wieden + Kennedy [advertising firm], and they're buying them because of the style. It's the open floor

An added reflecting pool looks right at home in the entry atrium. Camera vantage is from the living room windows looking toward the carport on the other side of the blue door, with bedroom wings to the left and right.





Above, the Eichleresque double-gable roof is most dramatically seen in this view of the front entry and carport. Facing, an Eames LCW and "Lincoln log" table from Target on the acid stained concrete floor.

plans, all of the glass, the indoor/outdoor feel," he says.

Zaikoski and Joe Barthlow, a fellow modern architecture junky who moderates the lottalivin.com message board, have cataloged roughly 90 percent of the Portland Rummers, some 250 to 300 by their count. Barthlow interviewed Bob Rummer, then 78, in 2003 when researching the homes. Rummer designs were obviously influenced heavily by Joseph Eichler's houses, and Barthlow has noted 16 Claude Oakland or Jones & Emmons floor plans that have only slight modifications. The Rummer tract homes sold in the \$20,000–\$32,000 range initially.

"I see Rummers as Eichler cousins; their quality is great," Barthlow says. "There is a lot of attention to detail, like the aggregate floor in the atrium. Rummer also experimented with



In our
Rummer,
you still
feel a sense
of natural light

plastic pipes in the radiant flooring, a technology that Boeing had developed; at the time it was pretty cutting edge.

"He really loved his houses; they were like his babies," he adds. "Rummer enjoyed building homes for the people and has a lot of pride and sense of accomplishment for what he did."

From the Floor Up

Miller, a manufacturer's rep, and Cho weren't banking on another renovation project, yet the house needed some TLC, beginning with removal of the industrial carpet on the floor. "Our first thought was geometric, matte black tile, but the bid for just the living and dining room was \$15,000," Cho says. "I next envisioned a pristine, industrial gray floor, and the cement guy said that would be really hard to do and he'd need to lay down a



Before and after views of the Rummer kitchen show what the homeowners did with IKEA cabinets and counters and higher end appliances: a Dacor oven and microwave, Fisher & Paykel cooktop, Bosch dishwasher and Price Pfister faucet. The KitchenAid refrigerator sits where the original walk-in pantry was behind the white door, and a replacement pantry cupboard was installed opposite the oven (off camera). The orange couch in the family room is from Hip in Portland. Facing, the 1" backsplash ceramic tile with a metallic wrap is from Pratt & Larsen, the bar stools from Kitchen Kaboodle and the media center is IKEA.



Before

BEFORE PHOTOS COURTESY THE HOMEOWNERS

new coat. That's when we decided to look at options for our existing floor."

That option took the form of an acid stain treatment from Ultra Quiet Floors, who primarily do commercial spaces. The homeowners say the process included cleaning, sanding and buffing the existing floor, followed by putting down a green stain, then a chemical inhibitor. The floor was then flooded with water, a black stain applied on top in select areas, then vacuuming up the water, more inhibitor, and lastly a sealer and wax. The resulting floor is unique and very easy to care for, Cho reports.

The couple knew they wanted to change the almost-original kitchen as well as the painted paneling. "Unfortunately, the year they built this Rummer they switched to inexpensive 4' x 8' particle board paneling, which 38 years later was in poor shape," Miller notes.

Joe Barthlow explains: "Rummer was building at a time that it was tough to get good quality Philippine mahogany paneling, so he had to compromise with what the market allowed, a lesser-quality paneling in the mid-'60s. At the time, it was probably a pretty good choice."

One thing led to another, and the homeowners ended up gutting much of the house with the help of their son, Nathan, then 7. "We saw the potential here," Miller says about the floor and how great it looked with some of their new modernist furniture in place. "It really inspired us to go for it."

Meeting the Schedule

Going for it in the kitchen included a trip to IKEA in Seattle. Looking at the calendar, five to six months for custom cabinetry wasn't going to fly—you need to have a kitchen during the Portland rainy season they say. Their previous remodels had given them skills and experience with what was extraneous to their lifestyle—thumbs up on a pantry, thumbs down on double ovens. But Brian was dubious about IKEA's quality.

"I didn't even want to talk about it," he says. "I thought they would only last a year, and I was going to be frustrated with them. Sandra made me go up there to look at it, and I thought it actually looked pretty good. I started beating the hell out of the [showroom] cabinets and I realized they're rather ingeniously designed."

With granite or marble counters in their past kitchens, the couple was drawn to something equally hefty for this setting. "I was interested in cement, but wanted to start someplace small, like in our bathroom, because I hadn't done it before," Miller says. "But I figured it would be about two years until I could get time for kitchen counters, so we needed something short term."

During





The homeowners opened up the living room windows to take advantage of as much natural light as possible. The Eames chairs and Noguchi table are from Design Within Reach, and the gray chair from Dania.



Before

They chose green laminate counters, also from IKEA, that have held up so far. At less than \$400, they're tempted to buy more to keep for possible future replacement. Ditto the cabinet fronts: "With IKEA products we could switch out the look of our kitchen by getting new doors in the future," Cho notes. By saving big bucks on case goods, they were able to splurge a little more on appliances, such as the Dacor oven and microwave.

That's More Like It

When Cho and Miller were introduced to Eichlers, something clicked for them about the minimalist aesthetic. "We found that every house we moved into dictated how you furnished it. We'd look around and think it looked nice but not really like us," Cho comments. "Once we found Eichlers, that was it. They are in tune with a different aesthetic."

They chose some iconic pieces—a Noguchi table and Eames chairs—but didn't want the house to feel retro. "I wanted things to look simple and have pieces that we appreciated for their form, not necessarily for who made it," Cho says. "We bought based on that, and our taste is fairly eclectic; I'm sure over the years it will evolve further."

Sofas for the living and family rooms were the hardest to find. Miller estimates they looked at 1,000. "Usually sitting on it or something about the lines bothered me," he says. "Sandra takes the lead on these things and I become the filter. Filter is a very powerful position: you're just sitting there saying 'No' all the time. I was driving her nuts: she'd find this great couch and I'd say, 'I hate it.'"

"One of the challenges was finding interesting pieces that didn't take away from the structure of the house so the focus was still on the form," Cho chimes in. "A lot of the sectionals were gargantuan pieces; they might have been comfortable but weren't right for an Eichler or a Rummer." The ultimate winners came from Dania and Hip.

Cho also sees similarities between their Rummer and traditional Korean architecture. "It's shaped very similarly to an old compound home. The last house I remember living in in Korea was significantly bigger than this because it was a multi-family dwelling, but the footprint is very similar—every room looked into a courtyard, which was where the kids played and where there was a fountain."

Their Modernist house has actually led to lifestyle changes for the couple and their young son. "We found in a 4,000-square-foot house you tend to live in a cluster of rooms," Cho says, noting that two rooms in their Mediterranean never were fully furnished or used much. "It just encourages over consumption. Here we're pared down to the essentials: one set of dishes instead of two or three, and less space to maintain and clean, although it's pretty un-American to downsize. This is a house where we envision using every square inch." ✱



“Rummer really loved his houses; they were like his babies.”

COLUMBUS, GA.

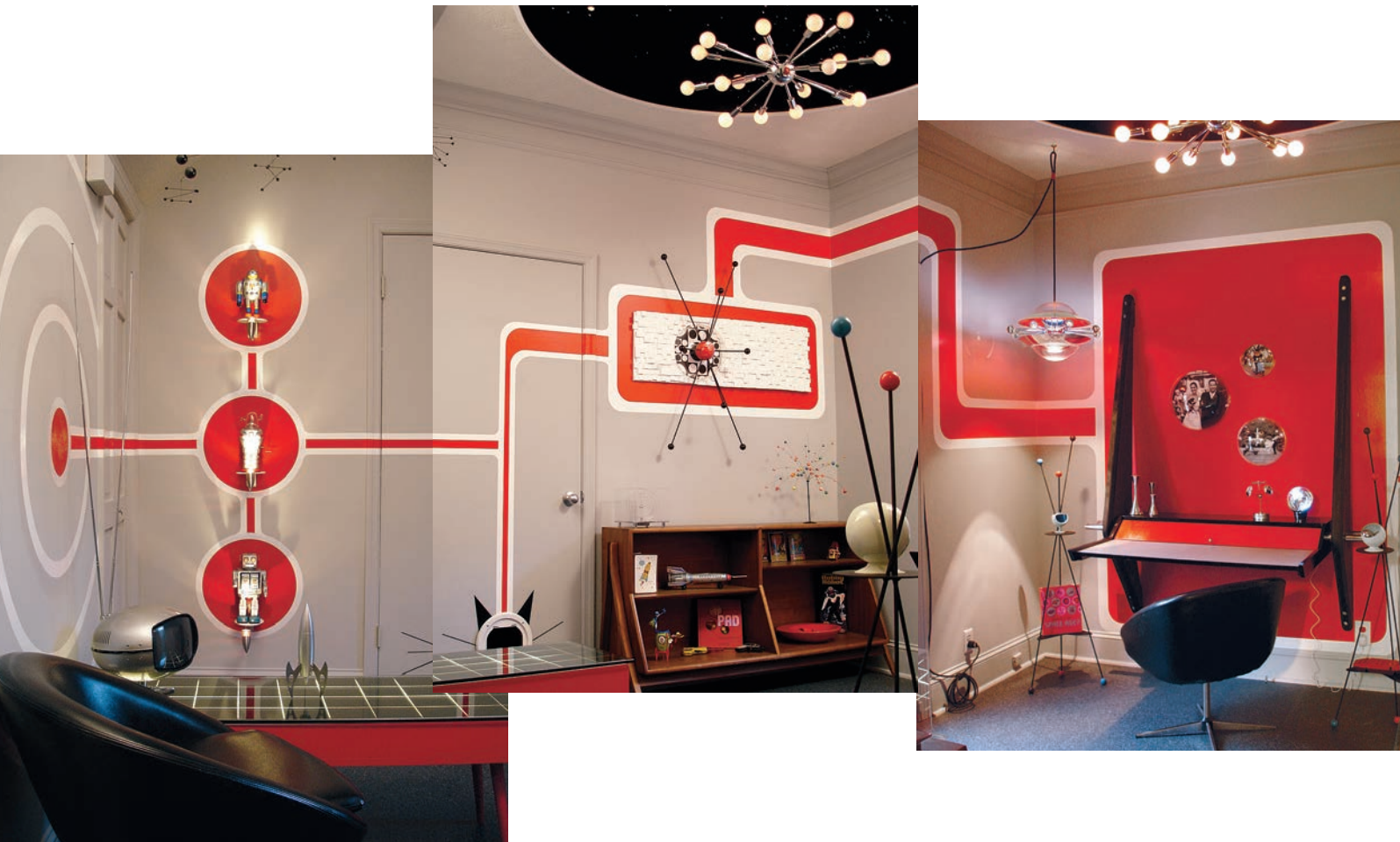


text and photography Lance Tankersley

The fact that our house was built in 1917 blesses it with details like heart pine floors, 11' ceilings, large windows and doors, and oversize moldings.

This really lends itself to any style of interior design, so my wife and I take an eclectic approach to decorating that utilizes the best elements from the '30s through the '60s—the heart of the modern movement in America. Each room uses a palette of red, black, white, aqua and yellow.

My office, which I call the “Verv Room,” was pretty much a blank slate with blue carpeting and white walls. My wife, Ann, had designed the interior of the rest of our house



and her talent added to the success of the Verv Room as well. A Verv desk, Tron coffee table and Verv lamp were already in the room when Ann and I sat down to brainstorm.

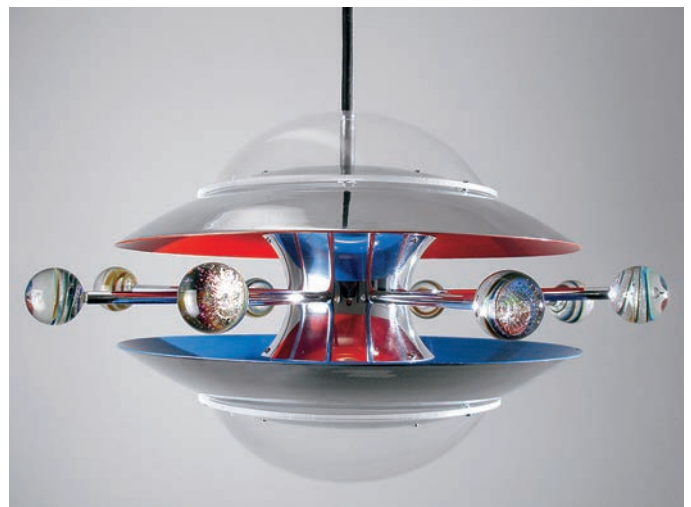
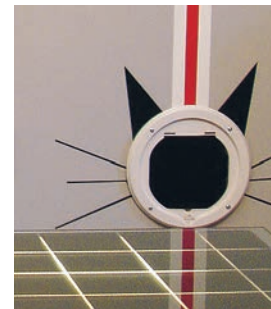
We sketched out and painted a mod wall mural, and I designed and built a sputnik-style wall sculpture to accent it. We added a vintage midcentury shelf unit, and installed lighted stands to display some of my replica tin robots. The kitty door on the closet was all Ann's idea: she is an interior designer with a great eye for retro atomic style, and had mentioned it would be cool to have a round cat door with whiskers.

The main influences for my furniture and lighting designs come from the MCM and space age eras, as well as from science fiction films. The Tron coffee table resembles the glowing grid pattern that the light cycles drove on in that movie, and the Verv desk looks like a spaceship has just docked on the wall, with its vertical wing-like structure and floating appearance.

I have often thought of the Verv lamp as being the offspring of a sputnik lamp (ca. 1950) and the VP Globe (Vernon Panton 1969). It took about four or five months from design to finish. After sketching out the design, I translated that into a 3D model on the computer. That way I could rotate the piece and see it from all angles in order to get the proportions right. Once that was done, I made a schematic drawing with all the measurements of each of the pieces.

I did about two months of research to find out how to make each element. I found a metal spinner in Washington State to fabricate the aluminum reflectors, a glass artist in Oregon to hand make the glass orbs, and a blown acrylic company in Canada for the clear domes. Other items like LEDs, wiring, plugs, etc., came from electronic stores. There was a lot of thought put into how to fit the parts together and wire the eight LEDs in conjunction with the 40-watt incandescent. But after a lot of planning and trial and error, the Verv Lamp is a real conversation piece, even during the day.

Ann and I are drawn to elements from various decades of the American 20th century due to their ingenuity, fresh modern shapes and colors, and playful sense of style. Being products of 20th century America ourselves, we really take pride in surrounding ourselves with those things that made our century special and unique. ❄️



Resources page 87

Thanks to Dave and Marcia Boule for the "Open House" ephemera.

my 2 cents

Well, we finally made the leap. As Jim says in his publisher's letter, it's been quite a frenetic few months, but here we are, ensconced in our new home.

Although we both grew up in postwar ranch houses, for 20 years our bungalow in California held great appeal. But with the birth of Atomic Ranch, we always felt a bit like imposters when readers would ask us what kind of midcentury collections we had and were we in a Modernist home. Like lots of you, we appreciate a wide variety of architecture and had many a conversation about what kind of house we'd look for in Portland.

Jim was all for a ranch, but I wasn't sure if a "regular" ranch in the suburbs would do it for me. And Portland has tons of bungalows—maybe we'd continue to write about ranches but go home to a cozy Tudor cottage or PDX Foursquare.

A brief flirtation with a '60s Rummer led us to conclude that market was too hot for out of state buyers to compete in—10 offers were rumored to come in the first day. But a funny

thing happened as we trekked through probably 20 houses in two days with Alyssa Starelli, our stalwart realtor. We fell in love with a "standard" ranch.

Some of our infatuation is due to the movie-set-perfect location—Eastmoreland, an elm and maple tree-shaded neighborhood in southeast Portland—but it's the house as well. The 1952 French brick (or so we've been told) home has a multifaceted hip roof, beautiful blond hardwood floors and textured ceilings. The vintage kitchen that the sellers backdated to the bungalow era is charming if not entirely authentic, and there's a full basement for our copious



stuff. Doesn't sound all that exciting or atomic, does it? But wait 'til you see the windows.

Floor-to-ceiling plate glass lines two walls of the living room, and shorter versions continue into the dining room. As the parade of workmen in our first weeks said, "Wow."

Just like in a junior high school clique, we've seen a hierarchy established when it comes to furnishings and architecture. Eichlers, Alexanders, Rummers, Strengs, anything Googiesque = very cool. Cliff Mays, Lustrons and other more traditional styles with some Modernist features = pretty cool. Colonial ranches, stucco tract boxes and other vernacular forms = puleez ...

As we get to know the house, furnish it and figure out what to do with the landscaping, we'll be featuring it in the magazine pages. For those of you in similar traditional postwar homes, hopefully we'll give you additional good ideas. Maybe others won't be convinced that a Prairie School-influenced brick ranch has just as much merit as your favorite killer '60s contemporary. But to my way of thinking, it *is* so cool.

Michelle Gringeri-Brown
Editor

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