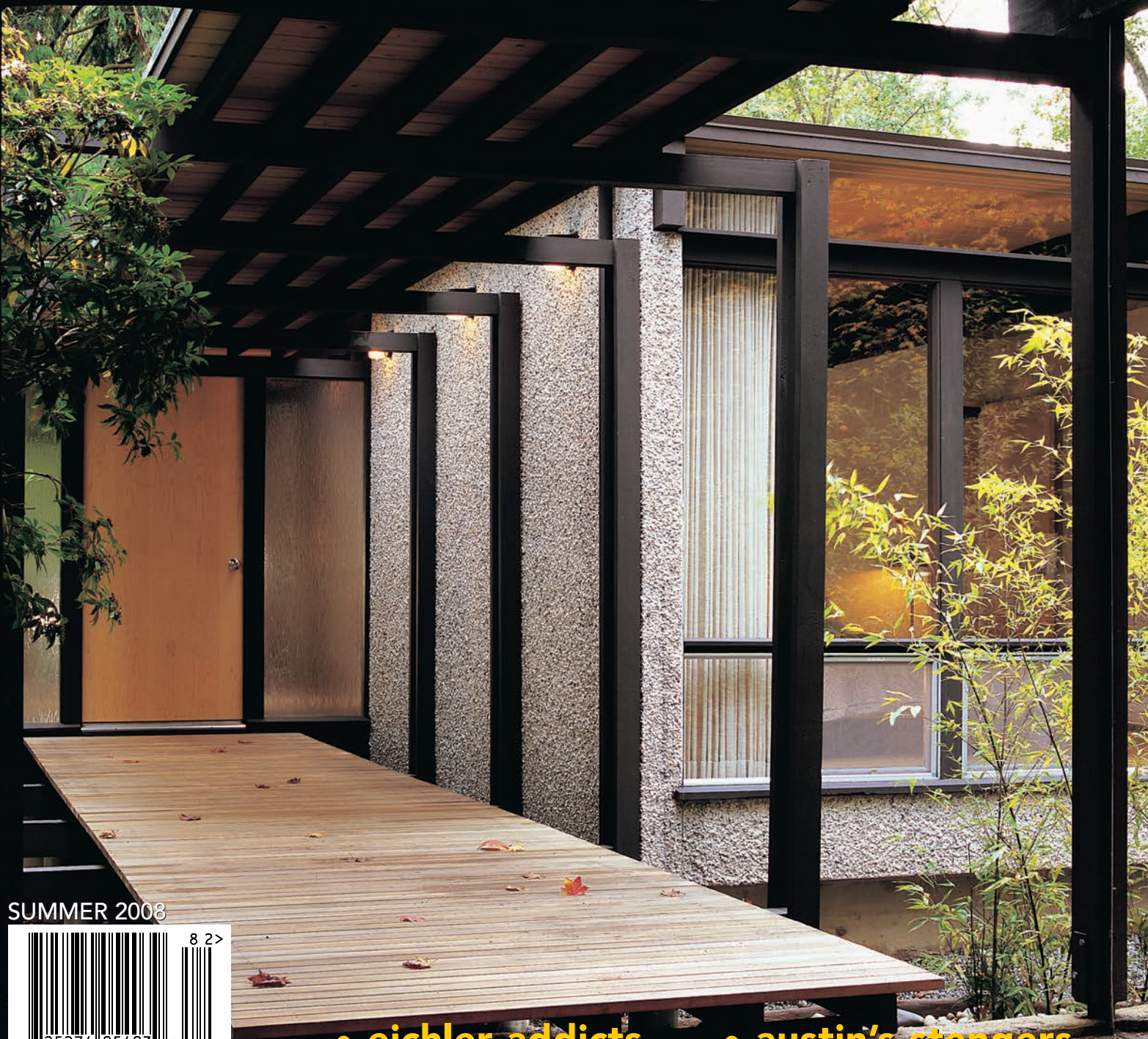


atomic ranch

MIDCENTURY MARVELS



SUMMER 2008



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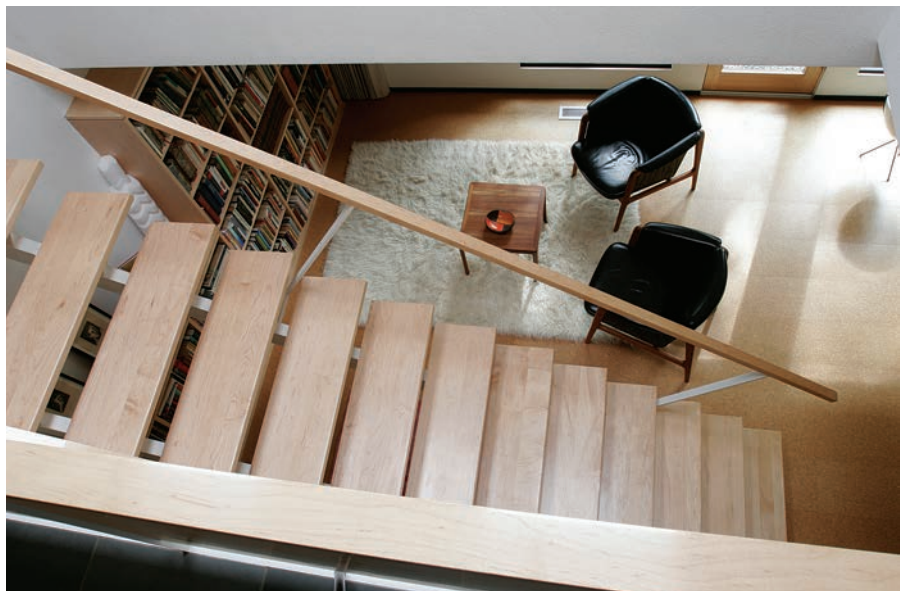
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A sheltering wooden bridge leads from the carport over a Japanese-inspired stream of river rocks to the front door of this 1961 Seattle modernist home. Designed by Ralph Anderson, it has a Marblecrete exterior surface—stucco with marble fragments—more typically seen on commercial buildings. The homeowners have painstakingly stripped it to its essence and upgraded the finishes throughout. Story page 70.

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atomic ranch®

MIDCENTURY MARVELS

Publisher

Jim Brown

Editor

Michelle Gringeri-Brown

Art Director

Nancy Anderson

Advertising Design

Carol Flores

Advertising Manager

Christina Walker

Logo Design

John Skelton

Editorial Assistant

Cheyenne Wortham

Web Design

Josh Tackitt

Copy Editor

Vickere Murphy

Advertising Dept.

503.297.5605

atomicranchadvertising@comcast.net

Publishing Office

3125 SE Rex St.

Portland, OR 97202-8573

503.771.4171 p 503.771.4172 f

editor@atomic-ranch.com

atomic-ranch.com

Subscriptions & Address Changes:

Atomic Ranch, PO Box 9624, Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33310-9624

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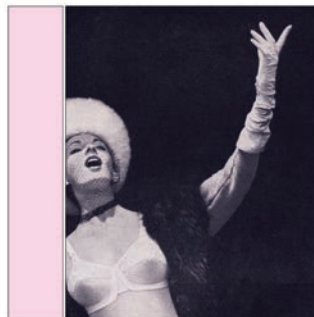
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meanwhile... back at the ranch

A

The saga of my zombie exploration and the grisly aftermath.

confession: I don't even like rum—I'm more of a whiskey guy. On a personal level, whiskey reminds me of family Xmases long ago, when a tolerant grandparent or uncle would pour me a whiskey and 7. The sensory cues of smell and flavor transport me back to the mid-'50s and I find it very comforting. My interest in rum is a late-life, almost intellectual pursuit, sparked by Beachbum Berry's *Sippin' Safari* book. I've had several zombies at tiki-themed bars and I was completely unimpressed; I was happy to read that the Beachbum also thought most currently available zombies were insipid. To me, rum almost elicits a gag reflex, recalling in equal parts rotting vegetation and visits to the school nurse's office.

So it was the curiosity of trying to understand everyone else's interest in tropical drinks that drove me to my investigation, plus the challenge of following the recipe *exactly*. Three brands of rum, the juice of white (not ruby red) grapefruit mixed with cinnamon syrup, Herbsaint, and what the hell is falernum? And not just any three rums, no, Donn the Beachcomber used specific rums for the layers of flavor, aroma and kick that each would impart to the finished drink. Some are no longer available, so I relied on the Beachbum's recommended substitutes.

I devoted several hours to pouring over the book and index, assembling all the 11 stipulated ingredients. Thanks to the Internet, I found everything but easily spent more than \$100. Our editorial assistant even provided real absinthe (all you need is 1/8 teaspoon) instead of Herbsaint. Finally the day came to mix

the drink—fittingly I chose Super Bowl XLII as my backdrop. Another confession: I enjoy the Super Bowl extravaganza as much as I used to enjoy rum, so the event was just an excuse to drink.

I followed the recipe precisely and poured the drink and partook of it—and it was good. It was so good, in fact, that all former revulsion to rum was banished. There were so many layers of flavors that swirled through my palate—cinnamon, ginger, anise, rum, tart lime and brown sugar syrup—it was a fantastic drink and worthy of the surrounding mythology. With all the ingredients I had amassed, I started thinking about who I could introduce to this drink. Then I made a crucial mistake.

As has occurred before (you'd think I would have learned by now), I decided that if one zombie tasted so good, it would be a terrific idea to mix a second zombie. There is an excellent reason why Donn the Beachcomber stipulated an absolute maximum of two zombies per customer—beyond making the forbidden more alluring; two—or in my case, 1 1/4 zombies—is the limit one should ingest before physical and mental health is impaired. At this point in my life I never anticipated revisiting the college whirly, but I'm here to report that keeping one foot on the floor while lying back in a stupor in my Lamino chair remains a vital hurl-avoidance strategy. It's an excellent drink (note the singular noun) and a great trip back to the '50s.

Jim Brown, Publisher



How we partied in '62; that's me cradling the 7Up.

modernwisdom

* I recently purchased a 2,021-square-foot duplex in a 36-unit modern condo complex in Houston called the Hillside. Built in 1959, it's a very unique project that grabbed the front page of the *Houston Chronicle* when it debuted, as well as a rumored mention in *Playboy* in the '60s due to the amount of "kept" women living here. Most floor plans are unique and feature floating staircases, large windows, butterfly rooflines and copper-hooded fireplaces.

The unit I bought has a kitchen with an unfortunate 1977 design. I am wondering if you have any resources



for Eichler-type kitchen plans. I'm particularly fond of Jon and Gayle's kitchen with the green laminate doors and grass cloth inlays featured in your book (pp. 74–75). I am chomping at the bit to rip out my doo-doo brown cabinets, '70s Kenmore wall oven and faux-tile vinyl floor. Any help or leads you could provide would be greatly appreciated!

Keep up the good work; with folks like you and Houston Mod, and preservationists like myself, we can re-ignite interest in midcentury architecture.

David Hille

Houston, Texas

Don't miss the virtually original kitchen in the San Jose Eichler featured on page 21 and another one coming in the winter issue. Renee Adelman's site (eichlerforsale.com/eichler_kitchen remodel) has some good examples (and some less so) of both original and remodeled kitchens.

We continually hear how hard it is to find a contractor who "gets" midcentury—see the next letter from a repeat contributor. And Monika Kafka, the owner of this issue's Eichler, had such a difficult time finding a

Modernist landscaper that she started her own business. Showing examples of what you're after in the kitchen may help, but you'll still have to be very proactive, clear that, no, Shaker is not what you're thinking of, and yes, you do want laminate, not granite counters. They may say they understand, but watch carefully ...

—ar editor

* I have to say I truly enjoyed your editor's note in the spring 2008 issue. I felt like a tourist who couldn't speak the native language as I dealt with replacing my entry doors (talking louder and gesturing wildly didn't seem to help). Each sales rep that came by would exclaim, "Why, these are new doors! Why would you want to replace them?" and then show me some lovely Craftsman-appropriate sample catalogs. Not being handy in the least when it comes to doors and windows, I settled on a solid slab door (which really means veneer on slab wood—who knew?). I found a painting contractor willing to stain and varnish it prior to installation, which again was no mean feat. Even the molding around the door was troublesome because I didn't want the standard colonial-brick molding—again leading to "Huhs?" from company reps.

I had no less than five different contractors at the house on installation day, all of whom were quite bemused as to why I would be replacing such nice, new doors. Happily the fiber-crap ones were sent off to one of the contractors' workshops, thereby keeping this an eco-conscious job.

Your daughter is lucky to have you guys on her team as she navigates the world of undoing the remuddling of her home.

Sandi Vincent

Portland, Ore.

* A friend recommended we check out your website today and I immediately subscribed! It's very exciting to see a magazine cover the things we're so passionate about. We own a 1952 ranch and have been working on it room by room; the inspiration, design, furniture, etc., is based on my grandparents' home built in '57. I even have the original black & white tile coffee table that was parked in their living room for decades.

Topics that would be of interest to us include

younger couples buying ranches to restore them to their earlier glory, garage sale furniture finds, the connection of midcentury homes and the rockabilly subculture and, most importantly, how classic cars look parked in the driveways of these ranches! I think that goes hand in hand; a lot of heads turn when passersby get a glimpse of our pink '60 Cadillac and '62 Mercury Meteor.

Jill Smith

Lodi, Ohio

* Your magazine has saved my psyche, as you'll see from my latest blog entry, "Embracing the ranch house vernacular," <http://langerdavis.blogspot.com>. My house is of no particular provenance, but your magazine and book have opened my eyes so that I can more clearly understand, and thus appreciate, all of the positive qualities of living in a ranch house.

So, thanks!

Caroline Langer Davis

Rockaway, N.J.

* My 1950 atomic ranch is an anomaly in Amarillo—there are maybe a dozen in this city of 200,000. Mine was designed and built by Dewey Hicks with a sunken living room, white stone fireplace wall with quarry tile hearth and picture windows across the front of the house. But the coolest part is the 500-square-foot concrete storm/bomb shelter with a staircase from the kitchen.

Since Amarillo is in tornado alley, and the Pantex plutonium "bomb factory" is outside of town, we have a *real* atomic ranch! During the late 1950s two other ranches were built on this block, both with lead-lined bomb shelters. Ours is now half media room, half art studio. (When we renovated it, we found the original floor with martini glasses on it, obviously once around a bar! I guess the rationale was, if we're gonna get sucked up by a tornado or blown to bits by the bomb factory, we might as well drink!)

I would find it interesting to read a feature story on what other atomic ranch owners are doing with their bomb shelters. Thanks for a great magazine!

Anne Amerson

Amarillo, Texas



Auggie, AR's beefcake boy

* Has the idea of Atomic Ranch T-shirts ever come up? For every good movement there has to be a corresponding T-shirt, right?

Todd

Grosse Pointe Woods, Mich.

Yup, we finally have them! Check out page 83, then go to atomic-ranch.com and click on the 'buy' page to wear your AR on your, um, chest, or whatever.

—ar editor

* Considering the recent interest in Lustron homes, I am wondering at the number of owners whose remarks always seem to center on the homes being in wonderful shape. I know of at least one Lustron in the Monroeville suburb of Pittsburgh that is absolutely falling apart—and I mean that in the literal sense: rusted walls, panels coming off, a sorry eyesore.

Is this a rarity among Lustrons, or have we heard only of the homes that are still in great shape? Has anyone else out there come across a Lustron that is coming apart at the seams, or is this the only one?

Joseph Benedetto

Pittsburgh, Penn.

Lustron enthusiast Michael O'Neal replies: As with any house—be it wood, brick or metal—the people that

morewisdom

live there are usually the ones that either make the house last or fall apart. I feel that most of the Lustron homes that are in disrepair were at one time rental properties. Owners who have lived in their homes since they were erected keep them looking ship-shape and are proud to live in an architectural marvel.

When my wife and I moved into our own Lustron, we were only the third owners. It was never a rental and you could tell by the way the house had been kept up. I have seen Lustrons that look as if they are on their last leg, and I've seen some that look like they just came off the showroom floor!

Lustrons may show damage more clearly because replacement parts are so hard to come by. If you should chip the porcelain enamel away from the metal panel, this would start to rust over time. Another problem is the eave spouts: they seem to leak at the seams on some Lustrons and that leads to a rust spot forming under the leak. But overall, I would have to say it all falls on the individual who is in charge of keeping the Lustron up. If they let it go for several years, some things might be unrepairable.

✱ I love everything about midcentury homes but the prices. I watched Bravo's show about the Parker Hotel in Palms Springs—the decor is fabulous. I did some online research about various midcentury-style hotels. There seem to be several in Palm Springs and I also found one in Scottsdale.

For those of us who cannot afford to live the dream, a piece on these hotels and motels around the country would be really appreciated. I could afford to return to the 1950s for one or two nights.

Shireen Ray

Online

✱ Atomic Ranch has become a favorite periodical since our purchase of a 1960 ranch home in Ludington, Mich., four years ago. My daughter, Cara Counard, her fiancée, Brett Sowers, and my granddaughters, Claire and Elaine Simon, enjoyed creating a midcentury modern gingerbread house during the holidays, loosely based on our 1960s ranch.

As we restore our home back to its original condi-

tion, we eagerly await each issue, looking for details of other loved midcentury ranch homes.

Valerie Counard

Grosse Ile, Mich.



The 80 zillion of you who received a catalog from Red Envelope last holiday season will recognize the similar, very cool but pricey Modernist gingerbread house they were marketing.

—ar editor

✱ I thought you'd like to know about this detailed site for the Triangle area of North Carolina. Listed are 35-plus architects and several hundred photos—many, many resources to educate people on local Modernist houses. I've also included some personal favorites outside the Triangle. To my surprise, several architects wrote in wanting to be included. I've even received plans for a few houses currently in development. Very exciting!

George Smart

trianglemodernisthouses.com

Correction:

We regret that the photo credit for "From Overgrown to Awesome: Modernist Landscaping in a Mediterranean Climate" in spring 2008 was misspelled; elliottjohnson.com is the correct URL.



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Do you know the way

A couple destined
to live in an
Eichler neighborhood
—twice.

text Michelle Gringeri-Brown
photography Jim Brown

to San Jose?



“We were told we had this modern furniture that would fit perfectly into a California lifestyle,” says Monika Kafka about her move to the Bay Area in 1997. She and husband Tom Borsellino were intent on finding a Modernist home during their relocation from Chicago, so they rented an apartment and put themselves on the watch list for a San Jose Eichler. It was a booming real estate market and they were always overbid by \$50,000 to \$60,000. But finally, a year later, they landed a great Eichler in the Fairglen tract through Realtor Jerry Ditto, the author of *Eichler Homes: Design for Living*. The couple renovated and lived happily in that house for six years until work took them back to suburban Chicago. “We moved back thinking we’d find a Keck + Keck or some other modern house,” says Borsellino, “but most were built in the early ’50s, are tiny and are on big lots—



The couple furnished with a mix of vintage, modern reissues and inexpensive kid-proof furniture from IKEA. The George Nelson/Herman Miller table with the lazy Susan in the center was bought on eBay, as was the Saarinen plastic-back side chairs. Overhead is an IKEA pendant lamp and on the wall are reissued Nelson clocks. A vintage find was the Russel Wright bar cart, bought at a Winnetka modernism show. Modern One in Los Angeles made the turquoise couch, and the suede rug is another IKEA purchase.

“Instead of a brand-new kitchen, we did a \$9,000 makeover—new counters, a sink from the U.K., flooring, paint, a sexy faucet, new fridge and accessories,” says Monika Kafka. Three years after being photographed, the couple has a Miele oven in place and is getting bids on re-creating the missing “flying coffin” cabinet over the cooktop island. The ball lights are new versions from IKEA.



they are a developer's dream. They were being sold and torn down without ever going on the market."

They missed other aspects of their California sojourn, too. "The house we rented in Chicago was over 3,000 square feet, yet it felt smaller than our Eichler; it just wasn't thought out well," he explains. "Plus we missed having people to talk to with the same interests; none of our Chicago friends could understand why we were so caught up in finding a house we actually liked. 'It's big, it's new, buy it!' they'd say about the houses we'd look at."

When they could, it was back to Northern California for the Kafka-Borsellinos.

Homing Pigeons

They focused on the same neighborhood they'd left a year before and credit their tenacious Realtor, Loni

Nagwani [whose own home will be featured in winter 2008], with helping them land their second Eichler, a 1960 four-bedroom, two-bath flat-roof model. "All the neighbors already knew us and knew we would do good things with the house," Kafka says. "Our first Eichler was a different, sexier model, as Tom calls it. It was more for single people who entertain. This house is definitely kid-friendly—the living and dining areas are small but the family room is big."

That was important because by now the household included Bella and Ben, who were 18 months and six weeks old when their parents moved back to San Jose. Borsellino had come out house hunting, keeping his wife in the loop via e-mailed photos. "Tom saw the house and he said, 'I'm buying it,' " the Czech-born Kafka recounts. "He sent me pictures and I said, OK, fine."



The living room in this Eichler model is cozy but not claustrophobic with its wall of glass, strip windows and view into the atrium. A budget-conscious Karlstad sofa from IKEA, two vintage armchairs, an Arco lamp from Design Within Reach and a George Nelson bench from Herman Miller used for a coffee table sit on a Milano rug from Trans-Ocean.

"On July 12, we arrived and there were people going in and out, not using the doors but through the walls of my son's room. I'm like, 'What did you do!' Tom had said, 'It needs some fixing.' I stood in front of the house and I said, 'I am not moving into this shit hole.' We stayed in a residential hotel for three weeks."

And so began a major renovation.

Holy Crap

When Borsellino toured the house, there was carpet throughout and outdated Asian-theme decor; an escrow inspection revealed that about 40% of the house had ter-



mite damage. The original kitchen cabinets were painted a sickly harvest gold, and his first inclination was to rip them out. Then there were the bathrooms.

“Joseph Eichler didn’t think out the baths in these houses,” Borsellino says, “so I have no problem making changes. They ran the same mahogany paneling from the bedroom into the bath and tiled right on top of it. Of course they were all full of dry rot and termite damage by now.”

On the plus side, the roof was only four years old. But as the crew who began the work while the couple was birthing babies and packing for a cross-country move was

to discover, this reno was a Pandora’s Box: It turned out that 95% of the walls, posts or beams had termite or water damage.

“The guys working on it could not believe that the house was still standing,” Kafka relates. “The tar and gravel roof was another surprise: We thought we could live with it but because there was no insulation, it would be 105° outside and 108° inside.” Switching to an insulating foam roof allowed them to install additional lighting and operable skylights, and cool off the house 15 to 20 degrees.

In addition to rotted structural members, 90 percent of the grooved Eichler siding needed replacing and, while the



Bella's bedroom is filled with affordable furniture from IKEA. The bed, hanging storage tube and orange swivel ball chair are all from there, while the “Organic” graphics on the beam are from blik and the carpet squares from FLOR. “IKEA is a godsend for parents,” says Bella’s dad. “You don’t feel so bad buying it and having the kids ruin it.” The Offi table and chairs and the orange plastic Tiki Stool are both available from modernseed.com.





Accessible from the atrium, the office has a George Nelson Executive Desk and framed photos of model-turned-mom Monika Kafka. The grass cloth-covered closet doors are original.

Opposite, left: "I thought this was our one chance to add a little whimsy for the kids since I don't have a slavish devotion to preserving Eichler bathrooms," Tom Borsellino says. "We had real trouble with the floor: we didn't want to use the same VCT tile as in the rest of the house because it needs to be waxed. We considered slate but it was too dark and we looked at rubber; then I thought of diamond plate. It's waterproof and offers great traction for the kids, and the ridges are low so it's nice on bare feet with the radiant heat. I make these decisions based on looks, but it ended up being very cheap—\$200." Special touches (some unseen) include an orange rubber shower fixture from Agape, quartz Silestone counters, and a porthole window from England.

Taking the original mosaic tile shower floor as a design cue, the master bath was tiled top to bottom and brightened with a skylight. This Eichler version has a mirror and double sinks in the dressing area open to the bedroom, while the toilet and shower are in a separate, albeit small, room.



walls were open, the couple opted to insulate and ground the electrical system. Inside, some of the original mahogany paneling had faded or was beyond repair; Borsellino used a combination of Watco Golden Oak and Fruitwood stains with some orange universal colorant mixed in to match new pieces to the existing. In the kitchen, they painted the cabinets black and found they liked the room just fine.

What Budget?

The renovation of their first Eichler was a dress rehearsal for this project. They put in the same flooring—\$4,000 worth of white, speckled Armstrong vinyl composite tile instead of trendier slate or bamboo—and once again added skylights in the hall to bring in more light. While Borsellino commuted to San Francisco daily for work and oversaw remotely, Kafka was fully in the trenches.

“For the first three months three to five guys were here every day. I was making margaritas, I was doing lunches; it’s so hard to find good workers, so when you do, you need to keep them,” she says.

The master bath had been gutted when the family arrived from Chicago, so the ugly but functional kids’ bath served their needs during the months of remodeling. It turned out to have a leaking shower that necessitated a



complete renovation as well, adding another unanticipated leg to the project. Then there was the landscaping.

"Monika wanted an irregular walkway and I always wanted a planter box filled with horsetail," Borsellino explains. "We rebuilt the crumbling block planter that was originally on the house, and since you shot it, replaced the missing lattice over the front beams.

"We really wrestled with the back yard. It went through a couple of different iterations, with the patio in different areas, but it started with the basic premise of having a couple of swings for the kids. The arbor location is based on our last house; it had trees in the middle of the very shallow and wide yard," he continues. "We wanted something vertical to draw the eye up, and decided instead of buying a swing set, we'd build an arbor with something



A variety of textures and surfaces adds interest and multiple usages to the shallow but wide back yard, which accommodates kids—Ben, 4, and Bella, 6, as well as whippet Jet and his new companion, Reno. Kafka designed the fountain, made from an old planter and a blue globe.

Above: Gravel and hollow cement spheres fill a shady section next to the driveway. Left: The trellis that was recently added to the restored front facade.

Tom Borsellino

coming off it to put the swings on. An added bonus is the overhead awning to shade the sun.”

Kafka has since launched a landscape business, in part due to their own challenges, as Borsellino explains. “We tried to find a designer, but no one knows modern; ‘modern landscape architect’ in the suburbs is an oxymoron. I went through magazines looking for landscape architects and rarely did they call me back; if they did, it was a receptionist who would politely tell me that they only do commercial projects. We ended up having to design it ourselves. We had big, fanciful ideas, but not the pocketbook.”

Nothing Like It

Despite the months of hard work, one senses the Kafka-Borsellino clan is happy as clams on their familiar turf. “I

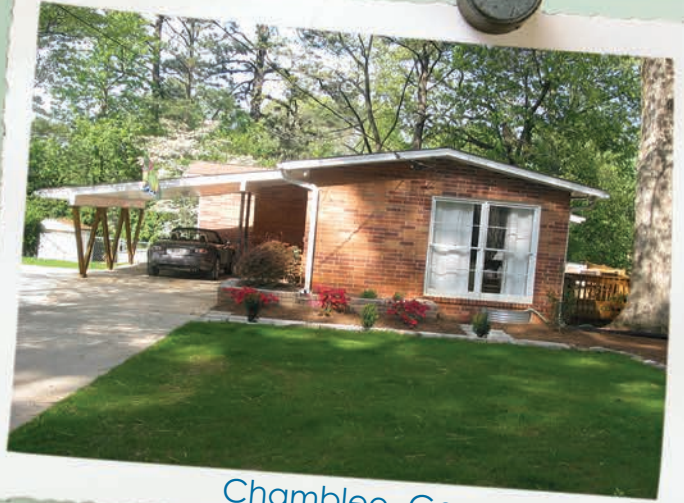
suffer through a 2 1/2 hour commute every day. But the neighborhood is cool enough, with cool people who like Eichlers and appreciate the fact that these houses were designed for living, that we’ve moved here twice now,” Borsellino says.

“We never looked at anything but Eichlers—they’re a brand-name collectible house now. The atrium gives you such a pleasant surprise when you walk in and it helps light up the rest of the house. The back wall of glass lets in the California weather and allows you to watch your kids and make the most of a small lot. And Eichler neighborhoods tend to be progressive, politically, which was attractive,” he sums up. “Here we have French and Indian and Vietnamese and Russian and Czech neighbors. We just feel more at home.” ●

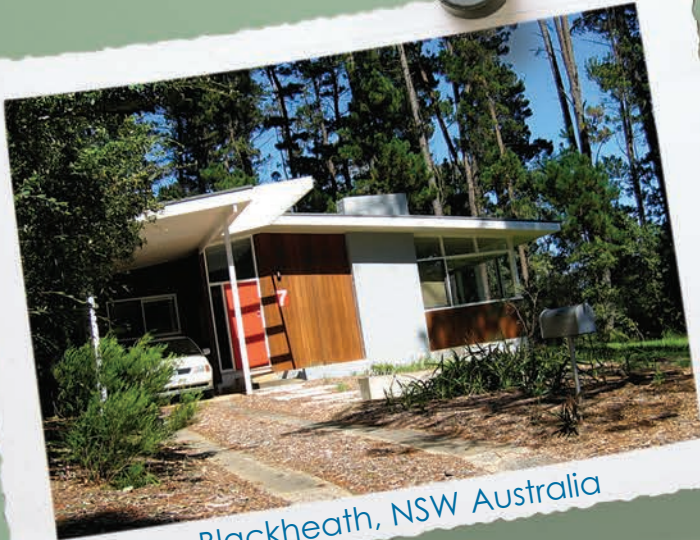




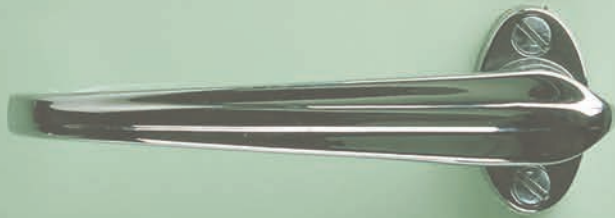
Denver, Colo.



Chamblee, Ga.



Blackheath, NSW Australia



home page

Denver, Colo.

Over the last three years, we have transformed the once neglected and overgrown yard of our Krisana Park home into a beautiful outdoor living area. A new fence, sod, extended concrete patio, annuals and some Asian influences have transformed the back yard completely. In front, the driveway was enlarged to accommodate two cars, and rocks and xeriscaping border the lawn. We removed a tree that was cracking the driveway and replaced it with aspens that will grow up, not out. This amazing community is really working hard to preserve the style and architecture of the houses that we all love.

Sherri Swann & Jorge Baez

Chamblee, Ga.

When I first saw this house, I really felt it had potential; my wife hated it. We have cleaned up, redone and added to the place, and now we both love it. Located in a neighborhood called Huntley Hills, about 25% of the 750 homes were built in this style from 1959 to 1963. The house is larger than it looks, as it has a downstairs and an addition on the back. We try to match any projects with the design of the house, while still mixing in our own ideas, like the supports for the carport. As with any other older house, there is always something to do and that is half the fun.

Craig Doyon & Ashley Dupuy

Blackheath, NSW Australia

John Pinter, a young Hungarian architect, designed this holiday house in the Blue Mountains, two hours' drive from Sydney. Completed in 1963, it remains virtually unchanged, with the exception of replacing the asbestos roof and gutters, a little tweaking to the bathroom and a recent coat of paint. The simple interior layout is augmented by perfect solar orientation, large areas of glazing, raked ceilings and a few '60s highlights, including a built-in drinks cabinet and pink Formica in the kitchen. It still is the perfect weekender!

Pip Bowling & David Laybourn

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 9.



channeling dash



text Michelle Gringeri-Brown

photography Jim Brown

Before starting architecture school in 1996, Dean Hight went on a road trip, visiting as many Frank Lloyd Wright structures as he could from Michigan to Arizona. “I like his sense of organic architecture, his low-slung roofs, the natural materials, the way the houses are sited,” says the 40-year-old home designer. “I can appreciate the Prairie style, but I really relate to the Usonians.”

Hight’s own 1957 split-level in Littleton, Colo., might not immediately bring Wright’s work to mind, but the designer contends they’re all of a piece. “This house was born out of that Usonian period, which began in the 1930s. A lot of Wright’s Usonian houses are in suburban neighborhoods or were originally out in natural settings that required a car; they were his idea of the ideal home for the United States. Stylistically they have low-slung or flat roofs, walls of glass, natural materials. They didn’t look anything like the tract houses of the ‘30s.”

Hight and his wife, Lisa Fournier, have lived in their home for more than 10 years and now share it with two sons, Daxton and Donovan. The couple first fell for midcentury after visiting a postwar home Fournier’s brother was working on in Kansas City. “We were both excited by the lines and the architecture,” she says. “We both wanted that kind of house, but we didn’t think Denver had any. We were ready to move from something that took so much time and effort, like

the Incredible(s) house

Previous spread: Daxton (in orange and black stripes) and Donovan run laps through the open floor plan. The painting of Carlos Santana is by Dean Hight and the large family portrait is Lisa Fournier's work.

our Victorian, into something that was spacious and had more air around it. I knew immediately that this was a great house."

After stumbling on to Arapaho Hills, a small midcentury tract near the Columbine Country Club, and looking at several homes that were for sale, they chose this one for its open floor plan and potential. There wasn't much in the way of original interior finishes left, with an almond laminate kitchen and painted-over lauan mahogany and wallpaper, but the general bones were nice, Hight explains.

They tore out carpeting on moving day and since then have upgraded the electrical system, painted inside and out, hung new birch slab doors customized with decorative copper detailing and installed built-ins. The dining room has a new grid window wall, and Hight designed trapezoid windows for the bedrooms; all of the fixed windows are now double paned. While Hight would have loved to do a total kitchen makeover, they settled for new concrete counters and replacing the cabinet doors and drawer fronts with maple, African padauk and oak for a self-proclaimed wabi-sabi aesthetic.

Hight also added on to a back deck and replaced rotted siding, choosing corrugated metal for some portions in a modern industrial nod. Outside, between the first- and second-floor bedrooms, where flat sand-texture asbestos panels were originally, Hight replaced the worn-out elements with distinctive frieze panels. "I was





Four bedrooms and two small baths nest in the gabled portion, while behind the metal handrail/mailbox, the homeowner-built birch front door opens into a small entryway leading to the kitchen and living room. Previously, the corner lot was mostly grass, but Dean Hight felt that wasn't right for the extreme high-altitude climate. "I've taken out 60 percent of the grass and put in perennials and native plants. Bluegrass is not native to Colorado," he says. Replacements include juniper, daylilies, lamb's ears and bark mulch.



While the two-story studio looms over the garage as seen from the side street, it is hidden from view on the front facade. Faux finishes and mixed materials give the addition textural interest.





The reverse angle shows Hight's melding of old and new: the Eichler-style paneling in the dining room (once the outside wall of a patio) repeats in the terracotta-colored exterior siding glimpsed through the new window. Hight's wall-hung cabinets and Fournier's two-men series of paintings give the room a gallery feeling. In the small living room, the brick fireplace wall, with its built-in shelves and seating, is balanced by the expanse of fixed windowpanes.

too into Wright at the time and modeled them off his Usonian and textile block houses," he says with perhaps a touch of chagrin. A skilled woodworker, he also designed and built an outdoor table, a desk and a coffee table for the family.

Despite the many improvements, an ongoing issue was the lack of studio space for Fournier, a 48-year-old former flight attendant turned working artist. In 2004 they decided to expand the house further. Originally 1,800 square feet with three bedrooms and two baths, in 1960 the owner converted the carport to a den, a side patio was enclosed to form the dining room and a garage was built at the back of the lot, adding 800 square feet to the living space.

"It was challenging to get a variance to expand the house because it had already been added on to," Hight explains. The new garage-cum-studio-workshop would encroach on the lot setback; ultimately an engineer had to sign off on the final two-story design, which was sunk into the ground slightly to help minimize its mass. Eichler-style siding was milled to match the material used on the 1960 addition. Today, the house is a robust 3,300 square feet, with four bedrooms, two baths and a studio with northern light up the stairs from the dining room.

"This house is very much about my husband," says Fournier good-naturedly. "The Victorian was more me, although I can live in almost any kind of house. Its colors were very rich and we did a lot of faux finishes, like marbling the columns. Each home lends itself to a different color palette, and our palettes match really well. My main contribution to this house has been textiles.

"Dean tried to honor the home for what it was while putting his own mark on it. He chooses the colors, and the lines and angles," she continues. "I'm more into





Hight refaced the kitchen cabinetry and saved a bundle, creating a custom-looking kitchen with new windows, concrete counters and hardware. The birch plywood facing the snack bar and wall behind the couch is new, since the original had long since been painted.

A vintage couch and armchair cohabitate with the homeowner-made coffee table and contemporary bar stools, dining table and chairs, and lighting. The graphic teacup artwork is by Fournier, while Hight painted the seascape over the sofa. As first built, the home ended at the doorway between the kitchen and dining room; two steps down (behind the vintage chair) is the den, formerly a carport.

architectural



details



From opposite, upper left, clockwise: An abstraction on Wright's design for the Ennis House, a 1924 concrete-block residence in Los Angeles, the decorative window on the fireplace wall lets in light but at the same time provides privacy.

Fournier's two-men series was inspired by papier-mâché characters she saw while visiting Germany. "They looked mysterious," she says. "I can put them in different situations and they're pure whimsy."

As seen from the kitchen, the birch slab door was customized with eight lights and faux copper detailing along the bottom.

Although most of the fireplace wall is in original condition, the horizontal band of brick had been painted by a previous owner. Hight gave the area a new face of cut glass tile.

Under the new grid of double pane windows in the dining room, corrugated metal cladding lends an industrial touch.

Hight designed the FLW-esque relief panels and graphic trellises on the front and rear facades.



function, while Dean has to have his style—but I can't point to anything in this house that I don't like. His taste is really good and he sees on a grand scale. He sees the whole thing done before it's even been started. I appreciate the space and the lines of this house so much; I'm more myself in this home."

Clyde Mannon, the retired builder of Arapaho Hills who lives nearby in Golden, partnered with developer Edward Hawkins on the tract. He confirms Hight's Wright connotation: "Eichler's homes were ones we always looked at, and Frank Lloyd Wright was always in our minds. I went through his place in Arizona; it was quite a concept," he said during an interview in 2005. Mannon remembers that the Fournier/Hight house was originally sold to an automobile racer from Sweden. He and other long-time residents have been a great source of information for the tract's close-knit

homeowners, who remain a creative bunch.

"There are lots of people here who are artists and graphic designers and architects. Original owners who are still in the neighborhood say they used to have 'martinis & bikinis parties,'" Fournier tells us before taking us down the street to see another home rife with potential. "We tend to have more margarita parties. But we have a common thread because we all value these homes." 🍹

For more on this home and other Denver midcenturies, we recommend *Atomic Ranch: Design Ideas for Stylish Ranch Homes*, as well as "Joe Average Gets Modern" in issue no. 15 and "Lofty A-Frame" in issue no. 17, all available at atomic-ranch.com. Resources page 95.

The quiet downstairs master bedroom has built-in storage behind the angled wall. A door at photo vantage leads out to the private back yard.



Ranch Roots: **Wright's Usonians**

text Michelle Gringeri-Brown

after Frank Lloyd Wright's Prairie School period, during a time when he had little in the way of paying commissions, he turned his attention to a populist home design he called "Usonian"—an acronym for United States of North America. Like the Prairie style, these homes had low roofs and open floor plans, and used natural materials, including brick, cement block and wood. But as models for frugality and affordability (they were first developed during the Depression) they usually had no



Wright's fondness for cantilevered elements carried through to his Usonian designs. The second-floor balcony cladding continues inside into the stairwell wall of the main living room (opposite, top). Large-scale trellises cover stepped terraces on both sides of the living room. "The openings are piercings through which you see fractures of exterior views," explains Site Manager Molly Murphy.

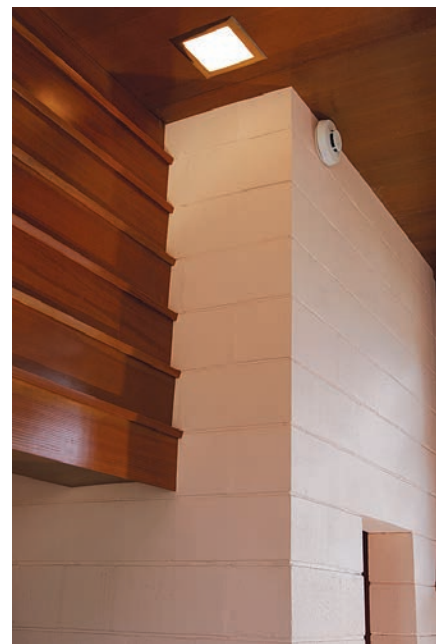


Entering from the carport through the double front door, the kitchen is to camera right, the door to the basement is behind the bent plywood chair and a short hall near the heater thermostat on the left leads to the master bedroom and bath. The 7' building grid is seen in the Cherokee Red (renamed by Wright "Taliesin Red") poured concrete floor; three of Wright's Gordon House tables hold a scale model and decorative items.



The library/music area of the main living room has a built-in sofa and shelving system below the signature Wright fretwork. This area is the first to have the woodwork's shellac finish cleaned.

An example of Wright's attention to detail is seen in the living room: many of the house elements employ a 15° edge bevel or, like the decorative wood balcony, each row steps back 15 degrees. Note how the rows line up with the mortar lines of the cement block and how the original block, seen above the doorway, has a different appearance than the new block below it. Still remaining in the restoration process is applying several coats of thick, sanded paint that Wright specified to fill in the naturally porous surface and vertical joints of the cement block.



Jim Brown (4)

basements or attics and were relatively unadorned.

Usonian houses were built slab on grade, and had radiant heating and open carports instead of garages. In the 1950s, Wright developed a modular version called Usonian Automatic, houses designed to be constructed by the buyer out of concrete block with reinforcing steel rods. In all, more than 100 Usonians were built.

America's most famous architect grew up and lived in Wisconsin in a complex he named Taliesin, a 600-acre site he continued to revise up until his death in 1959. Perhaps best known for such iconic works as Fallingwater, the Guggenheim Museum and the Johnson Wax Building, his Usonian houses are close cousins to postwar ranch houses, an opinion confirmed by Molly Murphy, site manager of the Gordon House in Silverton, Ore.

"The Usonian houses were revolutionary in their time and

have influenced modern houses of all sizes and prices since their creation," Murphy says. "The Gordon House is being restored and maintained to provide an example of the designs that changed the course of small house construction in America."

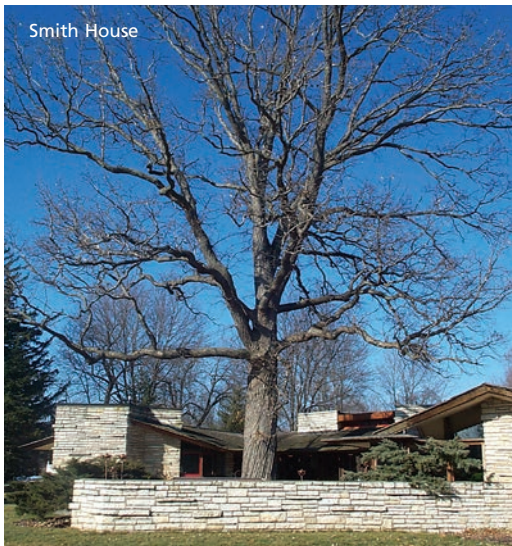
Postwar builders like Joe Eichler, who lived in Wright's Bazett Usonian in Hillsborough, Calif., were quick to apply Wright's established tenets to the ranch house. "Unlike the mass-produced Eichlers, Wright's Usonians were custom designed for individual clients, despite their similarly modest scale. ... The Usonians strove for efficiency with built-in furniture and a minimum of circulation space. The architects who designed Eichler's homes employed many of these Usonian principles when they designed Eichler's prototypes," writes Paul Adamson in *Eichler: Modernism Rebuilds the American Dream*.



Greenberg House



Jackson House



Smith House



Arnold House

Photos courtesy Frank Lloyd Wright © Wisconsin (4)

Midwest Enclave

Neatly straddling the interests of both architecture wonks and midcentury fans is this year's "Wright and Like 2008: On the Road Again," a tour of four Usonian homes and three additional houses by architects influenced by Wright. The driving tour, organized by Frank Lloyd Wright® Wisconsin, visits seven residences between Madison and Milwaukee on June 7, 2008 from 9 to 5 (see page 90 for more information).

Three of the four Wright houses on the tour were site-specific designs—the Arnold, Greenberg and Smith residences—while the Jackson home, an Erdman prefabricated house, was moved in 1985 and then restored. The Arnold House, built in 1954, is sited so the living room receives ample southwest light through its wall of windows, and its design is based on a diamond module, which is repeated throughout. A third wing added in 1959 balances the original bedroom wing, making it a Y-shaped plan today.

The Greenberg House, also designed in 1954, takes advantage of a hillside site strewn with boulders and, like Taliesin, is cantilevered from the brow of a hill. Built of buff-colored brick with mahogany walls, the brick was a secondary choice when the originally specified random-size, quarry-cut

stone proved too pricey at the time of construction.

The 1950 Smith House was designed around a large oak tree and, like the Arnold House, turns its back to the street in favor of rear views and privacy. Located on a smaller city lot, this single-story, three-bedroom home is built from Wisconsin limestone and cypress boards below a cedar shingle roof.

Perhaps most interesting of the tour group is the 1956 Jackson House built by Erdman & Associates from a Wright prefab design. One of nine such houses—which were available with material, plan orientation and modular structural options—the Jackson House is designed around a limestone core with horizontal board and batten siding. The bedroom wing is the longer of the two legs of the L-shaped plan, and due to the original sloped site, the house has an exposed lower level.

As the Wright In Wisconsin tour brochure proclaims, "Each home melds natural materials, bucolic settings and the ideas and principles of organic design into spaces that are fluid, functional and remarkably beautiful. These homes embody the midcentury modern aesthetic and lifestyle that is once again at the forefront of design."

All of the floor to ceiling windows in this bedroom open up, including the corner pair, turning it into an indoor-outdoor room in the summer months. The two twins are original Wright platform beds made for the house.



Wright always told his clients to get the best appliances they could afford. Other than the replaced dishwasher, all of the kitchen appliances are original and were chosen by Mrs. Gordon. They include the first Jenn-Air electric exhaust cooktop (shown flipped open) and a Revco refrigerator faced with wood panels (off camera). The laminate counters were originally closer in color to Wright's Taliesin Red but needed replacing after 40 years. Mrs. Gordon displayed baskets and numerous oil paintings throughout the house, including here in the kitchen above the upper cabinets. Although there are no windows in the kitchen, a skylight and under cabinet fixtures give good illumination.



Pacific Northwest Home

About an hour from Portland is the Gordon House, the sole Wright structure in Oregon and the only one in the Pacific Northwest open to the public. Designed in 1957 for the Wilsonville farm of Evelyn and Conrad Gordon, the house was completed in 1964, five years after Wright's death, its construction overseen by one-time Wright apprentice Burton Goodrich. The Gordons lived there for 30 years and, after their deaths, the structure was moved 24 miles south to The Oregon Garden, where it was restored and opened as a house museum in 2002.

Now listed on the National Register of Historic Places, it might well have fallen to the wrecking ball if not for the architect engaged by the buyer of the Wilsonville property. He recognized the structure's value and contacted the Wright Conservancy. "It's too bad the house couldn't have stayed at its original location but it was going to be demolished so there was no other choice," Molly Murphy comments. "It's a good example to save since it [encapsulates] so many of Wright's ideas.

"It's a very good [instance] of using low-cost local materials. It's an excellent example of the use of the original Bauhaus ideas and the open floor plan, which Wright

invented. At the Bauhaus they were particularly interested in materials; they would never have used wood because, to their way of thinking, wood was a finite commodity. Their materials of choice were stone and glass and metal; ours [in the U.S.] were those three and also wood. Wright was influenced by that and you see that same use of materials. His modern houses are still modern today."

The main section of the 2,133-square-foot house made a three-day journey to its new home on a flatbed truck. Each piece of the remainder was then dismantled, numbered, wrapped and trucked to Silverton. The intact second floor was set on blocks while the first floor was rebuilt, and then everything, down to the wooden shower curtain track, was reconstructed as Wright first specified.

The woods used in many of the Usonian houses were local. "Western red cedar was prevalent and it all looked like this," points out Murphy during our tour, which featured a leaking roof. "It was clear, vertical grain, beautiful old growth, which is completely gone now. We lose track of the fact that, at the time, it was the inexpensive choice. Using local materials [means] it looks like it belongs in Oregon."

The ubiquity of the other materials—concrete and con-



"The fretwork is the most controversial aspect of the Usonians," says Molly Murphy of the Gordon House, "because he used so little structure. At the time, glass and plywood weren't considered to be strong enough for framing, so 2x6s are the main uprights and they're almost 30" apart. What makes that work is the fretwork design in between: it distributes the load evenly between the uprights and takes on some of the load as well."

Resources page 95



Jim Brown (4)

crete block—helped save the Gordon House. "That the concrete block is still available today was one of the deciding factors for moving the house when they discovered early on that they were not going to be able to salvage most of the concrete block on the first floor," Murphy explains. "They wouldn't have been able to do that if it was a custom, cost-prohibitive material."

As is typical in other Wright designs, the Gordon House entry and its upstairs rooms have markedly low ceilings—6'8"—making the 11'11"—high living area even more striking. With full-height French doors lining both sides of the open floor plan and other walls filled with his signature Usonian fretwork, the main space—with areas for reading, listening to music, gathering around the fire and dining—has everything a household would seem to want.

The kitchen and utility room is off the front entry and stairs lead down to a partial basement—not a typical Usonian inclusion—with an incinerator and the furnace for the radiant heating. A modest master bedroom and bath is on the ground floor, as is Mr. Gordon's office and half bath that once looked out over the Willamette River. Up an oak stairway is a small niche for a loom (Mrs. Gordon was a textile artist),

another bath and two bedrooms, each with a balcony.

Tour guide Nancy Rhodes mentions that the Gordons' budget for the house was \$24,000, but that the construction bid came back at \$54,000. Their solution was to sell off more farmland to raise the capital and, by the time it was actually completed, the bill climbed to \$56,000. This perhaps led to the minimal Wright furniture that Mrs. Gordon ordered—two side tables, a coffee table, an occasional table and five platform beds, all of which remain with the house.

"Wright was learning to create the Usonian style all of his life," Murphy says. "Even the Usonians evolved from 1936 to 1959: as he was doing those, at the beginning he was also doing Fallingwater and at the end, the Guggenheim—all of these extravaganzas. And yet there are heavy-duty similarities between those [commercial projects] and these little houses: the horizontal lines, the flat roofs, the looping use of space. He was a master of moving you through space and giving you a constant enjoyment and experience.

"The goal was to use these simple materials in beautiful ways and to make the homeowner feel really good about them. It didn't matter what you used, you could make it wonderful." ❖

Stenger

Wood and stone,
quirky
and
casual—
perfect for Austin

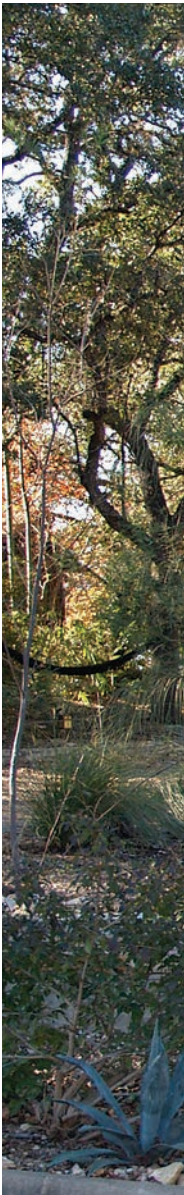
text Sydney Rubin

photography Lori Najvar

for nearly a century, Barton Springs has been the heart of Austin. An enormous natural spring-fed pool cut out of limestone and surrounded by grassy hillsides shaded by towering pecans, Barton Springs is a beloved landmark, a magnet on a summer day and a metaphor for those trying to preserve Austin in the face of explosive growth. The city changes, but Barton Springs remains the same, a refuge from the blazing Texas heat and relentless pace of urban life. It calls to you, “Come—take a swim, read a book.”

The neighborhood overlooking the springs is Barton Hills, a collection of modest homes and midcentury houses that are bicycling distance to downtown and the Saturday farmer’s market. The Colorado River, dammed up to create Town Lake, is so close you can go from carport to kayak in less than 10 minutes.

It was here, in the hills overlooking the springs, that Austin architect A.D. Stenger built homes in the early 1950s for middle-class Texans—the same houses that a whole new generation of Austinites now recognize as our city’s best contribution to America’s midcentury modern history.



homes



My A.D. Stenger home, recently landscaped with native plants and a new retaining wall that coordinates with the Arizona ledgestone of the house.



Texas Touch

My Stenger, like the 100 or so others that remain in central Austin, blends a low-slung, midcentury aesthetic with a unique Austin style, an urban Hill Country vernacular expressed in cedar, site-quarried stone and glass window walls carefully positioned to avoid the harsh Texas sun. Rooflines are flat, gently pitched or jut wing-like into the sky. These homes are comfortable and unpretentious, with a casual nod to the Machine Age and a lingering appreciation of craftsmanship—houses that fit the land.

Arthur Dallas (A.D.) Stenger was Austin's Eichler, a developer and architect of open, flowing space that brought the inside out and the outside in. The angular clerestory windows of my bedroom allow glimpses of squirrels in the live oak trees. The vaulted and beamed ceiling makes my living room seem much larger than it is. The stacked Arizona ledge stone of the fireplace—reminiscent of a '50s cocktail lounge or dude ranch—goes right through the living room's plate glass wall and into the cactus garden behind the house.

The style was revolutionary when Stenger built these

Stenger homes
delivered
affordable and stylish
housing
to
postwar Austin



Opposite: A B&B Italia sofa, Saarinen Womb chair, Eileen Gray coffee table and a painting by Evelina Kats in my living room. The biomorphic '50s planter was found on eBay, and I schlepped the rug back from the Izmailovsky flea market in Moscow when I was a foreign correspondent. On the fireplace wall are ceremonial feather headdresses used by the pygmies of Central Africa. In the dining room is a Ligne Roset table, vintage Danish modern chairs and a lamp original to the house. Left and below, two views of a Stenger home built in 1951 out of colorful fieldstone and cedar.





Stenger often built his homes in the center of a stand of live oak trees that provides a friendly habitat for armadillos, deer and possums right in the heart of town. Opposite: The residence Stenger built for John Henry Faulk, the Austin personality whose successful lawsuit helped bring an end to the Hollywood blacklist and McCarthyism. Faulk was just one of many writers and artists who lived in the Barton Hills neighborhood. Following page: Typical of many Stenger homes, this one has a wall of limestone quarried on the site where the house was built.

homes in Barton Hills and the adjacent Rolling Wood neighborhood in the early 1950s. Barton Hills was featured in Austin's Parade of Homes in 1956 as the "world's largest air-conditioned subdivision," although my home, along with many others Stenger built, was not among those with this feature.

Instead of air conditioning, Stenger made sure his homes captured whatever reprieve from the heat a site had to offer. He purchased land at the top of hills to catch the breeze and placed his houses under the shady boughs of oaks and pecans. My house sits anchored in a limestone cap at the top of a ridge, giving the house stability, cross breezes and a sweeping view of Austin's green hills. Panes along the bottom of the plate glass windows slide open to the prevailing wind.

Highly Valued

Stenger's first build-to-suit house was constructed in the 1940s on Arthur Lane, named after his architect father. He built his own home there, a dream house for his first wife, so people were not just clients, they were neighbors.

Stenger homes delivered affordable and stylish housing to postwar Austin. Originally priced between \$18,000 and

great design may not be enough to save Stenger homes

\$22,000, these homes today bring \$400,000 to \$600,000—when you can find one. Rarely up for sale, nearly 60 years later several of the people who bought homes from Stenger are still here.

Roselyn and John Bustin were newlyweds when they met A.D. Stenger in the early 1950s. Roselyn was the daughter of a newspaperman in Johnson City, Texas, while John reported for the *Austin American-Statesman*. His story on September 9, 1951, described the building of their new home. “We chose a style that combined luxurious informality with functional comfort,” John wrote of their new fieldstone and cedar home on Rundell Lane. Fifty-six years later, his widow is still there.

“I just love my house,” Roselyn says today. “I can still remember A.D. getting all excited about an idea and drawing it to show me on the palm of his hand. A.D. always had such good ideas and enthusiasm, and he loved to share them.”

Unlike other developer-builders riding the wave of

returning World War II veterans, Stenger wasn’t interested in building mass-produced tract houses. Ruddy and bespectacled, Stenger was the consummate entrepreneur, purchasing land, finding a buyer and then designing and building the home. It was something he loved and something he continued doing until he died five years ago at age 82.

The houses, built one at a time, reflect both the individual client’s specific needs and Stenger’s particular populist version of regional modernism. Architects, writers, journalists and musicians were drawn to the distinctive homes and filled the new neighborhood. Famed Austin radio personalities and raconteurs Cactus Pryor and John Henry Faulk were both Stenger’s clients—as well as his neighbors, friends, fishing buddies and avid fellow outdoorsmen. Old-timers still remember parties in the neighborhood cul-de-sacs with people up and down the street bringing lawn chairs, grills, guitars and kids for an evening out in the cool summer night.



Stenger houses are arranged like elegant puzzle boxes



Suited to Today

I found my home in the online real estate listings on a Friday evening and made an offer by Saturday noon. Four offers came in behind mine, reflecting the renewed demand for Stenger homes.

There is much about my little home that I love, but there also are some quirks. Stenger kitchens are small and mine is no exception, although the window wall of the breakfast nook floods the kitchen with light. The master bath would fit on a submarine so it was no surprise to learn that Stenger served in the Navy. Someone before me figured out how to put central air conditioning in this flat-roofed house but many Stenger houses still sprout window units.

Stenger houses are arranged like elegant puzzle boxes so that nothing can be moved or added without disturbing something else, making it impossible to add an office to my 1,400 square feet without destroying the Stenger lines I love. After consulting with three architects on the desired addition, I bought a modular redwood and glass office from Modern Cabana in San Francisco. The utterly modern design of the cabana is a perfect fit with my 60-year-old ranch, a testament to Stenger's enduring design.

But in a booming city like Austin, where the population is expected to grow to one million in the next few years, great design may not be enough to save Stenger homes. Small houses on valuable inner-city land are endangered architectural relics and a great many midcentury homes, including some Stengers, are being torn down to make way for generic McMansions, duplexes and townhouses. What a shame.

Because, at their best, Stenger homes uniquely capture the smart but laid-back attitude that is what so many people love about Austin.

"We just fell in love with the area, the views, the rocky soil, the scrub oaks," Roselyn Bustin says. "A.D. came with the territory because he was the one designing and building all these houses up here, houses with so much style.

"My house was just the height of contemporary," she says. "And, you know what? It still is." 💕

Sydney Rubin, a former foreign correspondent, divides her time between her Austin Stenger and an 18th century cottage in the South of France. Photographer Lori Najvar is the founder of PolkaWorks, a multimedia company documenting communities and cultures.

ranchdressing

House parts ...
midcentury collectibles ...
the inside scoop on
what's what
and where to get it



Q: I acquired this sofa at a thrift store in 1987 for \$40. It's 82" wide and 33" deep. The structure seems quite sound and of good quality; there is no label or maker's mark anywhere on the framework. Can you believe the upholstery? I strongly suspect there's a vinyl floor to match somewhere on the planet; if there isn't, there should be.

Rita Beeman

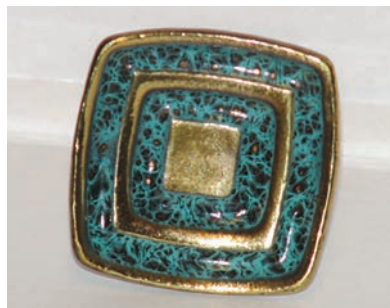
A: From Peter Maunu: "This is a great example of freeform biomorphic design in the style of Ed Wormley for Dunbar, Paul Laszlo or Vladimir Kagan. I've also seen a Paul Williams sofa that was similar."

And this from Modern Decodence's Nick Horvath: "The sofa looks like your classic '50s dog bone sofa, but does have some interesting design elements and a great architectural form. Tough to tell from the photo, as the angle doesn't give a real sense of size and scale, but I like the linear angularity. So often these are such curvy blobjects and you can't tell where one angle begins and another ends, but this has a nice form and suggests some actual design thought went into it."

"Everyone from Kagan and Isamu Noguchi to Heywood Wakefield and Montgomery Ward introduced their form and idea of the classic dog bone, cloud or kidney bean sofa, so I can't really offer up a true name behind this one, but it does have a very Wormley/Dunbar feel to it."

Q: We live in Lincoln, Neb., in a home designed by local architect Kenneth B. Clark in 1965 as his personal residence. It is contemporary and somewhat of the Frank Lloyd Wright style. We're trying to find additional cabinet pulls to match those in our home. They are heavy and we thought they probably were brass with some type of ceramic or enamel turquoise center. They measure 1 1/4" square and 5/8" deep. I'm sure they are no longer being made, but don't know who made them or where to look. Any guidance would be appreciated.

Larry Small



A: Southern California collector Maunu writes that they "are exquisite, reminiscent of Ed Wormley/Otto and Gertrude Natzler/'60s California crafts-style," while Denver dealer Horvath had this to suggest for a resource: "I have seen similar pulls, including cabinet and larger door pulls, at Liz's Antique Hardware in L.A. They are a great store for tracking down those hard-to-find bits, but they are not cheap and their website doesn't even scratch the surface of their selection. You really have to make a trip there to get the real experience and to go through their dizzying selection. I have found everything there, from Nelson thin-edge pulls to the coolest dual-cone sconces."

Liz's offers long-distance hardware matching for those out of the area: lahardware.com/mail.html.

Q: We have always enjoyed the midcentury era and are in the market to purchase a ranch home. Unfortunately we do not live in an area where these homes are held in high regard and we're having difficulty finding many that are in good condition or have not been completely remodeled. Are there any companies that sell reproduction veneer kitchen cabinets? If not, does anyone know of a way to refinish this type of cabinet?

Malco and Shara Ibalio

A: *Kathleen Donohue, a designer with cabinet manufacturer Neil Kelly Co., had this to offer: "What I have seen mostly [in this era of kitchens] have been veneered plywood doors with an outside edge detail that we called '3/8" lip': the outside edge of the door has been rabbeted so that the door sits halfway into the face frame of the cabinets and the 3/8" outer edge has been rounded. This makes the doors appear less bulky than modern-day overlay cabinet doors. Most custom cabinetmakers that make traditional face-frame cabinets can make this door style. Other typical cabinet door styles I have noticed in '50s-era ranch homes are more 'ranchy'—knotty pine vertical planks held together with a horizontal batten, for the rustic western look that was popular at the time.*

"Today, many homeowners elect to use frameless cabinets for greater efficiency and function with a veneered flush-panel door for a smooth, modern look, or a flat recess panel—ubiquitously called a Shaker door—for a simple substitute.

"And, if you find a home with original cabinetry in reasonable structural shape, a good painter can help you either refinish or paint them. Many cabinet hardware manufacturers still offer the retro-style knobs and pulls that were used in the '50s, such as saucer knobs and ribbed pulls."

Nathan Hartman of Kerf Design in Seattle had other good advice: "We work on a lot of houses like you describe, and the first project that new homeowners tackle is usually the kitchen. Cabinets from that era were not built with the quality you can find today. They were usually constructed on location and that makes it hard to reuse the old cabinets, as the cases won't accept modern hardware and many new appliances will require more space than the vintage ones needed.

"The best approach is to find a local custom cabinet



Courtesy Kerf

shop to build new cabinets. Ask if they can do frameless or Euro-style cabinets with slab doors. Visually, this type of cabinet is composed of only the doors and drawer fronts separated by small reveals. It is a clean and simple modern look. They should also be able to match the veneer and stain to the original cabinets. Sourcing vintage knobs and pulls can also help re-create the look. The good news is that this is generally the least expensive style of cabinet to build.



Fabienne Augustine
Courtesy Neil Kelly Co.

"Our company builds a variation of this style. We use typical materials from the era—plywood and plastic laminate (Eichler would be proud!)—but instead of reproductions, we create unique designs based on the ideas and the intent of that period. Our work is contemporary but it seems to fit right into [midcentury] houses. We will often incorporate period details like sliding cabinet doors, decorative venting under the sink and separate cooktops and wall-mounted ovens instead of free-standing ranges."

Need a renovation resource or wondering if that flea market find is anything? Send your questions and photos to editor@atomic-ranch.com and we'll run them past our experts.



text and photography Matthew Mayo



rochester, minn.



My wife, Pam, and I have been collecting vintage Danish modern and other midcentury furnishings for about six years. Initially, we were living in a 1950 Montgomery Ward bungalow and soon learned that this furniture was a perfect fit for that house. After not too long, the small bungalow was filled and before we knew it, we needed a bigger midcentury home to put our furnishings in.

I started looking online at homes for sale in Rochester dating from 1950 to 1965. One, a multi-level built in 1957, sat at the bottom of a very long, steep hill with custom midcentury homes all the way up the street. As soon as we saw the interior—original blonde fireplace and huge bay windows in the great room and dining room, the open floor plan with central kitchen and the original kitchen wall clock that still keeps perfect time—we were in love. Our bungalow sold in four hours, we made an offer on the split-level and two weeks later, both escrows closed and we moved in just before Christmas 2006 with our daughter, Makayla, and two dogs, Buttercup and Belle.

Making it Ours

Since we moved in, the house was painted inside and out, the floors on the

Affordable vintage pieces fill the living and dining areas of the Mayo home. Among the Craigslist bargains are a folding rope chair, the wall unit near the Ant chair in the entry and a \$600 Dillingham dining room set. The couple moves things around as new items join the household—witness the changing art over the Dunbar credenza, above and page 66, bottom.



main level and stairs were replaced with oak hardwood, and the kitchen received a cork floor, new countertops and appliances. The rec room and three upstairs bedrooms got new carpet and fresh paint, and the fireplace mantel and nearby divider shelf were topped with marble.

Now it was time to start looking for additional furnishings. We came across what is known as “retro loop” in Minneapolis, a few vintage shops that specialize in midcentury furnishings. Some of the shops that we bought things from are Classic Retro@Pete’s, Swank Retro, Succotash and Up-Six. We also found a studio in northeast Minneapolis called Spinario Design as well as ads on eBay and Craigslist to help us.

In the upstairs living room, the gondola-style Adrian Pearsall sofa, matching throne chair and custom-made wall hangings were purchased from Spinario Design, as was the Ed Wormley–designed Dunbar credenza, which we bought for \$2,500. Pearsall tables were purchased at Swank Interiors for \$400, and \$300 leather slipper chairs came from a now-closed antique store. A \$50 Hans Wegner folding rope chair is an original purchased on Craigslist, as is the arc floor lamp we found for \$75. The 1950s wall storage unit was purchased from a retired couple on Lake Minnetonka who advertised it for \$50; I think we got a deal on it. (If anyone can ID the designer or manufacturer, I’d love to know!)

More Bargains

The dining area features a Dillingham table and matching chairs that were also purchased on Craigslist; the doctor who was selling it purchased the table new in the 1960s for around \$3,000, he said. The table was mint, having never been used without the custom padded protector. A small bar cabinet came from Spinario Design for \$135. The dining room also features a nice built-in cabinet/hutch where we store all of our vintage dishes, including the 1950s Red Wing, Hull and German and California pottery we have started to collect.

Two Craigslist bedroom sets—a king with floating nightstands and a headboard with storage, and a queen with matching nightstands and



lamps—ranged from \$450 to \$1,000. The third bedroom is used as a home office, where we have a Danish folding desk, a 1968 Schwinn Stingray Runabout, a Jens Risom side table and a Danish walnut three-seater sofa, all purchased for under \$900 (the bike was the second most pricey!). In the downstairs rec room, we have a Komfort sofa and matching chair, \$500 to purchase, then another \$1,100 for re-covering. A couple of matching walnut side cabinets were a mere \$40, and a pair of table lamps cost \$80. A 1971 Schwinn Stingray Midget ran a whopping \$300, while a pair of Arne Jacobsen Ant chairs was just \$100. Our first midcentury piece, a teak-and-marble cocktail table that was given to us, rounds out that room.

Connecting to the Past

As it turned out, the first owners of our house were Stan and Peggy Moen, who I knew from my childhood; Stan has passed away but Peggy lives just three blocks from us. They kept a 50' fiberglass houseboat at a marina in Wabasha, Minn., where my parents owned a restaurant and bar, and where I grew up. Fond memories of those years led to collecting the Schwinn bikes: The harbormaster's son had a Schwinn Super Deluxe, as did one of the boaters' sons; although I rode a Huffy BMX-style bike, I've always liked the Schwinns, so I display them as part of our interior.

Of course, like any house, there are always things to do. I am working on restoring the back three rooms of the lower level—the laundry, bathroom and den. Our next major project will be the extensive landscaping facelift that will include replacing a 97' retaining wall of dry stacked limestone as well as the aging cement patio in the back yard.

We are still adding all kinds of things to the house and I started building some midcentury furniture myself. During the holidays, we had the aluminum Christmas tree set up with a color wheel on it and bought a new spindle clock for above the fireplace. Turned out very cool! 🚲

Above: The Mayos' home shares design details with the Gordon House (page 47)—the horizontal cladding demarcating the level changes—and the decorative trellises on the facades of the Hight-Fournier home in Denver (page 39, 44). Opposite, top: Among the favored pieces in the downstairs rec room are a Schwinn Stingray sitting on a Swedish Bruksbo bench, and a round teak and marble coffee table that got the couple started on their midcentury modern collecting.



in *pursuit* of perfection

text Bromley Davenport

photography Jim Brown

to meet Erich Volkstorf and tour his home in the Seattle suburb of Shoreline is to understand that finding the proper oven, the perfect stain for the beams or the correct hardware for the sliding closet doors takes time. Lots of time.

The oven needed to be 24" wide not 36", which led to 60 hertz Baumatic double ovens shipped from Taiwan. Advice to just paint the flat-roof home's beams didn't fly, and Volkstorf fiddled until he landed on a coffee-brown solid body stain with a linseed oil wipe on top. New aluminum replacement windows—switched out from double pane to single pane (no, that's not a typo)—came with a shiny mill finish, so he scrubbed the frames with a Scotch-Brite pad, then delivered them to a plating house for acid etching and clear anodizing before the glass was installed.

It took two years of working with a machinist friend to craft the aforementioned closet doorstops, bumpers and bottom glides. The winning combo was brass stops with rare earth magnets, UHMW bumpers and, for the glides, stainless steel pins that ride in UHMW tracks routed into the bottom of the doors. Easy. It's no wonder it took them four years to almost finish the remodel of their 1961 Ralph Anderson-designed Modernist home.

"He never takes 'No' for an answer," sighs tile artist Laura Brodax, Volkstorf's wife. "You have to keep digging and digging; it's painful. I'm the assistant here, helping make the calls. He comes up with the concept and we continue to pursue it beyond where anyone else would hope to go."

Volkstorf, 53, admits he revels in finding the house fittings that you supposedly can't get anymore and has launched a consulting business for owners of midcentury homes facing the same dilemmas. Case in point, the sheer, organic, natural curtains he envisioned for the window walls. After numerous dead ends, he punted to Brodax, 54, who finally found what they were looking for at Seattle Curtain.

Or the pin hinges they needed for the copious built-in cabinetry. New ones weren't up to Volkstorf's



quality standards and cost \$5 a pair. After a laborious archival search he found a company in New York who made them back in the day. The minimum order was 300 but they were only a quarter apiece. "A lot of times, these old places say, 'That's not a problem; you can get that,' while the new people say they've never seen it and it hasn't been made in 50 years," Volkstorf, a former cinematographer, comments.

But before they could labor over every detail, they had to find the house. No small feat, that.

Erich cancels his haircut

After going to a party in a Modernist house, the couple came back to their painstakingly renovated bungalow on a busy street. "We thought, Wait: there's some-

thing better out there," Brodax recalls of their conversion to midcentury.

"For some people, there's nostalgia with wanting to recapture part of their youth and the house they grew up in. In my case, it was a Modernist house," says Volkstorf. "A few years ago, they could be had for next to nothing because people would say, 'That's a home like I grew up in; it's 50 years old, it's a teardown.'"

"The hotbed of modernism has really been in Los Angeles. Celebrities are actually collecting them: 'I have two Neutras and a Lautner, but I sold my Schindler,' " he parodies. "But there are still incidents like the Maslon House that got torn down in Rancho Mirage, which generated a fair amount of press and outrage. People started seeing they were worth preserving. That's crept up the

Just inside the front door, the fastidious finishes and clean lines of the upper stairwell area sum up the project. Once home to the washer and dryer, custom built-ins now house a bar and other storage adjacent to the kitchen. Opposite: The couple looked long and hard for a minimal but comfortable low-back sofa and ended up with a '50s Martin Visser design for Spectrum. Gus, the family's dachshund, helpfully chewed a corner of one of the square bolsters; now recovered with Kvadrat wool, it sits on a Danish flat weave rug, with a vintage midcentury bench in the background.





Still on the to-do list is a privacy fence similar to the back deck railing that will run along the footing at the edge of the driveway. The Marblecrete exterior walls and the visible lighting for the skylights give the house a commercial flavor, but the intimate scale keeps it human.

Inside, Volkstorf and Brodax sit at his mother's vintage breakfast table in the family room. Architect Michael Soldano lobbied for a trimmer deck to replace the one that was threatening to collapse. It provides much-appreciated horizontal space in the largely hillside lot.

coast and gone east, and now people are recognizing the work of Breuer and Gropius and Johnson."

But in Seattle, the right house in the right setting wasn't gelling. "We had been looking for three years and were really discouraged," Brodax says. "The Modernist homes closer to town had been so rearranged and changed that we'd be paying for someone else's vision, which we'd have to then undo. At this point, we were looking for a crummy house overlooking a ravine, a teardown where we could build new."

In July 2003, a call from real estate agent Tom Holst—"Modern Tom" to Seattle architecture fans—alerted them to a new listing. "When I saw it onscreen, my heart started to pound and I told Erich he had to cancel his hair appointment," Brodax relates.

The house was on a steep lot overlooking a wooded ravine with a creek at the bottom in Innes Arden, a neigh-



Volkstorf grew up with the green Dux chair now in the family room; a Raymor Bitossi table lamp sits next to it on a Sussex credenza from Design Within Reach. Behind the door leading to the office is a section of the new curtains, which replaced Venetian blinds hung below the clerestory windows. Below: An early evening view showcases the concrete-block fireplace and the treed ravine.





borhood better known for its hilltop view homes. The couple had been driving down the cul-de-sacs looking for that FISBO or house just going on the market and had pulled tax records on dozens of homes, so they knew this was a gem. When Volkstorf walked down the entry bridge to the front door and looked through the clerestories straight out to the wild hillside, he said to himself, "This is going to have to be it."

It will cost just as much as starting new

Brodax and Volkstorf had already teamed up with Michael Soldano of Soldano/Luth Architects, who began his practice in 1956. They'd found him by knocking on the door of a midcentury house they admired, getting a tour and discovering he was the architect and still very much in business. With the discovery of the Innes Arden home the plan to find a teardown property and have Soldano design a new structure was scrapped.

"When I saw the house, my first reaction was to gut the entire main floor because it felt confining," Soldano says. "The original fireplace separated the dining room from the living room, obstructed the view from the kitchen and the entry, plus made both spaces seem small. Erich and Laura agreed the fireplace had to go; that was the beginning. The challenge was just how far to go.

The Bertoia Diamond chair was found in the neighborhood and its frame was straightened, welded and powder coated before reupholstering with a cover from Knoll. The Saarinen side table came from one of Brodax's favorite sources: "We always go to DWR when we need a quick fix," she says. The midcentury rosewood dining table is from Chartreuse in Seattle, and the hand-blown lamp over it is vintage as well.

The stairwell has been opened up and a landing and 90-degree turn eliminated. A skylight bathes the space and the library area below in soft light. Downstairs, two armchairs and an end table from the Modernist home built by Volkstorf's father sit on a new floating cork floor. "I had the chairs reupholstered in about 1996, after a yearlong search for someone who could supply the correct leather and do the stitching," Volkstorf says. "They are rather complex."

Ned and Gus in the family room. The Bottoni loveseat is a Marcel Wanders design for Moooi, and Alvar Aalto stools are used as casual end tables.





"We all agreed the interior space needed a higher quality of finishes," he continues. "Some of the walls were covered with mahogany paneling that made the spaces look dark and the interior gloomy, even though windows wrapped around the corner on the east side of the house, across the entire south elevation and around to the west. The decision was made to remove the paneling. Because the rest of the walls were plaster, Erich decided to replace the paneling with plaster rather than drywall."

The stacked brick fireplace was demoed and a new cement block-faced one installed on the end wall of the living room. This opened up the sightlines, circulation and dining area, and created the need for new car decking to fill in the ceiling where the chimney had been. A local woodworker milled new 1 5/8" hemlock stock to match the original.

A decision to move the laundry area from near the staircase to downstairs, coupled with dissatisfactions with the kitchen—poorly constructed and stained cabinetry, appliances in the wrong place—opened the scope of the remodel further. "When you start making little changes like that, you open up a can of worms. At that point we made the decision to gut the kitchen," says Brodax.

That's it: we're doing the whole house

"The other significant change was the stair to the lower level," architect Soldano explains. "The [original] stair had a winder that took up a lot of space at the bottom landing. By making the stairs run straight, we gained enough space to create a library and sitting area at the lower level; this turned an oversized circulation space into a much needed place for bookshelves."

Volkstorf's mantra of consistency and continuity of materials led them to settle on a palette of white maple for floors and cabinets, laminate for kitchen counters and a floating system of cork tiles on the kitchen and downstairs floors. Green slate was used for bathroom counters, the living room fireplace mantel and decorative insets in the flooring. Concrete block faces both fireplaces and off-white is used on all painted surfaces. "It's easier to do touchup if you only have one paint scheme," Volkstorf says dryly.

Since they didn't have blueprints of the as-built structure, Soldano refined the plan and did drawings as the house came apart. He also recommended the deck off the family room be rebuilt smaller and designed a handsome railing for it.



Custom kitchen cabinets with finely matched grain are topped with period-appropriate laminate counters and a Baumatic cooktop. The sliding windows are some of those that the couple replaced, while the vintage chairs, which turned out to be zinc plated with a plastic coating, were powder coated.

*lighting on select trees
turned the pitch-black nighttime windows
into a view
of a naturalistic landscape*

"We really trust Mike; the architects from that period certainly knew how to build things," Volkstorf comments. "He saw the level of detail we were putting into the house and was always there to make suggestions."

Volkstorf's penchant for perfection meant the hollow-core mahogany interior doors and moldings were replaced with solid-core maple doors cleanly installed sans trim—pity the finish carpenters and plasterers who took on that challenge. Closet doors were changed to bypass style and, in addition to replacing the double-pane windows in the master bedroom, all sliding windows got new aluminum versions from Windorco in Seattle.

"The curtain walls in Modernist homes were designed to make the division between inside and outside as transparent as possible," Volkstorf says in explaining his counterculture decision to remove the double panes. "From a practical standpoint, a double-pane window is more efficient than a single pane, but in relation to a wall, it's not efficient at all. If a

single pane is R-1, a double is only R-2, as opposed to a normal wall, which would be R-16.

“Another issue is the amount of energy consumed in manufacturing the windows. Most of the glass in this house is 40 years old; if you do a life-cycle analysis of a double-pane window, they have a fairly substantial failure rate.”

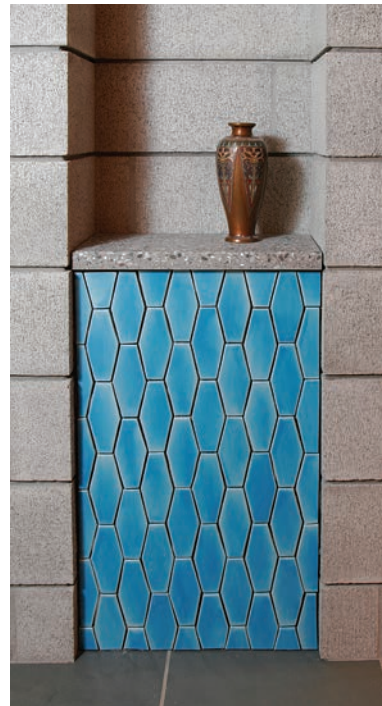
A self-taught student of modernism, Volkstorf borrowed an idea from Craig Elwood’s Case Study #17: illuminated skylights that function as light sources both day and night. The couple also changed out the original kitchen ball pendants in favor of surface-mounted can lights and illuminated select trees, turning the pitch-black nighttime windows into a view of a naturalistic landscape.

Brodax’s role in the project seems more subtle and supportive than her husband’s, but she drove decisions on the fireplace nook, upstairs storage closets and master bath

remodel, where she selected the unglazed porcelain tiles and lobbied for new fixture locations. “I’m more into having the right bedding and towels and having everything neat and looking a certain way,” she says. “I’m more the software and Erich’s the hardware. The big projects scare me, so I’m always the one saying We can’t do that yet; let’s wait. But then we do it, and it’s great.” ☕

Resources page 95

Brodax incorporated 1” blue tiles from the original bathroom into the unglazed porcelain Dal Tile wall in the redone master bath. Her portrait is by her father, Philip Brodax. Examples of her original tiles are seen in the niche near the family room fireplace.



cool|stuff



Pet Project

From the great-looking site to their styling products, Cheengoo Boutique has the right stuff—and an unusual name. Guess that's because Korean-born Liz Paik is a web designer and the name means "friend or companion." Josie, the Atomic pussycat, has a Yum water bowl (\$36) with a cool biomorphic handhold, and we're eyeing the Martini collar (\$32) for Auggie, AR's latest canine companion (page 13). cheengoo.com

Applying A&C to MCM

You reformed bungalow-philes are saying, "Teco? That's Arts and Crafts!" But look at those sculptural shapes; can't you picture them gracing a teak credenza or sitting on a minimalist mantel? Prairie Arts' vase collection, based on vintage originals, comes in six matte colors. Green Orb sits 8" high, while the 4 1/2" Kiss puts you in mind of 71% Venezuelan Criollo cocoa. Seven shapes beginning at \$45; prairie-arts.com for retailers.



Table Envy

Those yummy colors make you want to order a whole stable of tables from Peter Sandback's New Hampshire company. Made of lightweight polymerized cement veneer on aluminum or wood bases, the choices are mind numbing: White oak or cherry? Walnut or lacquered maple? A pedestal Wabash coffee table in pea soup with a brushed-chrome base

or maybe a modular Garfield in three shades of pink ...


Forty colors, stain resistant and durable; what more do you want?

petersandback.com;

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Hey, That's My Street

Danny Heller's photorealism will make you think he's been trolling your suburb, snapping a shot of your neighbor wrenching on his Camaro. The oil paintings immortalize the San Fernando Valley where he grew up—graffiti, power lines, muscle cars and all. "I paint the reality of suburbia: how the idea of safe, family oriented tract housing has been perpetuated and how it has decayed," he writes on his site, dannyhellerart.com. A solo show celebrating Eichler homes opens June 22 at Terrence Rogers Fine Art in Santa Monica. 

atomicbooks

Summertime Reads!



Beachbum Berry's Sippin' Safari by Jeff Berry

A well written, profusely illustrated narrative of the people and bars responsible for the tropical drink craze that helped lubricate the '50s and '60s. The treasures of this small book are the 70 authentic recipes for such tiki cocktails as the Zombie and Mai Tai, and the vintage ephemera that takes you back to the day. Forget about opening a mix, these are the real deal and presage the current fresh cocktail scene. Softcover, 183 pp., \$23.50

Publisher's Pick!



Saarinen by Pierluigi Serraino

If you miss the Saarinen exhibition in Washington D.C. (page 90), this gem of a little book can tide you over. Focusing on his architecture—Case Study House #9, North Christian Church, the Irwin Miller House, the TWA Terminal—with abbreviated coverage of the Tulip and Womb chairs, the softcover volume explores the roots of Saarinen's design sensibilities in interesting detail. 96 pp., \$16.45



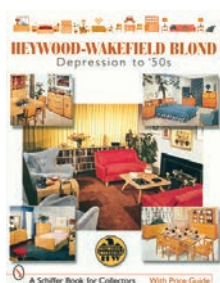
Blenko: Cool 50s & 60s Glass by Leslie Piña

Have you keyworded "Blenko" on eBay lately? The colorful, accessible glass line is still plentiful (548 items when we looked) and affordable—from a set of amethyst midcentury crackle glasses to 25"-tall tangerine decanter. Find out what's rare, how much items are worth and learn about the company through period advertising and a reproduced 1960 catalog. Hardcover, 208 pp., \$43.95



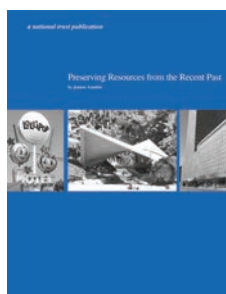
Little Boxes: The Architecture of a Classic Midcentury Suburb

Westlake, the quintessential postwar neighborhood in the Bay Area, gets the glamorous treatment in this attractive hardcover book looking at the "boxes made of ticky-tacky." Rob Keil, 144 pp. \$38.50



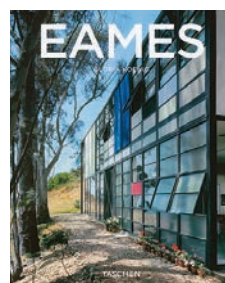
Heywood-Wakefield Blond: Depression to '50s

A definitive softcover volume on H-W's birch modern and streamline '30s pieces with vintage photos of upholstered pieces, tables, chairs and case goods; includes current values. Leslie Piña, softcover, 248 pp. \$33.45



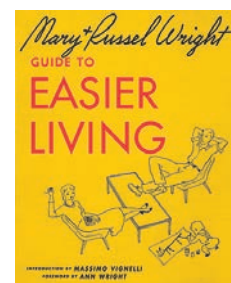
Preserving Resources from the Recent Past

This b&w National Trust booklet is full of great background info and accessible advice for the grassroots preservationist in you. Or use it to get started on researching the history of your own home. Jeanne Lambin, softcover, 28 pp., \$10



Eames

This small softcover book is a concise overview of the designs and talents of both Charles and Ray Eames. Highlights include their films, two Case Study houses, early plywood experiments and their numerous chairs. Gloria Koenig, 96 pp. \$16.45



Guide to Easier Living

This reprinted vintage book addresses modern living Wright-style, from organizing household chores to streamlining the dining table. Of particular interest are the sections on contemporary floor plans and Russel and Mary Wright's philosophy of informal living. A great look at the couple behind American Modern. Wright, softcover, b&w illus., 202 pp., \$22.95

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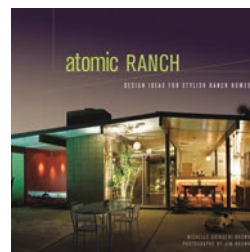


no. 16,
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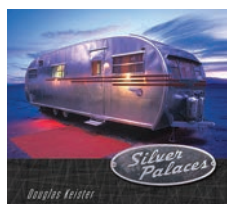
Atomic Ranch: Design Ideas for Stylish Ranch Homes

From modern to transitional, collecting to landscaping, 35 great houses to inspire you. Includes homes from our early sold-out issues and lots of practical advice from homeowners just like you. M. Gringeri-Brown/J. Brown, hardcover, 192 pp., \$43.95



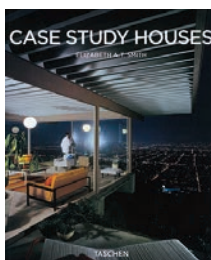
Fifties Furniture Revised & Expanded 3rd Edition

Looking to start collecting vintage furniture? This accessible yet thorough book covers the heavy hitters—Eames, Nelson, Platner, Bertioia and Noguchi—as well as major manufacturers like Heywood-Wakefield, Lightolier and Herman Miller. Includes current prices and dimensions. Leslie Piña, hardcover, 240 pp., \$43.95



Silver Palaces

Airstream, Curtis Wright and Shasta aluminum travel trailers and their diminutive interiors, as well as vintage vehicles that might pull them—from a 1965 Plymouth Sport Fury to a 1937 LaSalle Sport Coupe—get the star treatment in this fun softcover book. Douglas Keister, 160 pp., \$28.95



Case Study Houses

A softcover book on Arts & Architecture's Case Study Houses covers Pierre Koenig's iconic Stahl House, plus 34 other projects through Julius Shulman's vintage photos, floor plans, elevations, models of unbuilt designs and contemporary color photos. Elizabeth A.T. Smith, softcover, 96 pp., \$16.45



Inspiring 1950s Interiors

Over-the-top rooms from Armstrong Flooring advertising, but a great peek at interior details from the '50s. Softcover, 176 pp., \$33.45



Forgotten Modern: California Houses 1940–1970

Custom Modernist homes—from Edward Fickett ranches and a condo by William Cody, to Wright-disciple Foster Rhodes Jackson's compound in Claremont—are covered in Alan Hess' thorough text. Some 25 architects are explored in Alan Weintraub's 300 contemporary photos, including Mark Mills' organic Bay-area vernacular. Hardcover, 280 pp., \$45.95

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June 7 Madison, Wis.

Wright and Like 2008: On the Road Again

Presented by Frank Lloyd Wright® Wisconsin, four Usonian homes and three additional residences by Wright-influenced architects Russell Barr Williamson and John Randal McDonald will be open to the public from 9 to 5. Guided interior tours of the homes plus a visit to a Louis Sullivan bank building are part of a self-driving tour of Beaver Dam, Columbus, Dousman, Jefferson and Oconomowoc. Reservations and info at wrightinwisconsin.org or 608.287.0339. (See more on this event on page 49.)

June 7-8 San Francisco

Art Deco and Modernism Weekend By-the-Bay



Two hundred dealers running the gamut from Arts & Crafts to 1980s furnishings and collectibles, plus a vintage fashion show and swing dance performances. At the Concourse Exhibition Center, 8th & Brannan streets; artdecosale.com or 650.599.3326.

August 15-17 Denver

Denver Modernism Show

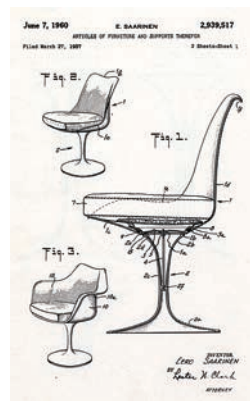
In its third location in as many years, Denver's modernism show is filling more than 30,000 square feet with midcentury, Art Deco and tiki vendors and a Friday night gala preview party. At the National Western Complex Expo Hall, I-25 and I-70 intersection. denvermodernism.com

Through August 23

Washington, D.C.

Eero Saarinen: Shaping the Future

The Saarinen retrospective at The National Building Museum features a variety of architecture, including the iconic TWA Terminal, John Deere Headquarters, Kresge Chapel at MIT and lesser-known, unbuilt works. Never before seen drawings and documents, along with large-scale models, photographs, a full-scale facade mock-up, original furniture samples and a documentary featuring interviews with some of Saarinen's prominent colleagues and collaborators are also part of the exhibition. The 382-page catalog and special programs—"Growing up Saarinen: Life and Legacy of an Architect" by Saarinen's daughter; "Preserving Modernism," a symposium; a tour of Washington Dulles International Airport; and Architecture Family Day—make this an event not to be missed. nbm.org



Patent drawing for pedestal chairs, June 7, 1960. Courtesy Eero Saarinen Collection. Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University



TWA Terminal, JFK International Airport, Jamaica, N.Y., circa 1962, © Ezra Stoller/ESTO

September 2-October 24 New Haven, Conn.

Hawaiian Modern:

The Architecture of Vladimir Ossipoff

Honolulu Academy of Arts put together this survey of Ossipoff's postwar residential work, which focused on place-sensitive architecture appropriate to the Hawaiian Islands. Fresh from Frankfurt, the exhibition travels to the



Ossipoff House, Kuli'ou'ou, Honolulu, O'ahu, 1958. ©Robert Wenkam

Yale University School of Architecture Gallery after its Honolulu premier. architecture.yale.edu

September 10–14 **San Francisco**

San Francisco 20th Century Art and Design Show & Sale

Fifty U.S. and international vendors—including dealers from Paris, Moscow and Budapest—and a tres chic Wednesday night preview at the Herbst Pavillion at Fort Mason Center. sf20.net

October 4 **Vancouver, BC**

Open Vancouver: Mid-Century Modern

Modernist Vancouver's annual home tour celebrates the city's International Style, Japanese and Northwest mid-century residences. This year, the 1–6 pm event includes a bus tour of five Modernist homes, a downtown Vancouver walking tour and an art exhibit. vancouverheritagefoundation.org.

October 4–5 **Las Vegas**

Las Vegas Modernism

Sixty vendors and a preview gala at the downtown Plaza Hotel that benefits the Las Vegas chapter of the Atomic Age Alliance. lasvegasmodernism.com

October 21–25 **Tulsa, Okla.**

Preservation in Progress

The National Trust for Historic Preservation's 2008 conference explores urban preservation challenges in and around Tulsa, including the Route 66 Corridor. At press time, sessions dealing with green building, recent past preservation, and teardowns and McMansions in older neighborhoods were under consideration. Get an update at nthpconference.org.

Ongoing **Shawnee, Kansas**

All-Electric House

Originally built in 1954 by KCP&L in Prairie Village, this restored all-electric home at the Johnson County Museum of History was innovative and futuristic living at its most accessible—from the curtain opener to the bedside remote for the coffee-maker. Info on guided tours at jocomuseum.org.



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Vintage furniture: stpaulretroloop.com

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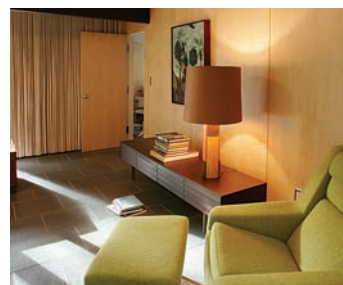
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