

atomic ranch

MIDCENTURY MARVELS

SPRING 2010



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cover

This vintage kitchen has a \$20 pink Western Holly wall oven and a reconditioned 1950 Wedgewood stove, both new to the house. The original cabinetry was given Jadite green pulls, counters are "Cracked Ice" laminate with metal edging and the floor is St. Mark's Square from Armstrong. Story page 24.



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meanwhile... back at the ranch



S

eemingly out of the blue, we were recently offered Marylhurst University's extensive collection of *Arts & Architecture* and *Architectural Forum* magazines, dating from the 1950s to the '60s. The magazines took up about five feet of shelf space, and the library was weeding out their print journals. We drove down to Shoen Library, not quite knowing what this gift entailed. It was all that anyone could hope for: bound and loose collections with some gaps, but still a wonderful resource and window on the times that are central to architecture and building in the Atomic Age. Over several days we poured through each issue and spread some of the wealth to our good friends at the Mid-Century Modern League in Portland.

So what did we discover in this treasure trove? Michelle has her own perspective on page 6, but for me the initial takeaway was the number of designer guiding lights contained in these pages—all in their original form, not yet encrusted with common wisdom's verdicts of greatness. There is a feeling of immediacy in viewing A&A's 1957 feature of the Eichler X-100, for example, that makes me feel as if I were touching primary documents. A caption states, "Interior partitions [are] treated as furnishings more than mere walls or boundaries of rooms." Reading AF's 1951 eight-page story of Hamilton Crawford's Gentilly Woods (also featured in our Summer 2006 issue), reveals details of prefab construction and the modest 1,000-square-foot size of the most popular model. I suffer from sharp hindsight when I read the brief entry that Dr. Edith Farnsworth is suing Mies van der Rohe; uh-oh, this will be important!

The ads are just as fascinating: to see the Frank Bros. store in Long Beach, Calif., hawking the Aalto lounge chair, or the 1963 humorous ad shouting "Beware of Imitations, Enjoy the Comfort of the Real Thing Designed by Charles Eames for Herman Miller" makes you understand there was a time when these were fresh new products. When I flip the cushion of my sofa to reveal the metal John Stuart Inc. medallion and then turn to his ad in the 1957 A&A, that sofa becomes more authentic and I feel fully vested in the era. These respectable magazines were not above being a business, however. Amid the ads and spreads for the desirables were an equal number of advertisements for all-steel boilers and grease interceptors; at core these were building magazines and they had to pay the bills.

As an inveterate masthead reader, the people behind the issues hold a special interest for me. I noticed *Arts & Architecture's* small staff of photographers included Harry Baskerville. A little memory recall led me back to my own staff days shooting cars at Petersen Publishing and my good, departed friend Gray Baskerville. Our coworker, Jane Barrett, now the librarian at *Road and Track*, confirmed that Harry was the wild, liberal uncle to Gray, one of the most popular and conservative editors at *Hot Rod*. It's an interlinked world; you just have to do a little searching to find your connections.

Jim Brown, Publisher





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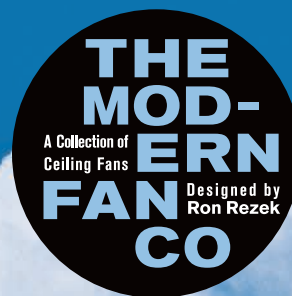
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◀ Designed by
Jorge Pensi



Consciously cool.

modernfan.com



my2cents

Flipping through a bound volume of 1955 *Arts & Architecture* magazines, an ad for Glide Windows with a testimonial from Craig Ellwood jumped out at me. Ellwood had chosen their sliding glass doors for Case Study House No. 17, a building that looked much like Art Center College of Design, a school where I worked for 17 years.

When I was hired for the princely annual salary of \$6,000, the college had just moved from L.A. into its brand-new campus in the Linda Vista hills of Pasadena, Calif. The flat-roof, black steel I-beam building resembled a train trestle spanning a ravine, with the two anchoring ends built into the hillside terrain. It was a heady work environment for a 23-year-old.

At the time, Ellwood was just the tall, slim, handsome architect of the building, a man who'd stroll through with college president Don Kubly. I knew nothing of his architecture career, nor, until 30 years later, the murmurings about whether he was personally responsible for three of the Case Study Houses and numerous other commissions, or if they were done by others in his firm. Kubly lived in an Ellwood-designed home nearby, which presumably helped land him the job.

Arts & Architecture's advisory board listings would make any MCM enthusiast apoplectic:

Walter Gropius, Richard Neutra, Marcel Breuer, A. Quincy Jones, Raphael Soriano, Gregory Ain, Paul Rudolph, Isamu Noguchi, Finn Juhl, George Nelson and Garrett Eckbo were among the 35 notables. Photography was by Ezra Stoller, Ernest Braun and then-staffer Julius Shulman, answering the unasked question, "Could Julius Shulman take a bad photo?" Um, yes. (Let the flogging begin ...)

A year's subscription was \$5 (comparable to \$40 today), and the just-introduced George Nelson rolltop lady's desk from Herman Miller, a stunning \$420 (that's \$3,384 in 2010 dollars). As an editor, the slimness of the vintage volumes was striking—38 pages with an average of 18 advertisers, primarily window, furniture, appliance, tile and brick manufacturers. A one-inch column ad offered a steel-frame house by Pierre Koenig in Glendale for \$16,950.

Poking around online, I read with interest David Travers' editorial comments on *artsandarchitecture.com*, the magazine's Web archive. Travers notes that he took over as editor from John Entenza in 1962, when circulation was 8,500. Five years later, when the magazine folded, it was up to 12,500, but the four other titles that were competing for registered architect subscribers boasted circulations of 40,000 or more.

"Little wonder the advertising went to them," he writes. "The magazine lived a life of poverty, making a profit perhaps two or three years in the mid forties when the excitement of the Case Study House program ignited a corresponding enthusiasm in manufacturers and their ad agencies. We conducted a study which showed that upwards of 20 people read each subscriber's copy of *A&A*, pushing the readership numbers up to a competitive level but to no effect with advertisers."

It's comforting—and discouraging—to see that publishing hasn't changed much in 40 years. Vive la little guy.

Michelle Gringeri-Brown
Editor



Not far from the tree: My mother, Marcelle, posing for an article my father wrote on home dyeing area rugs.

modernwisdom



Carnochan's 969 house and one proposed plan for the Butterfield home.



* First, let me say that I love your magazine and have been a fan and subscriber for years now. After flipping through the latest issue, I was floored to see the "Before and After: Austin" feature. Not only was I pleased to see such a nice remodel on the house, but, as coincidence would have it, my wife and I had placed an offer on this very house just a few months before the current owners. We, too, had major plans to renovate and even enlarge the structure to accommodate our family of four. We met with several local Austin architects (Travis Young, Mark Meyer and Don Harris), all of whom are wonderful artists and very sensitive to the MCM style. I even cut my teeth on Google Sketch Up, coming up with a few possibilities for the master suite addition to share with the architects.

Our misfortune came when we learned that the house was just barely in the 100-year-flood plain and therefore the process of adding square footage became

a much more daunting and costly task (if even possible at all). I am very happy for the owners and commend them on a wonderful job on what was almost our house. I am also happy to report that my family now lives in a modern subdivision just east of Austin called Nine Sixty Nine (ninesixtynine.com) in a home designed by the aforementioned Travis Young of Studio Momentum.

Thanks again for putting so much into the classic and beautiful art form that is MCM architecture!

Rob Carnochan

Austin, Texas

* In your Fall issue on page 27 ("Cult of Personality"), the two Goodwill chairs are by Russell Spanner.

Tom Gathman

Style North has a nice intro to '50s Canadian furniture designer Spanner, with a link to a detailed 1990 exhibition catalog: stylenorth.ca/blog/2009/10/canadian-cool-russell-spanner

—ar editor

* My husband and I were surprised and excited to see our coffee table featured on page 18 of your Fall 2009 magazine. We have a darker version of the table, plus



two matching end tables. We poured through the article several times but couldn't find any information about the table and its ultra-cool secret—the wood top of the table slides back to reveal a Formica surface and an inset burner. Can you tell us anything about the

manufacturer of our tables, their approximate age and the intended use of the burner?

Laurie & Paul Harris

Edmonds, Wash.

The '50s coffee table was designed by John Keal for Brown Saltman (the caption is in the ceiling portion of the photo), and the homeowners say the burner is a coffee warmer, just as you're suggesting in your photo.

—ar editor

* While reading the Fall 2009 issue, I was developing a Saarinen story of my own: My mother-in-law gave us a living room set that was purchased in 1949. The



tables had been painted, but were still in good shape. She told us that the same fellow who designed the St. Louis Gateway Arch designed the set. I went on an Internet search, from Cranbrook Academy of Art to the Grand Rapids Library and back to Columbus, Ind., looking for evidence of this Saarinen design.

I stumbled upon a book that had a desk with an S-shaped leg similar to the end tables in question. The designer was Eliel, rather than Eero Saarinen. Multiple Internet searches led me to Peter Kelly of MassModern in Quincy, Mass. Trading pictures back and forth, I was informed that the end table was from the S-series furniture designed for Eliel Saarinen's 1948 *Flexible Home Arrangements* catalog. It seems Eliel's daughter, Pipsan, collaborated on the designs; Peter identified ours as an S-418 End Table from Johnson Furniture of Michigan.

He also gave me advice on restoring the furniture (don't over-sand the veneer) and offered a source of pictures so I could match the honey-colored finish. It

seems that restoration best practices are needed for those collecting modern furniture.

Dennis Dell

West Lafayette, Ind.

Although Dennis has written often enough that other readers are going to think he's a fictitious plant, his latest letter is a great entrée for our new occasional series on caring for vintage finds. Things like "How should I restore my stained teak coffee table?" "How do I get the smutz out of my vintage glass decanter?" and "Is a dinette set with pitted chrome expensive to refinish?" Your questions and 150K or larger photos are welcome at editor@atomic-ranch.com.

—ar editor

* Hey there! I've been getting inspiration from your magazine for quite a few years now. I work at a Barnes & Noble and it's so refreshing to see it on our newsstand. I have been collecting vintage housewares and furniture for as long as I can remember. My husband



and I do not own a house yet and live in a condo; I like to pretend it's a midcentury ranch home, so I'm calling it our Atomic Condo.

Thanks so much for a great magazine!

Tanya Sipos Crouse

* We bought our house in 2005 from the original owner, bidding against developers to get it. (Since we moved in, two similar homes across the street have been torn down to make way for much larger houses.)

morewisdom

The seller gave us the original house plans, and we discovered it was designed by Charles A. Lawrence of Seattle, a popular and apparently distinguished modern architect of the period (docomomo-wewa.org/architects_detail.php?id=81).

We decided to keep the structure of the house but



Before and after at the Phelps house



update and modernize the look while maintaining its long and low lines. We have put in hardwood floors, replaced all the single-pane aluminum frame windows and some of the exterior doors and sliders, painted the exterior, replaced exterior fixtures and rebuilt the deck from scratch. Next up, a few interior updates.

Martha Phelps

Mercer Island, Wash.

✱ Bravo to Jim Brown for his “Meanwhile, Back at the Ranch” comments in the Fall 2009 issue. I’ve been seeing red about green sustainability lately, and his insightful words were most welcome.

I recently came across an article in a major shelter magazine that touted the virtues of a new, green home. The building was more than 5,000 square feet and built for one person as a seldom-used getaway house. Unfortunately, it takes more than countertops made of recycled materials to make a structure green. In the real world, the greenest house is the one that isn’t built. But since we all need shelter, the next greenest home is an existing home of reasonable size that has been thoughtfully restored. Sounds like an Atomic Ranch to me.

Mary Tooley

Cleveland, Wis., thesuitcaselady.com

✱ Recently, my boyfriend and I have been looking to buy a house. I would love to move into a cool, old midcentury gem; unfortunately, where we live, they’re nearly impossible to find. They’re either in advanced stages of disrepair or irretrievably “updated.” Adding to the difficulty is my better half’s almost allergic reaction to fixer-upper projects; his mind is firmly set on new construction. Can you point me in the direction of finding house plans that fit with the traditional midcentury design I’ve come to love?

Niki

Madison, Wis.

Here’s a couple of sites to browse: houseplans.com, which has several Eichler floor plans along with ‘ranch’ and ‘modern’ categories; Gregory LaVadera’s lamidesign.com modern hybrids; and if you’re drawn to traditional ranches, theplancollection.com/ranch-house-plans.

—ar editor

Worth Checking Out

Put “A Serious Man” by the Coen brothers in your Netflix queue for a spot-on trip to ’60s suburbia.



✱ We moved into our 1954 midcentury brick ranch home last year and really welcomed the open floor plan. Our prior house was a brick Cape Cod and felt very cobbled together at times. The style of our unassuming ranch is very contemporary, yet we could easily incorporate vintage or postmodern into our lifestyle.

Our home is in the heart of the city in "The Knolls" subdivision, which consists of several midcentury modern homes as well as two-story brick estates. We have been landscaping our half-acre lot and would love to know the precise name or style of our home. We have considered it to be California postmodern, but remain uncertain.

Rick Myers

Peoria, Ill.

Different regions have different names for home styles, often driven by the local real estate market. Not sure what a 'California postmodern' style would be, but it sounds catchy.

I'd categorize your home as a traditional brick hip-roof ranch, based on the exterior appearance. The open plan interior you mention was a modern feature that arguably began in California but was interpreted widely during the postwar building boom.

Did you happen to see the brick Chicago house in the Fall 2009 Ranch Dressing? It shares some features, including the cement windowsills that are a carryover from Chicago's bungalow belt-era houses (IMO). Yours benefits from a much larger lot and a swinging built-in planter at the entry. Be happy it's all unpainted!

—ar editor

✱ I live in Colorado and went to the Denver Modernism show last summer. A local dealer had a Womb chair for sale. It had some wear on the seat cushion and arms where the hands go. I am interested in purchasing it, as it seems like a good deal; however, I am not an expert and do not know if it is an original. How do I tell if this is a Saarinen Womb chair?

Robin

Lakewood, Colo.

Does the dealer imply it may be a knockoff? A knowledgeable and reputable dealer should be able to vouch for its authenticity. No label underneath? If you're trying to do research yourself, you'd need to shoot the overall chair plus the legs/connections to the body and share these with an outside source, such as Lloyd Fadem at retroredo.com. Don't forget that, while the chair purchase may be a real bargain, the price of recovering it can really boost your investment level. Retroredo could comment on this as well, or a local upholsterer experienced with MCM pieces (might be a hunt to find same and be careful that a craftsman used to working on more traditional pieces doesn't think a little more padding would be a little better...)

—ar editor

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

A 500-square-foot addition opens up the world

The Chrysalis Kitchen

Carving counter space out of thin air—cutting boards balanced on pulled out kitchen drawers—and tripping over each other as they cooked was status quo for Tacie Yoon and Kevin Kampschroer. Their narrow dining room wasn't any better: a permanent row of U-Haul boxes held Yoon's extra belongings and functioned as a defacto display area out of sheer necessity. The couple and their daughter, Erin, lived in Kampschroer's former bachelor quarters, a 1950s traditional ranch in Virginia with a decidedly modest footprint. But the pair weren't struggling artists or just out of college, and the make-do ethos grew old.

Yoon, a Washington, D.C., attorney, and Kampschroer, the director of the Office of Federal High-Performance Green Buildings, regularly entertain and all three family members are recreational cooks. Something had to give; the agent of change came in the form of Jim Burton of Carter + Burton, a Berryville, Va., architecture firm.

text Bromley Davenport

photography Daniel Afzal



After interviewing other architects—one sniffed at the size of their project, another made it clear that *he* would be making the materials choices—they meshed with Burton's inclusionary approach and the firm's aesthetic. The couple thought the best way to show him their daily challenges was to cook him a meal. It wasn't pretty.

"I was familiar with the neighborhood," Burton says. "It has some midcentury modern attempts, and a lot of potential to show what's possible. It was important to see past the limitations of what was there. The simple ranch shape is very easy to work from; it makes any addition feel elegant because there's not a lot going on to begin with."

Kampschroer, who sets the standards for green building for the federal government—Burton calls him the "Green Czar"—laughs about the modesty of his original home. "It was a forgettable, humdrum rambler," he says. "It had brick, shingles and no distinction whatsoever. The kitchen was cramped, the stove was on its last legs, and there was poor ventilation and no pantry. The dining room was tight with no display area, and if you were cooking and people were sitting in the living room, it was like they were in the next county."

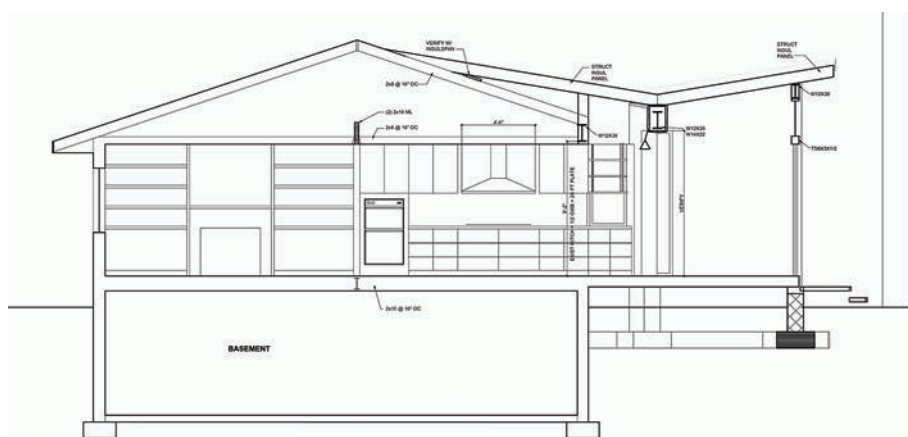
The standard ranch facade was transformed with a 500-square-foot butterfly roof kitchen/dining/entry addition that steps out into the forested front yard and gives the little house a dramatic stage-like performance space. It also brings in views of the wooded lake across the road through its window wall, something totally lacking in the home's previous incarnation. The new entry vestibule handles the shoe removal process, and the living room is no longer no-man's-land as it is now fully open to the kitchen.

Designing for someone who assesses design sustainability and new building technologies sounds like it could be intimidating. After Burton's initial presentation, the couple handed back some 50 pages of notes. "The thing that most translated from my work is how much the physical environment affects you even if you don't notice it," Kampschroer says. "I know that from the research that I've done on the effects of indoor air quality and your environment; it all affects your well-being. We were hoping to achieve something that affected us in a very positive way."

"I guess you could say I was the voice of reason and the pragmatic one of the two of us," Yoon adds about her role. "Kevin points out that



Tacie Yoon and Kevin Kampschroer like the neighborly aspect of their addition, with its porch-like front steps and stone patio. Although the surroundings look rural, lots are typically quarter acres and other homes are close by.



Previous spread and above; a stucco step wall guides visitors to the entry door and becomes the bearing wall for the butterfly roof. The upthrust portion of the roof was designed to bring more sun and natural light into the rooms. "It just became a logical concept as opposed to thinking 'butterfly' first," says architect Jim Burton. "The angle is good because it creates a valley that drains rainwater better and the entry stairs are welcoming—they're wider at the bottom than at the top."

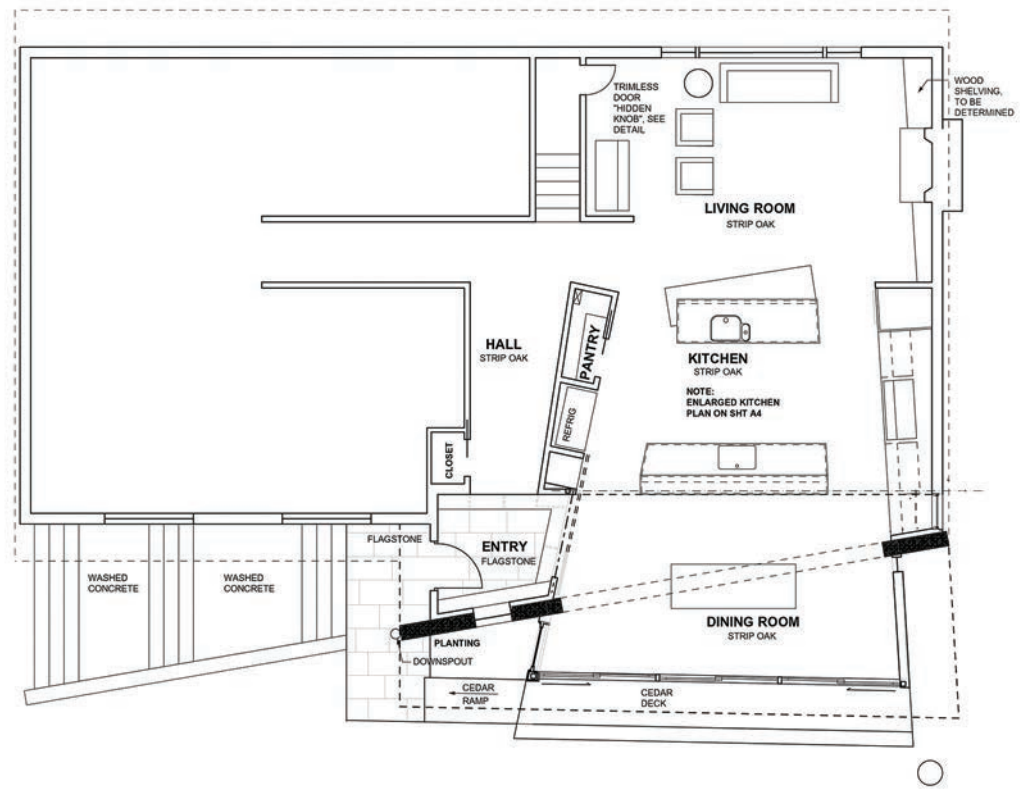
Drawings courtesy Carter+Burton



A lounge chair and four Mira chairs from George Nakashima Woodworker furnish a corner of the living room and a breakfast bar. Ecoresin panels are used in a ceiling treatment that showcases the roof trusses and runs down the hallway to the bedrooms, which are next on the list for updating.

The homeowners now have an airy dining spot that can easily handle family dinners, parties and cooking classes for 20. Red oak hardwood was chosen to tie in with the reused original flooring, and the cedar ceiling harmonizes with new Pella windows. The flat portion of the ceiling reflects the original house lines. "We like additions to clearly express what is new, yet still feel what was part of the old while renovating and blending it," says Burton.

*If the design phase was pure joy,
construction was less so.*



I made some useful observations about how he and I use space when cooking, thereby dictating the extra-wide space between the two islands. He has long arms and a propensity to get exuberant when handling sharp knives and hot pots and pans.”

If the design phase was pure joy, construction was less so. That process was slated to take six-and-a-half months; instead it took three years, six-and-a-half months. “The first 120 days of construction we had 90 days of rain, plus one hurricane,” Kampschroer reports. “That was when the front of the house was off, the steel frame was up and the roof SIPs had just been installed. We had to board up the house so the roof wouldn’t be torn off.”

Then there was the stuccowork that had to be redone, which Kampschroer estimates put them seven months behind. During this time the family was still living in the house, cooking in a makeshift kitchenette in the basement. While they might not choose to do it all over again, the end result was definitely worth the hassle.

The living room gained new shelving and a modernized fireplace surround, with a free-edge mantel that complements new Noguchi Mira chairs. The kitchen’s custom maple cabinets are paired with Port Orford cedar on the butterfly ceiling, and ecoresin panels were chosen for the backsplash, a lighting detail on the stainless steel-clad beam over the dining table and the living room ceiling. The front facade gained new Pella low-e, argon-filled exterior aluminum-clad windows.

“The kitchen area has enough definition that it feels like its own space, but from other parts of the open plan you can feel the kitchen linking to the dining room or living room,” Burton says. “Or you can feel all three areas working together; it’s a really interesting





balance. Sometimes open plans can be a little too open.

"We like to respect the history of a project even if it's a little rancher. There's a lot of integrity in those designs—that's why we enjoy working with them."

Kampschroer's favorite two comments about the home's metamorphosis came from friends. "An architect we know said, 'One of the things that I just realized is that everywhere I go in your house there is depth: depth of vista, and depth of detail; they complement each other. It makes whatever you're looking at pleasant in ways that you don't notice until you stop and look.'"

The other was from a friend who'd enjoyed maybe 100 dinners at their table. His succinct remark: "I had no idea you had a view." 🕶️

The stainless steel Neoporte door, the first pivoting model the company produced, echoes the cladding on the structural beam as well as the appliances in the adjoining kitchen area. The spotlights and pendants over the dining table can slide along a track to free up the space for large gatherings. Furnishings include a Le Corbusier LC4 Chaise Lounge and a vintage dining set from Kampschroer's parents.

Resources page 83



The aesthetics of the GE refrigerator, which needs periodic defrosting, won out over green energy concerns. New red laminate counters and edging, also sourced online, are repeated in the built-in desk and display area near the breakfast table (see page 29).

A photograph of a white General Electric refrigerator with chrome handles and a logo, set against a background of light-colored wooden kitchen cabinets. The refrigerator is a vintage model with a top freezer compartment.

Working Class

Heroes

**You don't
look
a day
over
50**

Paula and Mark Davey, both public school music teachers, both 47, had been trying to make their home into something it was not. Living in a vanilla '70s tract house stuffed with midcentury furniture and collectibles in Vancouver, Wash., the couple was planning to rip out their small kitchen and turn it into an ode to vintage style.

"We were trying to fit this '50s ideal into the wrong house," says Mark. That's when they chanced upon a 1959 ranch for sale a few miles away; it got them dreaming. "We stumbled across this house and started thinking that the remodel was pointless. We could be here and it would just fall into place."

text Michelle Gringeri-Brown

photography Jim Brown

“We really wanted to make it look like 1959.”

Living room furniture includes three Lane end tables as well as a Lane coffee table, all from family members. The vintage lounge chair and ottoman are newly reupholstered by Eastside Upholstery, as is the '40s couch, while the rug is from rugstudio.com. Impressive draperies run the width of the room and required 55 yards of barkcloth. Paula Davey praises the custom shades from Moon Shine Lamp and Shade, and owner D'lana Arthur's advice to go with red instead of a safer neutral; they dress up a pair of \$20 lamps with light-up bases that Mark found at an antique store.

Like any long-married couple, they didn't openly discuss their infatuations. They weren't in the market, but more than that, the timing was really poor. “We'd just had a death in the family and we were not thinking of moving at all,” Paula says. “But both of us, without talking to each other, kept thinking about this house.” The standoff lasted 10 days, whereupon they made a lowball offer that was accepted and the stone began to roll downhill.

Kitchen Centric

“You could see this was a solid house that you could do so much with,” Paula recalls, and Mark's memory is of “hardwoods that went on forever.” The house is one of the largest in the neighborhood, a small ranch tract called Allwood Manor, where a typical home runs between 1,200 and 2,000 square feet. At 3,300 square feet, counting the large unfinished basement, they felt like kids in a candy store.

As at the previous house, they were focused on creating the retro kitchen of their dreams. A large, L-shaped room, it was blessed with original cabinetry, tons of counter space, an expansive breakfast area and a built-in desk with even more storage. The pair was less keen on the ugly vinyl floor and the brown wall oven.

“Paula conceptualizes, down to the layout, color and design; then I get out the saws and hammers,” says Mark. “Because I work at a glacial pace, and she wasn't ready to be without a kitchen for any length of time, we hired it out to Nathan Darling of Indy Construction.”





details



Feeling that vintage appliances are what make or break a retro kitchen, the Davey family procured their refrigerator, stove and Western Holly wall oven, dubbed "The Pink Pig" by the plumber who installed it, online.

Paula Davey used vintage wallpaper on one section of the kitchen where the coppertone "Talk A Radio" is.



**Mark's love
of vintage kitchenwares
is what got this retro look started.**



Downlights were added to the original cabinetry and quarter round display shelves crafted in the area where upper and lower cabinets were removed. The white backsplash combines ceramic and accent glass tiles for touches of color.

Paula and Mark with Alison, 7, and Kevin, 6. The pull-down copper lamp original to the house illuminates inexpensive dinette chairs from Target and a vintage table from a friend.





Mark regularly uses his vintage barware, blenders and a small refrigerator, found on the street, in their “3 Deuces” basement bar, named for the New York hangout of Charlie Parker, Miles Davis and other jazz musicians. The colorful custom metal sign is by Steve Cambronne.

Going Vintage

Researching typical color schemes, the Daveys went with green, white and red, plus the warm honey color of the wood cabinetry. Red “Cracked Ice” laminate counters and metal edging were ordered through Bars & Booths, and new green pulls came from Van Dyke’s Restorers.

They opted to expand the size of the window over the sink and widen the doorway to the dining room. Two upper cabinets were removed and the overhead storage

compartment reframed to fit the shorter return. An electric cooktop was replaced with a reconditioned 1950 Wedgewood gas stove. Indy Construction also added downlights in the soffit area and built two display shelves for Paula’s knick-knacks.

“We saw a Jadite green Western Holly oven in Atomic Ranch, and we thought having an oven that looked like a clothes dryer was the best thing ever,” says Mark. They found a pink one on eBay for \$20, which at first felt like a huge score. What with \$400 to crate and ship, and adding the gas connection, it totaled about a grand. The refrigerator, the same GE model with rotating shelves that Mark had had as a bachelor, was found on craigslist for \$200.

Mark’s love of vintage kitchenwares is what got this retro look started. “The Rival Company had that whole line of ‘O-Mats’: Ice-O-Mat, Coffee-O-Mat, Knife-O-Mat.

There's a Shred-O-Mat for grating cheese. I started with a Can-O-Mat from a thrift store," he says. "I thought it was the coolest can opener; why don't we have these anymore? We still use our Juice-O-Mat and Jar-O-Mat daily."

The couple has lots of old-time barware for their downstairs "3 Deuces" bar, and culling and actively utilizing their collections became the house rule when they moved. "My little beef is when people make their home retro again, and the house looks awesome but the kitchen is too modern, with stainless steel appliances," Paula says.

"We really wanted to make it look like 1959. We use our blenders and all of our refrigerator dishes; there's no Tupperware in this house." ✱

Resources page 83

The Daveys display some of their clock, neon and advertising ephemera collections in the daylight basement, which also houses a retro bar and space for the couple's music lessons and band practice.

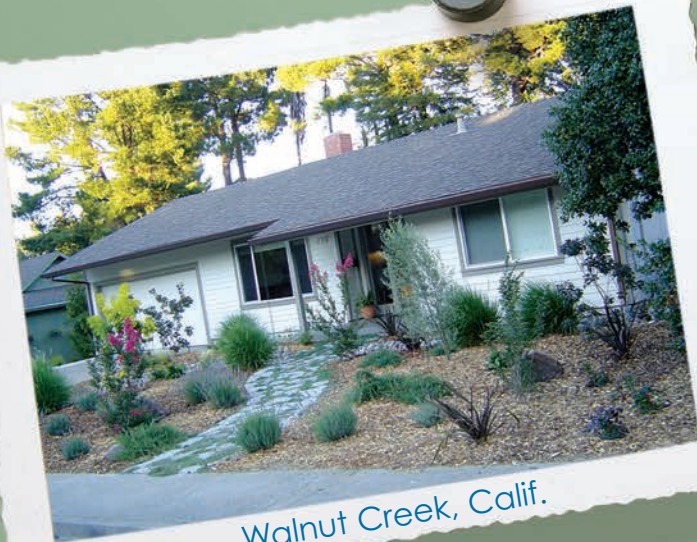




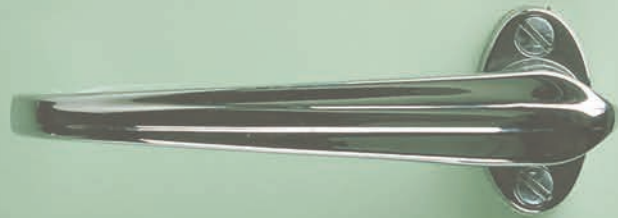
Norcross, Ga.



Farmington Hills, Mich.



Walnut Creek, Calif.



home page

Norcross, Ga.

My white brick ranch was quite a find, and I spend my weekends lovingly restoring it to its original 1962 splendor. One of only two midcentury marvels in the city of Norcross, the great thing about it was that it hadn't been touched, at all, in its 40-odd-year life. Solid 7" x 16" wood beams run from the front entrance, through the foyer, through the family room and out the rear of the house. Constructed by a builder as his own home, he added a wonderful 15' square kitchen with Coronet cabinets. Snow is rare in Atlanta, but this was the view on March 1, 2009; nothing looks better than to see your atomic ranch framed in snow!

Mark Lewis

Farmington Hills, Mich.

We love our ranch home in a '50s subdivision called Kendallwood, which includes 306 sites built by 14 different construction companies. While the designs do not include the flat-roof California style, they are all ranches with several different floor plans and even some A-frames. We have brought modern and MCM together in all our renovations, and especially love our sunroom, where we have decorated with art from Charley Harper. We met his son, Brett, several years ago, and my husband once spoke with Charley on the phone. Since his death, his estate is making his art much more available and affordable. (see p. 38)

Karen Bartos and Glenn Rader

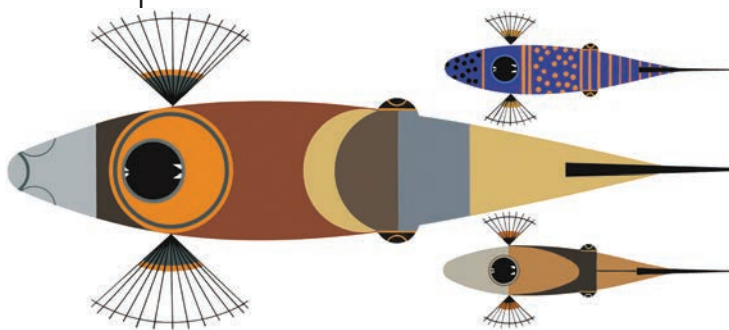
Walnut Creek, Calif.

We are proud of our remodeled, once-dreaded ranch house and wanted to share our front yard, with its low water usage and dry creek to contain storm runoff. The grasses are growing large, the crepe myrtle is in bloom and the front walk is rolled Blue Stone stepping-stones with wooley thyme planted in the joints. Our neighbors are pleased that the once ugly and barren front yard is now a place of beauty, and that a truly unique house now stands out among the mass of '60s ranches in our neighborhood. The home is truly loved.

Phyllis and Bob Goldberg

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 5.

cool|stuff



Where modern meets snarky nature, that's Charley Harper's world, and welcome to it. His commingling of modernism with wildlife (and other subjects, like the Conestoga wagon driving through the St. Louis Arch in "Where the East Meets the West") still feels incredibly stylish, although many images are decades old. Prices range from \$25 for lithographs to \$295 for giclees, with original prints at higher, but still reasonable rates from charleyharperartstudio.com.



Looking more like a set piece from Star Trek, Dyson's new bladeless fan will certainly register a few "Hey, what's that?" responses from visitors. The Air Multiplier has no blades, so gone are the concerns that little Johnny will lose a finger while investigating jet engine technology. Fortunately, they do not color coordinate with the company's popular vacuums, so if your palette is not Crayola-inspired, not to worry. Available in two sizes and three colors, starting at \$299.99 from dyson.com.



Despite a rather fey name, Fly-Fly, Foscarini's new pendant lamp does look like something winged—maybe a manta ray gliding under water—or midcentury, thinking Arne Jacobsen's stainless steel Hotel Royal series here. The work of the Palombas—prolific Milanese designers and architects—the 31" fixture is made of injection molded polycarbonate. The same technology used for car windows and bottle caps, it's highly transparent and touted as providing 360° lighting from its 300W halogen bulb. Available in white or orange, the surface looks like beach glass. Priced at \$887, find retailers at **foscarini.com**.

Easygoing sedums grow in many regions; these Zone 8 gardens include the gray-blue *Sedum spathulifolium* 'Cape Blanco' and an unidentified yellow-flowered variety.



Tweaking tradition

Live in a ranch
but not a
modern marvel?

We have
just the landscaping
ideas to get you going . . .

text Michelle Gringeri-Brown

photography SHWA

Post WWII, there was a lot of interest in exotics—blue cocktails and flaming appetizers,” says landscape architect Sam Williamson. The same went for plants: “When you think of phormium and other sculptural, crazy-looking plants—ocotillos and big, blue aloes—they were very popular. There was also an emphasis on minimalism—swathes of groundcovers like pachysandra and lawns—that you saw as well. Low maintenance was a big thing then, too.”

While the Phoenix look—succulents, palms and gravel—is graphically arresting, if you live in a less arid climate you may want a different approach. These three homes are sure to inspire: They’re all in USDA zone 8a (no colder than 10°–15°F typically) and were designed by Williamson’s firm, Samuel H. Williamson Associates in Portland, Ore.

“Some gardens for modern ranch houses extend the minimalist discipline out into the landscape; others are successfully set into a contrasting ‘jungle,’ ” he explains. “Le Corbusier would put his buildings into the wilderness; it’s almost a deliberate contrast with what’s going on in the house, and the contrast adds interest. The plants in these examples fit into one or the other type of garden, sometimes both.”

Seasonal Changes, Quilty Pleasures

The front yard in this first project was mostly lawn and shrubs past their prime. Homeowners Ed and Meg Okies wanted to address the boundary between public and private space and have a yard stylistically suited to their open-plan ranch. SHWA designed parallel bands of mounding groundcovers interspersed with basalt rock columns that form a textured tapestry—particularly appropriate since Meg is a clothing designer.

Williamson terms the design 'orthogonal'—a grid of aligned



rectangles with no curves in this interpretation. Although his firm conceived the project, the homeowners and another contractor selected and installed the plants. Some, such as the Dwarf mondo grass, are naturally clumping; others have become more blurred since the installation.

"Plants were selected that would grow to fill their allotted rectangle but not take over; the homeowners didn't want to battle their landscape for the next 30 years," he says. "There's a definite dot-dot-dot or eggs-in-a-carton quality to some of the plantings, while others have knitted together more. There are textural variations between the pieces of the quilt."

A path of aggregate concrete pavers leading to the front door and the side yard looks very midcentury, and the foundation beds under the eaves hold low-care shrubs and perennials with year-round textural interest. A grand old cherry tree was retained on the far side of the property, and three Paperbark maples and an existing tall cedar balance it near the driveway.

"One of the challenges of a house with wide eaves is that the areas underneath don't get any rainfall," Williamson mentions. "I couldn't do a groundcover, so we did bigger shrubs that could be situated just outside the eaves. That way, the root systems get water and the plant can fill in the area; another option is gravel or rocks." Plants in these foundation beds include hellebore, lily of the valley, penstemon and fetterbush, punctuated by several eave-high Hinoki false cypresses.



Foundation plants include **8** hellebore and **9** lily of the valley.



Opposite: The view through the cherry tree, shot when plants were a bit younger, shows the plot design most clearly. An original center walkway from the street was augmented with one running parallel to the house (see plan page 48). Fescue grass (*Festuca* 'Elijah Blue'), in the center of the frame, adds a nice counterpoint to the greens of the other groundcovers.



"We were interested in plants that had seasonal changes, while the basalt rock, the natural stone from this area, is unchanging," says landscape architect Sam Williamson. Groundcover plants include **1** bergenia (palm-sized round green leaves with seasonal pink flowers), then a row of **2** germander (*Teucrium chamaedrys* 'Nana'), which has spikes of small purple flowers. To the right of the first band of basalt are tight clumps of **3** dwarf mondo grass (*Ophiopogon japonicus* 'Nanus') and a smaller row of **4** lilyturf (*Liriope muscari* 'Majestic'). In the foreground is **5** black mondo grass (*Ophiopogon planiscapus* 'Nigrescens') and next to it, **6** coral bells (*Heuchera* 'Mint Frost'). Near the front door and the clump of bamboo in the background are looser drifts of **7** yellow-flowering sedum, seen in detail, left.

Long and Low and Young and Lovely

The Lozanos, who Williamson describes as young designers for Nike, updated their ranch and wanted a front yard that was in keeping. Starting with a post-construction blank slate, they knew they needed an organized plan of entry and wanted interesting views from the rooms inside. They already had a large, somewhat high-maintenance back yard with a pool, so minimal effort was at the top of their list for the expansive front plot.

Williamson calls their new plan a twist on the 1950s suburban front yard, traditionally dominated by lawn and foundation plantings. "This is a second take on midcentury modernism, and begins with the knowledge of what that landscape would be, but then doesn't adhere to it," he says.

"One thing I like to do with modern homes is to set up a very



Will It Grow in My Area?

Similar results in other zones can be achieved with different plant choices; SHWA has these recommendations for a look like the Lozano front yard.

Trees: *Instead of* **9** Birch-bark cherry (*Prunus serrula*)
Paperbark maple (*Acer griseum*) zones 4–8
Whitebarked Himalayan birch (*Betula jacquemontii*) zones 4–7
Honey locust (*Gleditsia triacanthos* 'Sunburst') zones 3–9

Low groundcover: *Instead of* **1** Creeping raspberry (*Rubus pentalobus*)
Pachysandra zones 4–9
Wild ginger (*Asarum europaeum*) zones 4–8
Heath (*Erica* sp.) some hardy to zone 4

Tall flowering perennials: *Instead of* **4** Spirea (*Spiraea* sp.)
Russian sage (*Perovskia atriplicifolia* 'Filigran') zones 6–9
Sedum 'Autumn Joy' zones 3–10
Aster species, many hardy to zones 4–5

Seen from the street, the Lozano landscape is dominated by rectangles of lawn and

1 Creeping raspberry groundcover (*Rubus pentalobus*), but SHWA included seasonal color as well. **2** Coreopsis 'Moonbeam' forms a parenthesis around **3** Mugo pines, and two levels up, near the house, is a large sweep of **4** spirea (*Spiraea* sp.) Lining the left side of the foundation are four **5** heavenly bamboo (*Nandina* 'Plum passion'), **6** Mexican orange (*Choisya ternata*) shrubs, **7** sedum 'Autumn Joy' and **8** purple Moor grass (*Molinia caerulea* 'Variegata').

clear, disciplined structure that relates to and extends the spaces of the house, then place within that looser garden areas, like wild horses in a corral.”

Geometric concrete pavers lead visitors from the curb or the driveway to a circular landing marking the front door. Four Birch-bark cherries with copper-colored trunks were planted at the corners of the entry hardscape, and groupings of River birches were added farther out in the yard. The disciplined rectangles of lawn and Creeping raspberry groundcover are broken up by looser sweeps of spirea, ornamental grasses and tall, layered perennials. There’s even annual color in the form of daylilies, echinacea and coreopsis, and some stalwart Northwest standards like Mexican orange, heavenly bamboo, specimen pines and other evergreens are used as accents.

“Low maintenance means you can’t have a huge variety of plant material,” Williamson says. “Our way of handling that was to make aggressive sweeps of single species, which tend to make the design cohesive and also keep weeds out. To guard from being too boring, we made an overlay of sculptural plants over that.”



Top: The view across the front yard shows that the “wild horse” elements still fit within an overall design discipline, even as they work to keep the plan from looking too buttoned-down.

Left: The fading blooms of a drift of spirea surround three River birches (*Betula nigra* ‘Heritage’) that steal the show with their dramatic peeling bark.



Below: From lawn to groundcover to layered herbaceous perennials—daisy-like **1** echinacea just coming into bloom and a clump of **2** Zebra grass (*Miscanthus sinensis* ‘Zebrinus’)—backed by a **3** birch on the right, red and green Japanese maples (center), and evergreens in the distance, this remote corner of the garden works as a nice screen for the view of the street.



I Think I'm Turning Japanese ... I Really Think So



Above and upper right: The similarities between this design and the Okies' home on pages 42–43 are apparent in the row massing of single species.

Right: Winter blooming **1** heath (Erica 'Kramer's Red') brings welcome color to the cold-weather landscape. The closed gate indicates 'Not here,' as the first path leads to the side yard; the main entry is to the right of the last post.

The last example uses some of the same linear groundcover approach as the first home, but with a distinctly Asian result. This remodeled midcentury home has a distinctive horizontal wood facade that the new front yard complements. The biggest challenges were the shallowness of the setback from the street and the sizeable footprint of the driveway.

"We did this project after the Okies' home, and I wanted to bring some of their elements to this garden," Williamson explains. "This was the only time in my career that I had a formal idea I wanted to explore more than once. The Okies' plot was very flat, so I asked myself, What if some of the bars were sticking up in the air?"

"The idea was to have a sweep of dark smooth rocks at the entry, with two large areas of very low groundcovers. Rising out of this field of groundcovers are bars of plants with contrasting texture and colors, selected to reference the materials of the house," he says. Black mondo grass, which picks up on the black granite bands in the front entry walk, and Japanese maples are two examples of this tie-in, particularly in the fall when the trees echo the orange of the Parklex siding.



A chunky wood-and-cable fence underplanted with sweeps of heath separates the yard from the street. “We didn’t want to wall the front yard off as a separate space—it would seem too cut off. We were looking for a feeling of entry, with a light fence and a jagged path that stepped down and to the side, a sense of passing through planes on the way to the front door,” Williamson continues.

Around the back of the house, a small flagstone patio gains privacy from neighbors with a line of arborvitae, a spreading Pfitzer juniper and a weeping cherry tree. Other plants are species repeats (but different varieties) from the front yard: blue-green euphorbia, ornamental grasses and a low specimen pine.

“The river rock under the eaves and the sculptural pine tree against the house are straight from Japanese design,” Williamson says. “There’s a simplicity to the design, an elimination of unnecessary visual noise that seems very Japanese to me.”



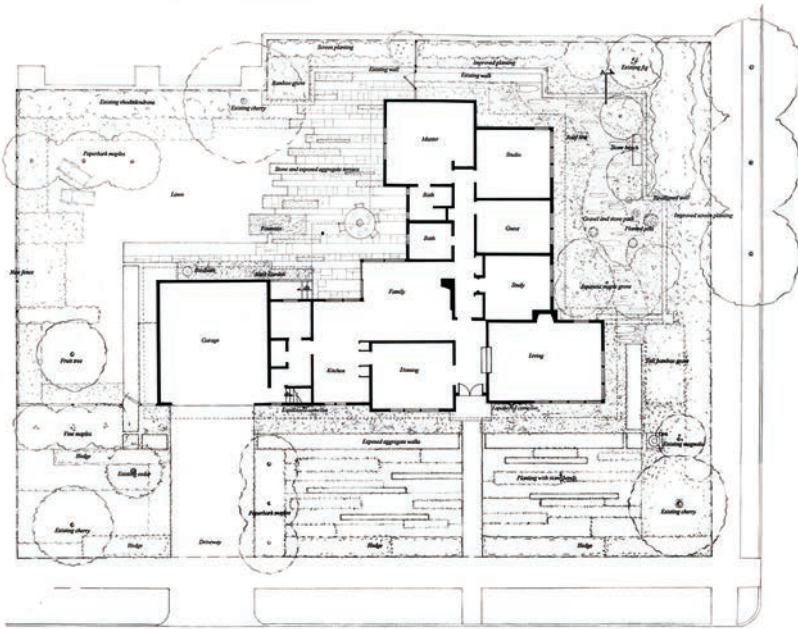
With a much smaller canvas than the other examples, SHWA still packed a lot of interest into the yard of this modern ranch house designed by Lane Williams of Coop15 in Seattle. From the curb, moving backward we see massed **1** heath, **2** ornamental strawberry (*Fragaria* sp.) groundcover, a row of **3** purple wood spurge (*Euphorbia amygdaloides* 'Purpurea'), **4** black mondo grass and a row of **5** Adam's needle (*Yucca filamentosa* 'Variegata'), which earlier in the year sent up dramatic flowers on tall spikes. The trees include a **6** Lodgepole pine (*Pinus contorta*), three flaming **7** Japanese maples in full fall color and a **8** weeping Japanese maple in a niche near the front door.

Top: A rear patio (see plan page 48) gains privacy from a series of tall **9** arborvitae, a **10** spreading juniper (*Juniperus chinensis* 'Pfitzeriana') and a **11** weeping cherry tree (*Malus* sp.). The yellow spiky grass is **12** Moor grass (*Molina caerulea*).

Plot Plans

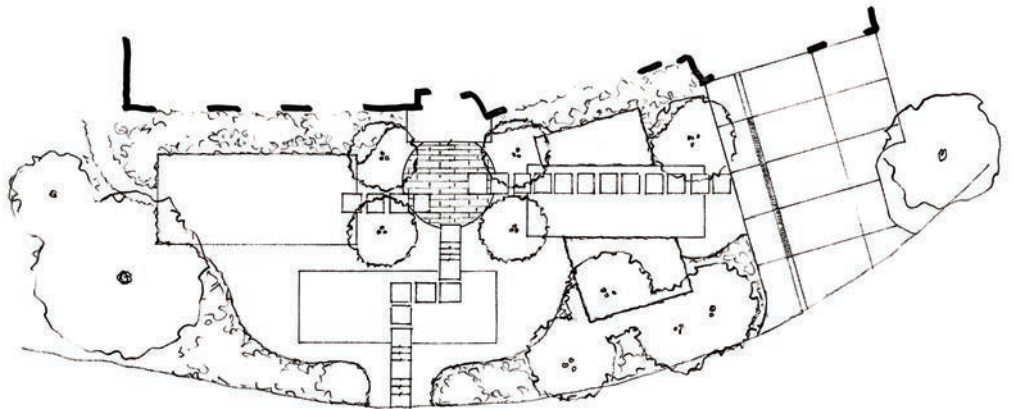
Okies

"A rolled out lawn and a strip of three azaleas is not a landscape; there's no extension of the architecture that makes up the house," says Sam Williamson. "I've noticed that Eastcoasters, who are exposed to older homes, have higher expectations of what a landscape should be." The Okies' home is blessed with a number of mature trees in both front and rear yards.



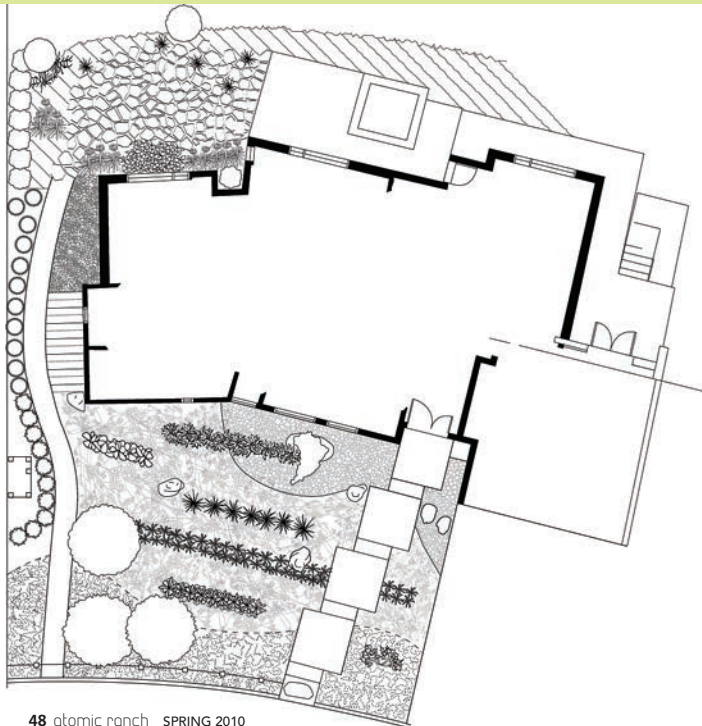
Lozano

"The number of clients who say 'I want a really high-maintenance garden' is smaller than you might think," Williamson says dryly. He estimates that all of these gardens could get by with quarterly or monthly maintenance, though that is largely driven by the presence or absence of lawns. Williamson cautions homeowners to think long term with their plant choices to avoid overgrown 30' shrubs in a 10' space.



Japanese

An irregularly shaped lot and nearby neighbors were typical suburban challenges for this installation. "The Japanese maples are a sculptural violation of the strict geometry of the front yard, which gives you some relief," Williamson notes. "The design is clean and contemporary like the updated ranch house that it fronts."



atomicbooks

Better Together!
(sorry, Amazon)



Midcentury Architects

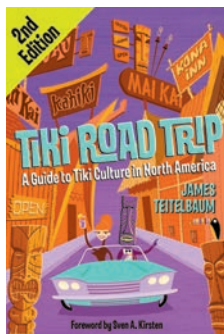
Saarinen
by Pierluigi Serraino, 96 pp., \$14

This small softcover volume introduces you to Eero Saarinen's architecture—the St. Louis arch, TWA terminal and many more—his Tulip and Womb chairs and his collaborations with Charles Eames. Then, learn more about his life and prolific designs in the Fall 2009 issue, along with articles on remodels in Austin and Omaha and collectors' homes in Washington State and Connecticut.

Master Builders

Cliff May and the Modern Ranch House
by Daniel Gregory, 256 pp., \$60

A hefty coffee-table book, *Cliff May* explores the builder's quintessential houses, from b&w archival shots to contemporary color photography of the Long Beach Ranchos tract and large custom homes. A look at a San Jose home by fellow developer Joseph Eichler is in Summer 2009, as well as features on modern in Indiana and Minnesota, and classic homes in Palm Springs and Dallas.



Get Your Retro On

Tiki Road Trip: A Guide to Tiki Culture in North America
by James Teitelbaum, 360 pp., \$16.95

Find out what throwback delights are hidden in your state—from kitschy restaurants and bars to their signature exotic drinks—with this softcover guide to the midcentury fascination with all things faux Polynesian. Then admire a veritable time capsule of a house in Milwaukee, along with family theme-remodels from California and Oregon, and a Florida getaway in Winter 2009.

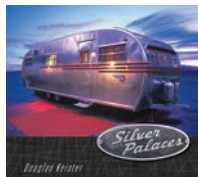
California Architecture

Forgotten Modern: California Houses 1940–1970
by Alan Hess, 280 pp., \$39.95

Less well-known modernist homes from Claremont to the Bay Area get their star treatment in this hardcover coffee-table book photographed by Alan Weintraub. If you're interested in expanding your vocabulary beyond Alexander, Eichler and Neutra, this is an informative read. For a blast of modernism for the masses, Spring 2009 takes you to Tustin's Broadmoor tract, as well as contemporaries in Seattle and Austin and vintage interiors in Pennsylvania and Oregon.



Back Issues \$6.95 while they last



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., \$24.95



Inspiring 1950s Interiors

Over-the-top rooms from Armstrong Flooring vintage advertising are a great guide to re-creating authenticity in your own ranch. What colors were they using in living rooms? What bath fixtures should I be looking for at the salvage yard? Softcover, 176 pp., \$29.95



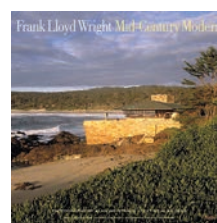
The Vintage Home

A small hardcover book from the UK that brings to mind Terence Conran titles of the '70s. The room-by-room approach is helpful—the kitchen section chats about cabinetry, dining furniture, flooring, appliances and tableware—and inspires one to think beyond the usual suspects when decorating your home. Judith Wilson, color photos, 144 pp., \$19.95



Ranch Houses: Living the California Dream

A photography-driven book thanks to Joe Fletcher's images, the writing style is casual, accessible and brief after the 20-page historical introduction. In addition to 14 midcentury homes, it expands your ranch vocabulary to include the 1800s and six recent interpretations. David Weingarten & Lucia Howard, hardcover, 240 pp., \$50



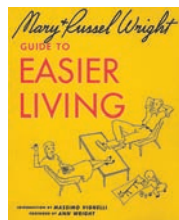
Frank Lloyd Wright Mid-Century Modern

This volume takes you inside homes rarely open to the public, focusing on Wright's late career after his Prairie School oeuvre. Visit Fallingwater, the Seth Peterson cottage, Usonian houses and other moderns, along with less-well-known designs like the Marshall Erdman prefabs. Alan Hess, hardcover, color photos, 336 pp., \$55



Little Boxes: The Architecture of a Classic Midcentury Suburb

Westlake, the quintessential postwar neighborhood in the Bay Area, gets the glamour treatment in this attractive hardcover book looking at the "boxes made of ticky-tacky." Built on tight suburban lots, the neighborhood and its unique architecture is inspiring. Rob Keil, color and b&w vintage photos, 144 pp. \$35.00



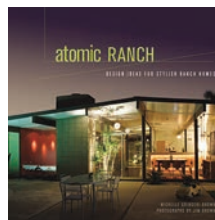
Guide to Easier Living

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., \$18.95



Charles & Ray Eames

Covering Charles and Ray Eames in 96 pages is a challenge, but this small softcover book is a great intro to the couple's career. From their Case Study houses, plywood experiments and Aluminum Group furniture to exhibitions like "Mathematica" and their film series, including "Powers of Ten," this volume will whet your appetite for more. Gloria Koenig, color and b&w photos, \$14



Atomic Ranch: Design Ideas for Stylish Ranch Homes

New to the magazine? Complete your midcentury reference shelf with an autographed copy of our hardcover coffee-table book. From budget decorating and neighborhood preservation to high-end remodels and online resources, there's plenty of inspiration in its pages. Michelle Gringeri-Brown & Jim Brown, color photos, 192 pp., \$39.95



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. \$29.95



A Constructed View: The Architectural Photography of Julius Shulman

Much celebrated for his b&w Case Study series, in this book you'll enjoy the iconic architecture of Koenig, Lautner, Saarinen, Schindler, Eames and more, as well as 1930s L.A. and '70s and '80s color plates shot in Brazil, Mexico and the U.S. The text entertainingly covers his biography, photographic staging and relationships with some of modernism's biggest names. Joseph Rosa, 224 pp., \$50

A photograph of a modern house with large windows and a patio. In the foreground, there is a dark metal pergola structure. The patio is paved with large, flat stones. Three lounge chairs are arranged on the patio. The house has a light-colored exterior and a brick chimney. The background is filled with lush greenery and trees.

Oregon Tale:

Joe Average
Goes Off a Cliff

text Joe Barthlow
photography Jim Brown



Maintaining the Cliff May grid pattern with an exposed aggregate patio was a detail we wanted in our back courtyard. After removing 12 dump trucks of debris, in went a pergola, new fence, a 70' retaining wall, two raised planting beds and a low-maintenance landscape inspired by Thomas Church and the Portland Japanese Garden. The butterfly chairs were a yard sale score from around the block.



before

While the cabinets and Westinghouse oven and cook-top remained, the original countertops vanished sometime in the early 1970s. We reproduced close-to-vintage counters with aqua, charcoal and white boomerang laminate from a bar supply store, and edging from Lansing Linoleum in Portland, Ore. One modification we made was to continue the countertop over the washer and dryer at the far end of the kitchen U, and build a tri-fold door to hide them. We replaced the island's '70s walnut paneling with birch plywood and matched it to the patina of the cabinets with amber shellac. Custom-cut pieces of stainless steel for the backsplash were cheap and easy to install ourselves.



All she could say was “Hmm ... hmm.” This was good—it wasn’t a “Yes” but it wasn’t a “No,” either. I still had an opportunity to convince my wife, Tina, that this could be our next home.

We were looking at a house that had sat vacant for a year and a half, the makeshift storage locker in the carport tagged with graffiti and its doors hanging by one hinge. A jail-bar screen door guarded the entry. The worn out roof had a solar water heater at the end of its life, while the landscape consisted of neglected rhododendrons, a dying pear tree and several large holes courtesy of a former owner’s dog. Neighbors had considered tearing the house down and replacing it with a garden.

On the positive side was the location in Eugene, Oregon’s, Ferry Street Bridge area, a part of town we normally couldn’t afford. The foreclosed 1955 house was on a good-size lot; other positives included the low-pitched roof, slab radiant heat, exposed ceiling beams, open floor

plan, clerestory end gables and walls of glass.

After commuting from Salem to Eugene for eight months, Tina and I decided it was time to move back to our old college town where I worked in a design studio. We had just finished restoring a 1939 Cape Cod and weren’t really looking for another fixer. But after trying to do the cottage bungalow thing, it just wasn’t working for us; our favorite part of our Cape Cod was the remodeled ‘50s basement. My taste was leaning toward something more contemporary, something different, maybe, of all things, a ranch house.

Ah-Ha Moment

What led us to the discovery of this midcentury home was an epiphany we experienced at the airport 10 years ago. While Tina and I were waiting to catch a flight, I grabbed a shelter magazine for inspiration in our quest for a new home. The magazine featured a Palo Alto house

built by some guy named Eichler. It had glass walls, glass end gables, exposed beams, large open rooms and cool furniture found on eBay and at yard sales. The owners seemed like average people like us.

From that point I became obsessed and hit the Web in search of anything Eichler. I discovered the Eichler Network and Lottalivin.com, sites whose members were restoring midcentury modern homes. I also found a book on eBay, *Builders' Homes for Better Living*, written by A. Quincy Jones and Frederick Emmons in 1957, that described everything that was wrong about the house we were living in and everything right about the house we now desired. It was a life-changing read for both of us.

"I think I've seen houses like those in the South Hills of Eugene," I told Tina. So, on our first free weekend we made the hour drive to have a look. We found a '50s post and beam for sale that was small and out of our price range, but we quickly realized this was what we wanted. We also realized most homes in that area were out of reach.

That didn't stop us from looking. One day our Eugene realtor sent me some listings to scout. A low-slung ranch house with a carport in a desirable neighborhood caught my eye. So did the price.

After our initial visit, I knew I had some objections to overcome and had to show Tina the potential for this dilapidated ranch. Using books and magazines, I illustrated what could be—from landscape design and restoring the window walls to new paint colors. With those images, the location and a price drop from the bank, we were on our way to owning a midcentury home.

Cliff Dwelling

Nothing like trying to squeeze 2,300 square feet of stuff into a 1,280-square-foot house. All of our furniture was overscale and the wrong style for our new house. For a year, we did nothing but learn about our home and research others of the same period. I stockpiled old magazines like *House + Home*, *House Beautiful* and *Sunset*. We even hired an architect to help us with an addition we wanted to build. Our plans were grand, but ultimately unaffordable. After several bids from contractors, we

We felt restoring the original garage would offer a better use of space, so we removed the large brick fireplace and rebuilt the garage door and clerestory window. A restored '64 Vespa GS is my daily commuter.



Positives included
the low-pitched roof,
open floor plan
and
clerestory end gables.







realized we would have to consider other options to improve our space.

Out of the blue, a neighbor mentioned our house was designed by California architect Cliff May. I found several books published on his works, but at the time May was known more for his sprawling custom ranch homes than his builders' tracts.

Our neighborhood is a little different than other May tracts in a couple of ways. Its curvilinear design allowed each house to be individually sited to maximize its southern exposure, presenting different facades to the street.

The den doubles as my graphic design studio, where I have a custom desk with legs from IKEA and vintage Eames shell chairs. Our renovation included adding a floor-to-ceiling window unit and accenting the south wall with birch paneling.



Simple white ceramic tile on the walls adds a touch of period style to a basic bath. At 11 cents each from a local home improvement store, it kept our bathroom project costs down significantly. The original vanity got a new white laminate top, and when we were unable to match the pink fixtures, we had the tub painted to coordinate with the more recent white toilet and a new Kohler period-appropriate sink.



Additionally, the Cliff Mays are mixed in with custom ranch houses and other midcentury modern homes, which include *Better Homes and Gardens* designs by Hugh Stubbins and by Wurster, Bernardi and Emmons.

Our house was the final version of Cliff May and Chris Choate's prefab design. This means it has a larger living area and a better kitchen design than prior models. Ours also included an extra half-width wall panel between the main bathroom and the bedrooms, improving the placement of the closets and providing a central hallway linking the three bedrooms.

Crafting the Vision

Like most, our renovation project was driven by budget. Every room and surface needed help—drywall, electrical upgrades, paint, flooring, insulation, bathroom tile and fixtures, new doors and replacing the roof and boiler. Structurally, our biggest challenge was restoring the original front facade of the garage. The first owner decided to convert it into a narrow family room by removing the garage door and erecting a huge fireplace with an 11' hearth.

"My dad built the fireplace in the early 1960s," mentioned Charles Desler, a Sacramento architect who moved into the house when it was new in 1955. "[That's] where



Previous page: French doors and replacement wood windows look out onto the back patios. In this part of the living room we have two vintage Eames shell chairs and a trio of Shag prints.

The living room has both open spaces and more intimate areas, like the seating near the fireplace. There, a walnut Knoll credenza and wrought iron telephone stand flank our only splurge, a sofa from Design Within Reach. The Plycraft lounge chair and ottoman—a vintage Eames knockoff—came from popcorn baron Orville Redenbacher's office. The shelf system on the back wall was a project out of *Sunset* magazine.





Bang for our Buck

Our budget was just over \$52K. The bulk of our time was spent on research and design, and serving as the general contractor. We felt we wasted \$7,000 on architectural plans we didn't use; to date, we have spent about \$59K.

- \$11,000 door and window restoration
- \$7,000 restoring garage opening and beam replacement
- \$6,000 new roof (Duro-last membrane)
- \$5,000 new patios, walkway, dog run
- \$4,200 insulation, drywall replace/repair, interior paint, electrical, lighting
- \$3,000 excavation
- \$3,000 gas boiler
- \$2,700 asbestos flooring removal
- \$2,200 new VCT floor
- \$2,000 plants, rocks, ground coverings, drip system
- \$2,000 retaining wall
- \$1,000 guest bath rehab
- \$1,000 kitchen rehab
- \$1,000 raised beds and pergola
- \$700 courtyard fence and gate
- \$300 oven/cook top refurbish
- \$200 rainwater drain to the street
- \$200 exterior paint

—JB

he put the hibachi for his daily (more or less) steak, unless it was Friday, and then it was Hamburger Heaven on the Willamette."

We also had to replace a rotten beam at the front of the garage and straighten out a couple of posts in the carport. "I destroyed the right front column with some car during a party when I was a teenager," Desler admitted.

The gable clerestories were intact, but none of the wood-frame windows and doors remained. We were able to acquire originals from other Cliff May owners in Eugene, and even drove down to Pomona, Calif., for some collected from remodeled houses in a May neighborhood. What originals we couldn't find through salvage, we replicated, and all received dual pane, low-e glass.

Because of the budget, nearly every project came back to restoration and careful period-correct renovation, which cost far less than radical remodeling or the contemporary "upgrades" that plague many homes of this era. Serving

as our own general contractors, our D.I.Y. involvement was ultimately only drywall demo, insulation, painting, light carpentry and landscaping. Using our research to guide our design decisions really saved us a lot of money.

"We're in this for the long haul," I told Tina. Undoing the bad remodeling decisions of past owners has given this house a chance to survive another 50 years, which we plan to experience right along with it. 💰

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Learn more about May's architecture in *Cliff May and The Modern Ranch House*, available from the Atomic Ranch Bookstore, page 50; atomic-ranch.com.

Joe Barthlow is a freelance graphic designer and vintage Vespa aficionado; his blog is at cliffmayhomes.com. Tina Barthlow, a financial associate, can be seen on the back of Joe's Vespa.

modern masters

for your
ranch:



Arne Jacobsen (1902–1971)

Arne Jacobsen



text Timothy Sullivan

Photos courtesy Fritz Hansen.com

A few years ago, I noticed that a store in a local mall had installed a new chair near its entrance. Shaped like an eggshell, upholstered in tweed and set on a swivel, it exuded James Bondian cool and modern sophistication. Each time I walked by the door, I marveled at the chair's magnetism. Children and adults alike couldn't resist stopping to strike a playful pose on it, delighting in its ability to flatter and uplift the sitter to an imagined lifestyle more soigné than his or her own. Never before had I seen people react to a piece of furniture in quite this way, and I was not alone.

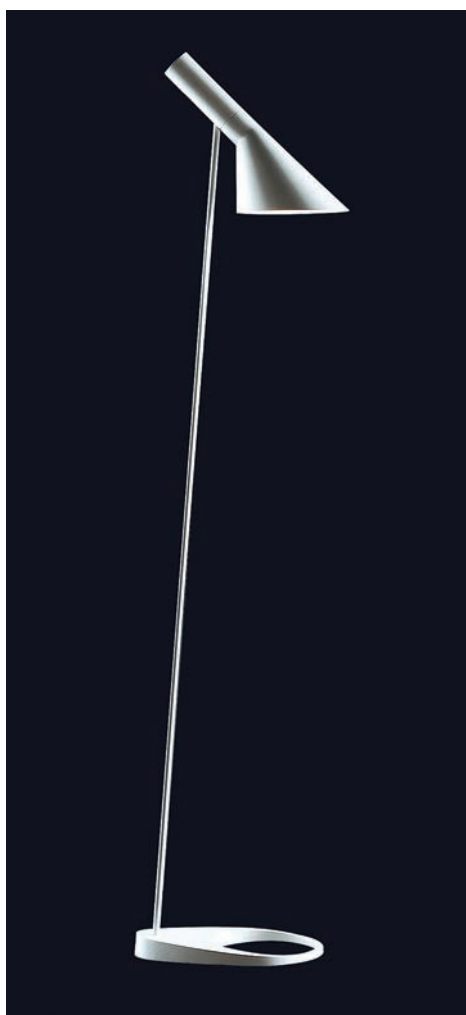
Before long, another clever store manager installed a similar piece in his window display, and again, the curious marched inside to take a peek. While I overheard some of the shoppers comment that they were sitting on "chairs of the future," I knew something that they did not. The first was an Egg Chair and the second a Swan Chair, both designs that had been around for about 50 years. And both were by the same designer, the legendary Danish architect who helped to define Atomic-era modernism, Arne Jacobsen.

Jacobsen was one of the leading lights of midcentury design. From faucets to furniture, commercial build-



Opposite: One of the most comfortable and supportive chairs to emerge from the 1950s, Jacobsen's Swan Chair was made for the SAS Royal Hotel.

Jacobsen had the opportunity to put his thoughts on integrated design into practice when he created the glamorous SAS Royal Hotel, Copenhagen's first skyscraper, in 1960. From the building to the textiles, door handles and cutlery for the hotel restaurant, he did it all. Here in the lobby are groups of Swan and Egg chairs surrounding Jacobsen coffee tables.



ings to lighting, he had an impact upon almost all the fixtures of architecture and design. You might call him “the total package,” because if you hired him, he wanted to design everything for you. A firm believer in integrated design, he attempted to achieve a harmonious whole in his buildings by paying careful attention to all the elements of a structure, right down to the doorknobs, lampshades and flatware. So passionate was his insistence upon this level of control that he had it written into some of his clients’ contracts.

While it may no longer be possible to have Jacobsen design every last detail of a home, there is good news: You can still integrate much of his best work into your own house. Many of his most popular products are produced to this day, including his flatware, pieces of which were made famous through their use in Stanley Kubric’s film “2001: A Space Odyssey.” Clearly, those futuristic shoppers were onto something.

Jacobsen was born in Copenhagen in 1902. He apprenticed as a bricklayer, but at age 22 left the field to study architecture at the Royal Academy of Arts and to travel around Europe. He soon achieved recognition at the 1925 Paris Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs, where he won an award for a chair design. While visiting France and Germany, he came under the influence of modernist greats Le Corbusier, Mies van der Rohe and Walter Gropius. Enthralled, he returned to his native Denmark, eager to translate these architects’ new ideas into a style that remained sensitive to the classical Danish tradition in which he had been trained. It wasn’t long before the Danish Academy awarded him a medal for such a design.

During World War II, Jacobsen had to flee Nazi Denmark. He took up residence in Sweden, which he found inspirational. It was not until well after the war and its many privations, however, that he was able to establish the type of challenging architectural practice he desired. It was also during the 1950s that he developed most of the furniture, lighting and fixtures that later became commercial successes. His interest in the work of Charles and Ray Eames, and a series of fortuitous commissions, inspired him to create some of the most beautiful pieces of midcentury design.

In 1952 his now famous Ant Chair was developed for the canteen of a Danish pharmaceutical company. It was designed to be light and stackable, with an open three-legged base that did not entangle feet. He followed it up in 1955 with an adapted design called the Series 7 Chair. Made of molded plywood with three different bends, it had all the benefits of the Ant with even more stability and comfort. At a reported five million-plus production, it has remained one of the most imitated and best-loved chairs in recent history.

Before long, Jacobsen had become famous, and with notoriety came important commissions. Scandinavian Airlines asked him to design their Copenhagen terminal and the Royal Hotel; it was for the latter that he designed the Egg and Swan chairs. As with his stacking pieces, he pushed materials to their limits, creating seating with organic shapes that was as comfortable and light as it was elegant. Not one to leave details to chance, he accompanied these pieces with a matching lamp that was perfect for reading, yet delicate and unassuming.

Jacobsen continued to design products throughout the 1960s, taking up the humble and the glamorous with vigor until his death in 1971. Having observed his impact firsthand, it is obvious that his style is as fresh today as it was decades ago. And if his work is the furniture of tomorrow, we can be well assured it will be a happy future.



Practical, stackable and comfortable, the Ant (seen here in white) and Series 7 chairs have graced countless homes, film sets and photo shoots for decades. The Ant Chair is available in three- and four-leg versions and the Series 7 comes in various heights and myriad colors as well as upholstered.

To achieve the Egg's minimalist upholstery, the chair requires extensive hand stitching and multiple days of work to complete.

Opposite, top: Jacobsen's classic 1957 flatware has been so popular that it has never gone out of production.

Courtesy, Georg Jensen

Opposite, bottom: Consistent with Jacobsen's belief in integrated design, the architect left a hole in the base of his 1960 AJ floor lamp for an ashtray.

Courtesy, Louis Poulsen





Red Rock *Repose*

text and photography Marie Tartar



We fell hard for the red rocks of Sedona. Rust-colored spires glowing in a fiery sunset landed us in a realtor's office several years ago to look for an Arizona getaway property. By day, my husband, Steve Eilenberg, and I are both radiologists, mining images of the human body for evidence of disease; by avocation, we are devoted nature and underwater photographers. Our surroundings have always been important to us, leading us to acquire and rehabilitate several unusual properties.

Steve Eilenberg



Our primary residence in San Diego is an early design by Wallace Cunningham, known as “Aperture.” The name derives from the radial arrangement of the floating roof segments, much like the leaves of a camera opening. It was a distressed property, as was the 1966 Howard Madole-designed Sedona house we acquired in 2007.

We weren’t familiar with Madole’s residential architecture, but quickly were brought up to speed by our realtors and ModernPhoenix.net, which had a link to our future house. On the market for a year, due to a combination of being overpriced and needing work, my excitement rose as we headed farther and farther down the street, finally stopping at the road’s dead-end junction with the national forest.

Right off, we could see intriguing features and good bones. This required mentally subtracting questionable paint colors, a plethora of decorative elements in the yard and poorly executed “improvements” that utilized pipes and wiring on the exterior. Stacked schist fireplaces in the great room and master bedroom were fantastic original features, ones we soon learned were a signature Madole element along with exposed wood ceilings. The lot was big and private, with an incredible panoramic view of the

national forest and red rock formations known as Steamboat and Shiprock. The house was larger than we needed, but not ridiculously so, and had a small guest-house in addition.

We enlisted the aid of a San Diego friend, design consultant and fellow midcentury enthusiast Bryan Forward, to help in color selection and to speed our decision-making process. Working on this project from another state would require periodic visits and long distance oversight—we wouldn’t have the luxury of visiting the site daily and weighing in on every small decision that arose. We needed to formulate a comprehensive plan and communicate it and our goals as clearly as possible.

Shortly after closing in early August, the three of us swooped in SWAT-team style to plan our attack. Armed with inflatable mattresses and sleeping bags, and prepared with small cans of sample paint colors, we came to figure out what to tackle and how to do it.

Some decisions were easy—the house needed painting badly, inside and out, including the pink and navy blue cabinet interiors. Other decisions were harder. Fortunately, most of the vast expanse of wood ceilings



Steve Eilenberg



Opposite: The rear of the house looks out on a native landscape that replaced the previous owners' attempt to turn the high desert into an English garden. Above: Mimicking the color of the red clay soil, Dunn Edwards 'Hope Chest' was used on the masonry, while 'Battle Harbor' olive green is on the T-111 siding and 'Weathered Brown' for the beams and trim. The intricate original front door required two weeks of hand sanding. Steps are cast concrete, and a cast aluminum architectural element by Malcolm Leland hangs on the wall. Below: Two original Howard Madole tiles form the cornerstones of a new brick patio.



The Architect

Howard Madole began his architectural career on a Sedona parcel acquired by his parents around 1948. A graduate of the University of Iowa without formal design or engineering training, Madole learned by doing and improvising, down to hand-making adobe bricks for early projects. Over the course of his career he built dozens of houses, many of which display the characteristic design elements seen in our home; a 1962 house of his achieved Sedona Landmark status in 2007.

During the 1950s, Madole became involved with Taliesen West and built Wright's award-winning Usonian replica that is housed on that site. In 1966, he moved to Phoenix, where his career expanded to include commercial projects. He cites the former Northwestern Mutual Life building, built in 1977, as a personal favorite of his, with its award-winning concrete work and 45-degree angled second story.

At age 87, Madole is still active enough to hold court at an open house we hosted recently for Sedona's Historic Preservation Commission. About 70 mid-century modern enthusiasts attended, including many who made the two-hour trip from Phoenix.

—MT



and overhangs had not been painted, and, as we later learned from Howard Madole himself, had been coated with a cocktail of varnish, linseed oil and an aluminum salt mixture. This coating had turned muddy over 40 years, and there were areas of water damage and oxidation to be ameliorated as well. (Another Madole house we saw with a similar ceiling showed us what not to do: sandblasting left a rough texture more suitable to a southwest-style house than a modern one.) In the end, a crew of men hand sanded the entire wood ceiling for two weeks, restoring it to its rightful status as the home's crowning glory.

Both of the bedrooms initially seemed dark. My first impulse was to extend the floor-to-ceiling windows, but further study suggested other solutions. Light to the master bedroom was choked off by a carport and an enclosed

slate patio, both later additions. Undoing the patio enclosure restored the home's exterior lines and brought sunlight to the master bedroom. As for the carport, which blocked views to the forest and red rocks, we were not unhappy to learn it was crippled from termites anyway, and so it was torn down.

We made some happy discoveries. The claustrophobic kitchen had the original turquoise sink, cooktop and oven, while bright faux-marble paint concealed a pristine butcher block counter. An impulse to tear out overhead cabinets adjoining the living room was almost irresistible, until we figured out that another entrance to the kitchen had been walled up at some point. Once that was open, the kitchen again made sense in its original layout.

By the end of the four-day weekend, we had decided on



Opposite: Looking out from the front entry, the large overhangs—a characteristic Madole element—are Douglas fir 2x4s set on end. The green entryway slate coordinates with the naturalized yard by Jon Kerchner of Green Magic Landscaping in Sedona.

Left: In the large master bedroom, new birch plywood replaced time-dulled paneling. A Milo Baughman bed, a Modern Fan Company 'Ball' fan and a vintage pole lamp and Dux armchair furnish the room.

Below: The view toward the later-added studio shows the new brick patio on a lower level. A packrat- and termite-infested wood deck outside the studio was replaced with brick recycled from the front of the house; much of the fill material came from gravel and other materials gained from recontouring the landscape.





the major paint colors, what was to be saved, what to demolish and what to restore. Every surface was studded with instructions, transforming the house into a static ticker tape parade of confetti-colored notes. We aimed to keep the best of the original, paring back some dubious additions and improvements from later eras to highlight the strong lines and features of the house. We wanted to be practical, with an eye to good function, without being rigidly purist about retaining every possibly original element.

Some features we hoped to rehabilitate proved to be too far gone. We thought time-dulled birch plywood walls in the master bedroom could be easily restored by sanding and oiling. Our contractor responded, “Yes, it could be done that way—with a tremendous amount of time, effort and expense. It would be cheaper to replace the panels with new.” Similar hopes to resuscitate the kitchen cabinets inexpensively were countered by the contractors pointing out that the doors were warped and the drawer mechanisms shot. We ended up keeping and painting the original boxes and having new birch plywood doors and drawers made.

We elected to upgrade other seemingly original features. Hollow core doors were replaced with solid core, a folding closet door now has sliding birch panels, and all of the hardware (door hinges, handsets and electrical covers) was changed out to achieve a coherent, period-appropriate look.

A huge skylight in the dining room presented another challenge. It was blindingly bright and shrinking it would be difficult, as we’d be hard pressed to match the ceiling material. Our electrician suggested building a wood surround in which small, recessed light fixtures could be placed to address the room’s lack of light at night. Then our contractor further proposed hanging metal screens to disguise the size of the openings; the massive skylight was thus visually tamed and is now an asset.

Along the way, decisions were accompanied by the constant weighing of what we wanted against what existed: Is it good enough to keep? Can it be refurbished? Are we better off—functionally, financially or aesthetically—replacing it? Trying to keep the palette coherent, with a minimum number of colors and materials, was an effort.



Opposite: In the dining room, the Danish Modern table and Erik Buck-designed chairs were found at Mid-Century. A wood surround that houses much-needed light fixtures and screens to soften the sunlight tamed the expansive skylight. Down one level is the media room (see page 76) with its vintage Saul Bass movie posters. Above: Buck also designed the craigslist stools at the kitchen counter, part of the open plan entry/living/cooking space.

Below: The stacked schist fireplace extends outside and is intersected by an expansive window wall. A concrete seat ledge, formerly embellished with a faux finish, was stripped and buffed. The George Nelson for Herman Miller sectional, set off by a red eBay Womb chair, provides comfortable seating without blocking the view. Another Ball ceiling fan designed by Ron Rezek aids in air circulation.





Left: A 1960s couch from Boomerang for Modern anchors the media room. Other pieces include a reissued Eames molded plywood screen, George Nelson wall units and credenza holding the TV, and a Knoll coffee table. Below: A leaky shower pan in the guest bath required a full-scale rebuild. Frosted mosaic glass tile was chosen to coordinate with the original 4"x 4" Dahl ceramic tile on the counter and wall. As in the kitchen, cabinets were refaced with new doors and drawers and the floor was resurfaced with Armstrong VCT tile. Original wall heating units in both bathrooms were preserved.

Bryan's pet term, "period-appropriate," started to set my teeth on edge after a few thousand repetitions, but it did help create a unified look.

Shopping for furnishings was probably the most fun part of the whole process. Going into an acquisition mindset in the eBay era opened up a greatly expanded shopping network. We found a Milo Baughman bedroom set (padded avocado leather headboard with floating attached nightstands) in Seattle, and Eric Buck barstools on craigslist in Kansas City. We also were able to repurpose many trunks, tables and other pieces of furniture that had found their way over the years into our garage. And we became acquainted with the midcentury shops in Phoenix and began making the rounds again of those in San Diego.

Although we didn't set out to do so, we ended up with nearly all of the upholstered furniture being brown—a 1960s couch from Boomerang for Modern for the media room, a Herman Miller sectional from a friend in Phoenix and Erik Buck dining room chairs from Mid-Century in San Diego. Our carpet selection also morphed as the months passed and ended up a medium brown. While the landscape was in evolution and the house under construction, we gained a local's appreciation for how much red rock dirt comes in with each visitor. From our initial selection of an oatmeal color, on each subsequent visit we changed to darker and darker shades.

The floor-to-ceiling refurbishment took a surprisingly long time—nearly a year. But in some ways the protraction of the process proved valuable, giving us the opportunity to reconsider earlier decisions and, in many cases, coming up with better options. Along the way, we've developed a sense of community with other Madole home owners in Sedona, and have been asked by the Sedona Historic



Preservation Commission to consider historic designation of the house, a decision we're currently mulling over. The final project yielded exactly what we hoped for—a comfortable and enriching retreat, a destination that calls us from afar and draws us back again and again. 🏡

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ranchdressing

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

Courtesy Deja Vu



Q: I just bought a plaid chair that I believe matches the coral sofa in the ad on page 14 of the Fall 2009 issue. I would like to know who the designer and maker were. Also, are there any specific websites where one can look up info to help identify our finds? I have a good eye for picking things up, but a bad memory for names.

Scott Romano

Q: When closing up my mother-in-law's home, we discovered many interesting and some perplexing things. Our favorites are an unusual lamp, and the teak and cane couches with original scratchy green upholstery.

The couches have woven cane side panels in the arms, which fold down flat (like end tables). Our other treasure is this incredible lamp: It has a central cylinder

and silk or a similar fabric stretched around the undulating frame. The pull to turn it on is attached to a floating ball under the shade.

I have not been able to identify either the couches or the lamp. Can you give us some clues?

Tamara Cagney



A: Vincent Dogat of Deja Vu in Long Beach, Calif., replies: "The sofa in the ad was designed by Peter Hvidt and Orla Mølgaard-Nielsen in 1955 and was manufactured in Denmark by France and Daverkosen, then France and Son. The frame is made of solid teak, and sides and back are caned, as shown in the photo. Scott's find carries the same style with a thicker frame and sharper angles; it was probably made in the U.S."

"Tamara's couches definitely look to be Hvidt sofas/daybeds. Unlike the one in our ad, the backrest split cushion indicates that it is probably the version with a metal mechanism allowing the arms to drop down, as she mentions. The market value is in the \$1,500–\$2,500 range each, depending on condition."



"For Danish furniture research, my favorite source is furnitureindex.dk; they have fabulous archives online." AR is fond of architonic.com as well.

Q: I have an original-to-the-house Tappan Fabulous 500 range from approximately 1960–62. I have been told the thermostat is the reason the oven is not heating up. I'm looking for a repairman who knows what he is doing, or the parts and I'll figure it out myself; I'm in Dallas, Texas.

Bill Miranda

A: *If you've exhausted the stove repair services in your area (often you can find someone familiar with vintage stoves by checking with used appliance shops as well), you might want to call or e-mail one of these online specialists to see what they know about this particular model (is it gas or electric?): Antiquestoves.com (they rebuild thermostats); antiquegasstoves.com; partselect.com; appliance411.com/archive/424_tappan_pv440_stove.shtml.*

It seems that '60s and '70s appliances are harder to find parts/service for than '50s stoves like the one on the cover, but there are undoubtedly junked ones out there with full-functioning thermostats. You might also post on lottalivin.com or the AR Facebook site.

—ar editor

Q: I've been buying your magazine for about a year now and completely enjoy every issue. Lots of modest-size houses that most of us can afford to own and/or restore.

I have attached a few photos of one of a pair of chairs that I picked up at a local garage sale. They are in pretty rough shape, so I want to restore them, but how I restore them will depend on how valuable they are—wondering whether I should spend a bunch of money on new leather, etc. (The other chair is actually in much

better condition but would still need refinishing to match.) Do you know who might have designed or made this chair? I can't find any markings, and overall



the chairs are pretty lightweight. Thanks for any comments or info that you can provide.

Mark and Kristi Erickson

A: *Collector/refurbisher Gregory McKinney replies: "That style is generically referred to as a Danish 'sling' chair. If it were by a major maker or importer it would likely have their mark on it. Many chairs were cloned, and placing their own maker's mark would only prove it was not an original. It is likely a Dunbar, Kagan, Mobler or Wormley inspiration. The leather straps and buckles*

more ranchdressing

certainly make for an intriguing support system, something I have not previously seen. Well, there was that Madonna video a few years back...

"Without knowing more about their origin and pedigree, I'd say avoid a high-cost rehabilitation. Your chairs appear to be stained hardwood with a lot of exposure and surface damage. I have refinished a few of these over the years, and they are not terribly difficult but will require patience. The wood could be lightly sanded and Danish-oiled, and the leather cleaned and re-dyed to reduce distracting wear and tear. I would advise you to stain the wood a darker shade if you have too many wood-putty-scarred areas, as this will help hide the fixes. It is also possible to steam treat wood to remove some of the dings.

"These procedures shouldn't gut any potential antique value. If you later discover they are worth the new leather investment, consider the expense at that time. But part of the practicality of affordable vintage finds is appreciating a few signs of life, along with the savings. These are very intriguing designs, and regardless of the maker, they deserve to be given a second life. There will definitely be someone out there who'd appreciate these.

Q: I found these salt & pepper shakers at a tag sale the other day and just love them. They are 18-8 stainless steel and are marked Gense 18-8 Stainless Sweden by Prorselli (sp?). The salt is 4 1/2" tall and the pepper is 3 1/2" tall. Can you tell me anything about the designer and how to clean them?

Joellen Jeffers

A: We found a set of "Pierre Forssell for Gense, Sweden" s&p shakers on eBay for \$40, as well as primo three-piece sets for sale on modern50.com and porchmodern.com in the \$200–\$300 range. Designed in 1955, Swedish housewares company Gense rereleased the set this year.

Dino Paxenos, Modern 50 proprietor, had this to say:



Courtesy Barry Smith



"I found my Pierre Forssell tableware at the Reykjavik weekly city flea market during the Iceland Airwaves Music Festival back in 2005. To gently and deeply clean stainless steel in a non-abrasive way, I use a rough piece of thin cloth and Harley Bright Chrome Cleaner, which seems to really pull away tough rust spots with ease without ruining the original finish like steel wool or plastic scouring pads can."

Colen Colthurst of Porch Modern, added: "The sugar shaker is exceptionally rare in my opinion. I have seen perhaps four or five sets of these shakers in the past 12 to 15 years, and never with the sugar [container]. It's a

really nice simple design from a folded piece of stainless; I have always admired these for their simplicity." The Gense site (gense.se) agrees: "The construction is [so] simple that it's nearly embarrassing."

Q: We have two windows like this in the front of our 1958 house. They are beautiful but also leave us no privacy at night. We're looking for some type of window covering that fits the modern look of the house. Any ideas would be appreciated.

Jeff Purdy



A: Two design experts weighed in; first, Erin Marshall of Kismet Design in Portland, Ore.: "You have several options around window coverings. The easiest and proba-



Window film



Solar shades

bly least expensive route would be window film. A 72" x 36" piece is about \$30. There are several texture options, but the prettiest looks like rice paper. You can find it online by Googling 'window film.' It goes on with water and a squeegee, peels off again and can be reused. I'd float a large rectangle of film inside a wide clear border; your windows would then look frosted from the outside. The film provides privacy, translucence, clean design, plus it's inexpensive, fast and easy. Wow; I wish all home projects were like that!

"Of course there are more traditional looks that would fit as well—bamboo or woven wood Roman shades, down-up single-cell honeycomb shades, even panels from IKEA; it all depends on what the rest of your window treatments are like."

Val Ibardolasa from Retro@home in Emeryville, Calif., had another idea: "If you're looking for privacy, but still want some light, solar shades are perfect. You can decide the degree of openness (3%–15%, denoting the amount of light that comes in, so 15% is the sheerest), selecting from a range of materials with different weave styles/patterns that allow you to see out. They are easy to clean, reduce solar heat gain, block UV rays and can be inside-mounted for a modern look. I think this would be perfect for your particular application." Google "solar shades or blinds" for numerous online sources.

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.

atomic events

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April 8–11 Boston

AD 20/21

The Art & Design of the 20th & 21st Centuries show at The Boston Center for The Arts will include 35 exhibitors offering fine art, furniture, glass, ceramics and jewelry in styles ranging from Arts and Crafts to contemporary. Visit ad2021.com for updates on guest speakers and programs throughout the weekend; \$15.



Courtesy The Celadon Group

April 10–11 Phoenix & Scottsdale

Modern Home Tour and Expo

Tour restored and remodeled midcentury houses in the Paradise Gardens neighborhood, including an Alfred Beadle home with a pivoting portico and another with a new master suite built of repurposed industrial shipping containers. The free Expo features vendors and seminars, and tours of the Hotel Valley Ho and Paolo Soleri's Dome House are also planned. Tickets are limited; call 480.994.ARTS or visit ModernPhoenixWeek.com.

April 24–25 Dallas

White Rock Home Tour

MCM and sustainable architecture is the focus of the 12–5 p.m. tour of five Dallas homes, which include two Ju-Nel models. whiterockhometour.org

Through April 25 Milwaukee

Street Seen: The Psychological Gesture in American Photography, 1940–1959

The Milwaukee Art Museum presents a look at everyday American life as seen through the work of six photographers. Cultural changes, including abstract expressionism, film noir, Beat poetry and the New Journalism, are explored in 100 prints, along with short films and artwork by Jackson Pollock, Willem de Kooning and Franz Kline. mam.org/exhibitions/details/streetseen.php

April 28 Washington D.C.

May 1 Alexandria, Va.

Hollin Hills Lecture & House & Garden Tour

Preceding a weekend home tour, the National Building Museum will host a lecture on Hollin Hills, a 250-home neighborhood designed by Charles Goodman built between 1949 and 1973. The houses benefited from prefabrication,



Chris McNamara

Hollin Hills 2010 Tour

open floor plans and park-like grounds that merged one lot with the next. A self-guided walking tour from noon to 6 p.m. will include select homes and gardens in the neighborhood, which is pursuing nomination to the National Register. Visit nbm.org/programs-lectures or hollinhills.org/NationalRegister/houseTour2008.php.

April 30–May 2 Los Angeles

Los Angeles Modernism Show & Sale

The Santa Monica Civic Auditorium's Friday night gala benefits United Cerebral Palsy's Wheels for Humanity, followed by two days of vintage shopping from 90 international dealers. Weekend admission \$15, Pico & Main street; dolphinfairs.com/lamodernism.

May 8th Philadelphia

Modern Home Philadelphia 3rd Annual Tour

A self-guided tour of seven homes in East Falls and Mt. Airy designed by Richard Neutra, Oscar Stonorov, Frank Weise and others. Tickets \$45 through Community page of ModernHomesPhiladelphia.com.

Through May 23 Palm Springs

Between Earth and Heaven:

The Architecture of John Lautner

The first comprehensive museum overview of Lautner's work includes 115 drawings and sketches, along with 10 original models and additional large-scale models constructed for the exhibition. A documentary further explores his career, from student days at FLW's Taliesen



Joshua White

John Lautner,
Chemosphere,
Los Angeles, 1960

to the hillside Chemosphere House—more than 150 built works in all. psmuseum.org

Through October 24 Long Island City, N.Y.

Noguchi ReINstalled

Using photographs to re-create the permanent collection displays as originally intended by Isamu Noguchi when the museum was founded in 1985, this exhibition also celebrates the site's recent renovation. Housed in 13 galleries within a converted factory building surrounded by a sculpture garden, the artist's works include pieces rendered in metal, stone, wood and clay, as well as models for public projects and gardens, dance sets and Akari Light Sculptures. noguchi.org/exhibitions.html#futureexhibitions

resources

chrysalis kitchen, pp. 14–21

Architect: Jim Burton, Carter + Burton Architecture & Interior Design, Berryville, Va., 540.955.1644, carterburton.com ✖ Backsplash & ceiling treatment: Ecoresin panels, 3-form.com/materials-varia.php ✖ Living room & breakfast bar chairs: Mira and Lounge chairs, nakashimawoodworker.com ✖ Windows: pella.com ✖ Door: Neoporte Sideshow 1.0, neoporte.com

working class heroes, pp. 24–31

Contractor: Nate Darling, Indy Construction, Washougal, Wash., 360.210.5115
✖ Kitchen counters & edging: barsandbooths.com ✖ Kitchen cabinet pulls: vandykes.com
✖ Vintage stoves & parts: antiquegasstoves.com ✖ Living room lampshades: moonshinesthades.com
✖ Bar sign: stevecambronne.com

tweaking tradition, pp. 40–48

Landscape architecture: Sam Williamson, SHWA, Portland, Ore. 503.226.7742, shwa.net

oregon tale, pp. 52–61

Kitchen: Counter laminate: turquoise glacier, pastense.com/materials.html ✖ Counter edging: lansinglinoleum.com ✖ Stainless steel backsplash: coyotesteel.com ✖ Flooring: Armstrong classic black VCT, armstrong.com/commflooringna

red rock repose, pp. 68–76

Vintage furnishings: Mid-Century, San Diego, 619.295.4832
✖ boomerangformodern.com ✖ Design consultant: Bryan Forward, Forward Design Group, Carlsbad, Calif., 760.533.1950 ✖ Ceiling fans: modernfan.com ✖ Landscaping: Green Magic Landscaping, Sedona, 928.284.9380

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