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Courtesy Dion Neutra

cover

The homeowners of this 1959 ranch in Long Beach, Calif., emphasized originality and minimalism in their renovation, as seen in their open plan living/dining room. Rehabbed sliding glass doors lead to the private pool and patio, while the vintage furnishings include a Nakashima table surrounded by Hans Wegner rush-seat Wishbone chairs, and an Eames lounge chair and ottoman. The Polder sofa is accessorized with a white Yo-Yo table and a Fjord pouffe, and an original Nelson bubble lamp hides behind the AR logo. Story page 46.



meanwhile... back at the ranch

s it the inescapable fate of everyone to regard his or her youth as a golden era, when culture reached a high point and every current endeavor is but a pale imitation? If so, then my gold standard is '60s music and cars; at the time, homes were not on my radar. Will some teen of today look back in 50 years and wistfully say, "Wow, that Britney Spears; now she could really Auto-Tune!" I can confidently predict that I won't be around to grump about that.

I'm not a blind nostalgist—I'm very happy with the advances we've seen in equality compared to conditions in the '50s and '60s; they're just not moving fast enough. I'm fully engaged in the digital age and emphati-





Match the build dates—1960 and 2013—to the houses. cally would not want to relive the recent past. But, I feel that midcentury design reached a high point of purity and simplicity that has now sunk to excess and bloat.

Compare the taut lines of the 1964 Mustang to its current iteration. Yes, today's Mustang features levels of safety, comfort, performance and efficiency unimaginable then, but the exterior is just so ponderous. If you say that its loss of spirit comes from government and market demands, I'll counter that the 1963 Porsche 911 thrives in the same environment and has retained its basic silhouette.

Race car designer Colin Chapman's dictate, "Simplify, then add lightness," was presaged by Mies van der Rohe's 1951 Farnsworth House, and carried to the masses by flat-roofed Eichlers and many other tracts looking to house the returning GIs in modest, efficient ranches. Walls of glass, prefab construction, one-level floor plans and minimal ornamentation were hallmarks of these marvels. Today, in the midcentury market the most prized homes are the untouched originals, unsullied by 'improvements' and additions in the '70s and '80s.

So what has happened to the well-thought-out concepts of the '50s and '60s? The size of new homes has more than doubled since then; the average U.S. house now stands at 2,300 square feet. Today I learned that the latest desirable feature for high-end homes is the 'dirty kitchen'—the place where food is actually prepared (raise your hand if your saw this trend coming). This frees up the trophy kitchen for gatherings where guests can ogle eight-burner-10-million-Btu stoves, double dishwashers, commercial-grade refrigerators and square miles of stainless steel and polished granite. I don't know about you, but I just roll my eyes when I read quotes from blissful homeowners about all the socializing that goes on in their kitchen during a

party, or the Zen experience of steaming local, organic vegetables in their mega-buck culinary 'sanctuary.' Please—cooking is a task and then you have to clean up the mess.

Is it too much to ask for beautiful design? I'm afraid we live in an age of minor designers and clients with unbridled appetites. Feel free to file this under Old Man Rant No. 12.

Jim Brown, Publisher



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husband and I recently purchased a MCM home in the high desert of SoCal. Our house was photographed by Julius Shulman in 1970, as it

was the first model home in the Spring Valley Lake golf community. I'm having a hard time finding any info on it except a copy of an undated, one-page newsletter that states something like, 'This Boise Cascade home designed by Earl V. Kaltanbach, AIA was featured in the *LA Times Home* magazine [article] titled "Updating the High Desert" by James Toland, photographed by Julius Shulman.'

I've already searched the *LA Times* online archives and no luck. We just moved in and still have to furnish it and re-remodel, as a past owner updated the kitchen, bar and bathrooms, all in '90s fashion. We have a lot to do to bring it back to life. Thankfully, they kept most of the bones of the home intact. Refurbishing it will be a challenge since we're on a budget, but we're loving the dream so far, and the family is enjoying being steps away from the 18th hole overlooking the lake and incredible valley views.

Nicole Reimers

If the Los Angeles Times *was a dead end, you might try Shulman's archives at the Getty. I found a different*

spelling of the architect's last name with a middle initial of 'G.' Here's a hit on the combo of 'Shulman' and 'Kaltenbach': goo.gl/xaSWga.

—ar editor

* Two years ago when we bought our 1952 raisedranch on the south side of Chicago, I gave my wife, Jenna, the best birthday gift ever—a subscription to Atomic Ranch! It would be hard to overstate what a great resource it has been.

If you don't mind, we have a small suggestion: In articles, especially Modern Wisdom and Ranch Dressing, you include some rather long web addresses. I can tell you from experience that transcribing those into my browser is a pain. So how about including shorter Google URLs (info at goo.gl/?authed=1), or on your website have a URL reference page for each edition?

Just my two cents! Michael Coyle

Michael's home was featured in Spring 2014's 'My Favorite Space.' We applied his great suggestion to the previous letter and elsewhere in this issue. —ar editor

✤ I wanted to share with you a little about the house that we purchased last summer across the river from you. It's a gem in my opinion—a 1972 with four levels built into a hillside by builder/architect Ralph



Fletcher. Fletcher's wife walked through the house last summer, and she said that much of it is still original; they lived here for some 20 years after building it.

Here's a picture of our living room from last Christmas. We're not sure if we bought the house just so we could get the pod chairs...

Steve Miller

Vancouver, Wash.

Congratulations on the 'Keep it Up' article in Winter 2013. Ralph Lembcke's advice should be very helpful for anyone undertaking a renovation. Having recently retired from a career as project manager for the real estate division of a major financial corporation, I'd like to add a couple more pointers. The advice about builder's risk insurance is good. This type of insurance covers new work put in place by the builder, but not yet handed over to the owner. It is typically carried by the owner, so talking to your insurance agent before undertaking a project is a very good idea.

The homeowner should also confirm that the contractor has two other more familiar types of insurance: general liability and workers' compensation. The best way to confirm this is to require current certificates of insurance showing coverage limits from your contractor's insurance company. If possible, the homeowner should be named as an 'also insured' (rather than a certificate holder) on the general liability policy. This is commonly done and the contractor's insurance agent will email or snail mail a copy to you promptly.

A good contract to start with is the AIA form of contract. They are the construction industry standard, and have a lot of case law experience behind them. There are several different contracts, including a fivepage minimal one designed for homeowners. Your local AIA chapter will have these for sale, or you can get them on their website. You can alter it as needed by writing in and/or striking out provisions.

All of the things Mr. Lembcke mentions under 'Sweat the Small Stuff' are true. He doesn't, however, mention the biggest source of aggravation radios. I have a no-radios provision in all my contracts, from home renovations to \$100 million construction jobs. I would also advise making these provisions—parking, radios, cleanup, etc.—part of the general conditions portion of the AIA contract. It's simpler if you have all instructions, agreements and requirements in the body of the contract rather than in separate side letters.

Lastly, I would make a waiver of liens a requirement for final payment to the contractor. This simply says that, in receiving full payment the contractor waives any liens he may have or acquire.

Thanks again for publishing such a helpful article. **Tim Shaw**

Cambridge, Mass.

Great article on tips for working with a contractor. This information is long overdue for homeowners. [Regarding permits] I would like to add that when an inspector comes and signs off on all aspects of your project, he is verifying that the work has been done to the minimum requirement as required by code. Once it meets the minimum, they go no further as to the quality of work performed. From there it is up to the homeowner, architect and contractor to make sure the quality of work suits the project.

Tucker Strasser Venice, Calif.

✤ I read with interest your 'Keep It Up' article in the winter issue, having recently completed a remodel of



PJ McMulla

morewisdom



our 1959 ranch. I wanted to add two pieces of advice for those considering their first remodel.

Despite all of the horror stories we had heard, it is possible to put together a team (architect, contractor and subcontractors) who can make your vision come true without incredible frustration and regrets. We put in a couple of years of homework, researching who could do a sensitive, in-period remodel of our home, as well as what appliances would complement the home and how we could improve but not grossly modify the non-ideal aspects of the original building. And it paid off. Bottom line—take your time and do your homework!

Although it might not be feasible for everyone, another consideration to factor into the total cost is relocating for the duration. We had initially planned to live in the house while the nine-month, major remodel was going on, but after talking with the architect and contractor, and thinking about it for a weekend, we realized that there was no way we could stay in the house. We found a vacation rental, which I highly recommend because, not only are they furnished, but also all utilities including phone are included and it is month-to-month should things take longer than planned.

We were so right [to relocate]! The dust alone would have killed me. Having to be up, dressed, fed and out the door by 7:00 every morning when the crew showed up, moving your personal life from room to room as work progressed, and spending winter nights next to a microwave for dinner—crazy! And how about being home sick for a few days and having the demolition crew 10 feet away? Not to mention we were told the project would take about six months longer if we lived in the house.

Instead, we were able to live in a clean and peaceful home

instead of a war zone. The construction crew could plow through with what they had to do in a timely way without having to work around us. Despite the extra funds, if we had to do it again there is no question that we would be back in a vacation rental.

Brian Van Lenten & Susan Cushing Sherman Oaks, Calif.

Brian and Susan's home was so lovely that we'll be featuring it in an upcoming issue. —ar editor

Kiven the last several years of economic uncertainty, as a contractor I always take a deposit. I would never pay to do someone's remodel, no matter how small. It's not about my ability to cover the customer's purchases, but that the client needs to have 'skin in the game' in addition to a solid contract.

In my experience, if the homeowner doesn't have money invested in the project, a false sense of what is left in the budget can develop. An example: A client sets a remodel budget of \$200,000 to \$250,000. We begin by demoing from the plate up to remove the under-engineered structure and proceed to remove all the partition walls, leaving masonry walls on three sides. I can tell the client that this is going to go quickly and I am going to need money to pay for permitting, the demo, purchasing the windows, trusses, door package, cabinet package and flooring, as well as any flat work (concrete) that we may be doing. I also need to purchase the lumber package so we can frame, and pay a mason to address the existing walls and openings (if we are moving or closing them and cutting new openings). Oh, and don't forget to pretreat for termites. This easily costs me \$100,000-plus and it all happens in the first seven to 10 days.

If the clients don't give me any money down, it may appear they still have \$200,000-plus, when in reality they are more than halfway through the money. And if I'm busy doing three or four of these at one time, it becomes a large amount of money, quickly. Not establishing retention/material deposits leads to contractors having to cut corners to get the job done, or pulling off the job while waiting on the customer to pay. I think it is bad advice to tell a homeowner to expect a contractor to start a project without exchanging money.

Shawn Lustig

Scottsdale, Ariz.

Wy friend Deborah turned me on to Atomic Ranch about a year ago. I'm hooked! I owned numerous MC items and even studied the design and culture at university. But it wasn't until I read AR, however, that it all came together in a big way.

I had been renovating my '70s townhouse and the inspiration from AR kicked things into high gear. Serendipity has been my constant companion, as I've managed to find a lot of nice items by chance at thrift shops and flea markets. IKEA also knows me well.

AR has given me a vocabulary, so I can now refer to my wicked, vintage, 25-cent 'garden thing' as a bullet planter! My latest find in a church thrift sale was a table and six chairs that looked suspiciously midcentury. With help from a couple of friends, I restored the wood and re-reupholstered the chairs in a suitable linen fabric. The chairs seem to garner all the attention, due to the bent plywood backs that swivel on tiny hinges. Brief Googling has identified a probable maker as Deilcraft, the furniture subsidiary of Electrohome Ltd., quite



literally a pioneering household name in Canadian electronics and furniture.

Thanks, Deborah; thanks, AR! **AJ Dashwood** *Victoria, BC*

Shauntelle LeBlanc, proprietor of Ethel-20th Century Living in Toronto, says she's seen these chairs before and shared a link about Deilcraft and Electrohome: goo.gl/y0oiuk.

—ar editor

* I wanted to express my thanks for Atomic Ranch magazine. The articles and photographs are very interesting and the ads provide me many chances for online research.

Have you heard of architect Art Troutner, who practiced mostly around Boise, Idaho? I stumbled across his work on the Boise Architecture Project website, goo.gl/h3Vh85. Troutner has his own gallery with many great photos that make your mouth water. I think he would make a compelling story for a future issue.

Again, thanks for your hard work in bringing midcentury to many people!

Bruce Hegna Portland, Ore.

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.









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An early modernist residence for the founder of the Case Study Houses

text Michelle Gringeri-Brown photography Undine Pröhl

The Entenzor John Entenzor House







ike Deasy knows all about pedigreed houses. The real estate brokerage he formed with George Penner in 2006, Deasy/Penner & Partners, and the one before that, Mossler, Deasy & Doe, are devoted to marketing architecturally significant homes. The work of such midcentury architects as Rudolph Schindler, Craig Ellwood, John Lautner, Donald Wexler, Richard Neutra, Ray Kappe and Gregory Ain has all been repped by Deasy and his cohorts.

He discovered his current Santa Monica residence, the 1937 John Entenza House by Harwell Hamilton Harris, as a boy, riding by on his bike. "It's always been an iconic home for me," the 70-year-old Deasy says. "Even before I knew the history, I thought it was a strange and unique house. I thought, Well, I'm going to live there sometime."

John Entenza, the editor and publisher of *Arts & Architecture* ('California' was dropped from the title in the mid-'40s prior to the Case Study series), who died in 1984, lived in the home for 12 years. Harris, who died in 1990, worked for Neutra and Schindler but intended to be a sculptor, so his background beyond trade school coursework was in art, not architecture.

back to the house

Sitting vacant for some time after an elderly owner died, in 1996 Deasy found the home's condition daunting enough to pass on his intended purchase; George Penner stepped in. "Mike's business partner, George, was a bachelor when we started, and he got married and was going to have a baby by the time the house was almost finished," says architect Michael Folonis, who rehabbed the residence some 18 years ago. "The Entenza house was the first midcentury home restoration our firm did. Because it

The rooftop entertainment deck is visible from the back facade; access is from the stairs off the driveway.





was a midcentury modern and because of the names involved, it really intrigued me."

At 850 square feet, there is only one bedroom, one bath, a living room and a kitchen; on top of the roof there's space for entertaining, and a small wood deck cantilevers off the back of the steep lot. The bedroom is curved, as is the porte-cochere, first cousin to a carport. Despite its iconic status, the house wasn't a good fit for a family of three, so as the project neared completion, Deasy bought it from Penner.

"The condition was horrifying," Folonis, 66, recalls. "It hadn't been maintained properly for a long, long time. The windows were rotten, the roof leaked and we knew it needed serious work on the plumbing, the electrical and insulating the walls and floors. There was a fleeting discussion from George about just tearing it down; ultimately we spent a third of the budget on foundation work."

parsing history

Working from original drawings and photos from the Harris archive at the University of Texas at Austin, and vintage copies of *Arts* & *Architecture*, Folonis tackled making the house livable again while respecting its scale and details. "I wanted to make sure I didn't leave my signature," he says. "It was really important to me to let the building be what it was when Harris originally conceived it with Entenza."

That included removing the exterior stucco walls to allow the team to replace all of the windows, waterproof, insulate and redo the electrical system. New wood windows were

By accessing the walls through the stucco exterior, the integrity of the interior lath and plaster was preserved, says architect Michael Folonis, who re-created a missing daybed seen in period interior photos. The round vintage table rises to dining height, the bookcase is French and the chaise on the deck is Italian. Around the perimeter of the maple floor is a $3^{*}x 3^{*}$ continuous strip of cork that allows the wood to expand and contract, eliminating the need for base-shoe molding.





manufactured to the exact same dimensions as the originals and, through forensic exploration, painted the 1937 gray-blue color. Built without heating initially, a long hunt yielded a furnace that vented horizontally, and floor registers were installed in all of the rooms.

The large concrete hearth was redone, as were the curved driveway and the treads of the staircase on the front facade that lead to the roof. Degraded, unoriginal add-ons, like the red and black linoleum and the wrought iron gate and stairway balusters, were removed.

"We knew there was once shag carpet in the living room and bedroom, and linoleum in the kitchen and bath," Folonis explains. "We didn't know what color the originals were, but they looked light in the photos. I thought maple hardwood would last and would be a benign material that wouldn't call a lot of attention to itself. When you walk in the house now, it all seems very seamless and appropriate. These were decisions we spent a lot of time thinking about."

navigating upgrades

"One of biggest challenges was George wanted a bathtub, while originally there was just a toilet, a shower and a sink," Folonis says. "The toilet was going to be relocated where the shower had been, and that left a larger area for a tub. We did a lot of soul searching about adding a fixture in a small house like that—what kind of fixture would it be, new or old? What we decided to do, instead, was dig a hole in the ground and [simply] line it with tile so it's kind of the antithesis of a [new] fixture."

Deasy says the kitchen had been renovated in the '40s and Folonis adds that the builton-site face-frame cabinets were degraded,

Two Alvar Aalto Tank chairs and a sculptural plywood table face the fireplace. Near the vintage Eames lounge chair and ottoman is a console with a retractable front that transforms into a dining table.







A Noguchi Cyclone table sits in the curved entry, which opens directly to the living room and the kitchen. "There's kind of a relentlessness to the windows that face south," says Folonis. "From the kitchen, they continue without interruption into the bathroom, and one even appears in the bedroom closet. If you were to stand outside the building, you would just see this square window pattern across that [whole] elevation."

The Doug fir ceiling of the porte-cochere was stripped of years of paint and the ribbon driveway repoured; an original wall sconce is near the front door. "The house is about a quarter of a mile from the beach," says Folonis, founder of an eponymous architectural firm. "John Entenza could walk back from the beach, and behind the curved wall of the carport was a shower. Perfect for one person."



Before



Most everything in the bedroom is built in, including the dresser and bed. The desk is by Paul McCobb.

The cabinetry, counters and fixtures share details with the kitchen. "We have used tried-and-true Chicago faucets for 25 years in our practice; it's a non-designed faucet, so it's very nondescript," says the architect. "It will fit in an old house, a new house, the Entenza House. We used it everywhere: tub, shower and sinks. If you put in a new contemporary fixture, then you have a 1937 house with a 2012 fixture. We tried to be very conscientious about things like that." and the cheap hinges and painted wooden knobs—reflective of the tiny budget Harris had to work with—not worth saving. Today, the sink and refrigerator are in the original locations, and the custom maple cabinetry and stainless steel look timeless. "We took a detail that all of these architects were using, except Harris, for a recessed cabinet pull. I think Neutra did it first, and then Schindler and others stole the detail," says Folonis. "Because the appliances were stainless, we put a stainless steel countertop and backsplash down; tile would have been adding another material."

After living in the home for more than a decade, Entenza, best known for the Case Study House program, moved to the Pacific Palisades House #9 designed for him by Charles Eames and Eero Saarinen in 1949. An anecdote that Folonis shares indicates that the little house on the hill may have incubated that ambitious endeavor.





"I met with Eames Demetrios, his wife and, eventually, Lucia Eames regarding repairs to the Eames house," he says. "We were sitting in the kitchen, and Lucia mentioned she'd like to see the Entenza project when it was done. When she visited, she said, 'I remember it—coming here as a child with Ray and Charles. I'm sure the Case Study House program was conceived right here.'"

Despite dozens of unique properties coming through Deasy/ Penner over the past two decades, Mike Deasy hasn't yet been tempted to move to something larger and perhaps less idiosyncratic. "The only bad thing is I can't put all of my art on the walls. It's highly disciplined, so I have to edit what I buy—that's probably a good thing," he says. "It's abstract and very limiting in a good way. It's like a haiku—by limiting the perimeters, one begins to live in a piece of art. That is what this house is, I think." be what it was when Harris originally conceived it with Entenza."

Resources page 72; before images courtesy Michael W. Folonis Architects

keepitup

Housekeeping ^{with} Sandy

Sandy Wright, a 20-year pro in the battle against creeping crud, runs My Wright Hand, an independent housekeeping service in Portland, Ore. We sat down with her to talk about ranch kitchens—what's easy care, what's a pain, and how much effort it really takes to keep it all up ...

Tedium Trending

he two main challenges in the kitchen are granite countertops and stainless steel appliances. Granite surfaces need to be washed with hot, soapy water and dried to alleviate smears.

Most homeowners use a sponge, which leaves tracks and is not as sanitary; a dishcloth is far better. Any of your modern-day countertops that reflect light—granite, marble, solid surface—almost always tend to look dirty; a duller finish hides smears and wear and tear better.

There are different grades of **stain**less steel, and some are much easier to keep up than others. Stainless steel butcher blocks get marred from knife cuts, but the heavy-gauge steel keeps a nice sheen and is easy to polish. With appliances, the grade varies; some polish up beautifully, while others are a constant battle. If you get water on stainless, wipe it off immediately, as it seems to eat into the finish and leave permanent marks. My best tip is to not use appliance handles as towel bars; that's a surefire way to end up with water damage.

When it comes to stainless steel cleaner-polishes, each one is different and has specific instructions to follow.

Some want you to leave a paste on for a few minutes and then buff off with a cloth; most aerosols are spray on, wipe off; others say to spray onto a cloth. Hope's Perfect Stainless is one of the most durable polishes and you need to buff it off with a paper towel; if you don't, the surface will smear. My current favorite is Rock-it Oil Lustre, which lasts longer than any others I've tried. And for sinks with spots and streaks, or fingerprints at the top of dishwashers, Bar Keepers Friend cleanser applied with a damp cloth, then rinsed, dries to a nice sheen. It's slightly abrasive but won't scratch.

Counter Intelligence

Laminate: You have to be careful about what you use on stains, as powdered cleansers will mar laminate. If you used Soft Scrub with bleach and leave it on a hair too long or rub too hard, when you look at in the right light, there may be a permanent mark.

Solid surface: Silestone can be stained by extended contact with a wet item like a soap dispenser, and matter vs. sheen matters, as does color and mate-



rial porosity. Darker colors show less smearing, just as long as you dry them.

Ceramic tile: If you get a stain on white grout, use a product containing bleach right away. If it is stubborn, scrub with a toothbrush and let the cleaner sit, then rinse with hot, soapy water and dry. To keep grout looking its best, use Zap! restorer once or twice a year, followed by resealing.

Overall, there's nothing better for cleaning than hot, soapy water and drying surfaces—no need to rinse. Wearing gloves, I use hot water at full temperature on a dishrag, squirt on dish soap, wring it to distribute the soap, scrub the surface and dry. If it's super greasy, go over it twice. And natural dish soaps don't clean as well as grocery store brands like Dawn or Joy. They more or less smear grease instead of cutting through it. If I use natural dish soap, it takes double or triple the product; they're fine for daily use but not for overall sparkle.

The most durable, and the easiest counter material to care for is laminate; it's very forgiving. Granite and other hard surfaces certainly hold up, but if you want them to be beautiful, it's more work.

Floor Me

Wood floors are pretty durable, but will get marked more than in other areas of the house from drips and spills. **Engineered laminate** lasts well and is as easy to clean as wood, but a scratch is there forever, unlike real wood. Between a name brand such as Pergo and a generic, some require drying after mopping to avoid watermarks; others mop and dry like a dream. And the less product you use on them, the better. Start with water, and then go to ¼ cup of vinegar in a gallon of tepid water.

Sheet vinyl or **VCT tiles** are pretty darn good, too; the only thing to avoid is vinyl with the textured pits once dirt builds up in those, it is virtually impossible to keep clean without



using a scrub brush on your hands and knees.

Ceramic tile or **slate** is fantastic as long as you pick the right color grout. For slate, a charcoal or black; for ceramic tile, the lightest would be sand color. If you choose very light grout, you need to have super thin grout lines and clean often. And these surfaces are not forgiving, so if you drop anything breakable, consider it gone.

With **linoleum**, you must be careful with what tool you use to pick up loose dirt [personal experience with lots of superficial scratching from dog claws and a Dyson upright —editor], but it holds up great. A more mottled overall design in a neutral color will hide the most dirt and scratches, and using Forbo's floor finish a few times a year helps with durability and restores the shine.

For **wood floors**, the softer the tool the better: I like a canister vacuum with a brush head, or an old-fashioned cotton or microfiber loop mop. Disposable dusting pads like Swiffers work well, but you will go through a lot of pads. I do not recommend premoistened, pad-type cleaners; they leave a film that builds up and is not easy to remove.

Ultimately, wood hides dirt the best. But if you have pets, a tile floor in a color that is similar to your dog can be amazing—it really masks the fur.

In our next issue, Sandy tackles bathrooms....



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A homeowner goes to great lengths to keep her bath in the pink

text Janice Hong *photography* Stacy Ransom

I have a tiny 1959 California ranch in Thousand Oaks with open-beam ceilings, a pink bathroom, a pink built-in stovetop and a separate pink oven in the knotty pine kitchen—all original. Last summer, I embarked on what I thought would be a small-scale bathroom renovation project. The reglazing on the white bathtub was peeling off in sections, and I planned to put in a shower while keeping the original pink tiles and installing new tiles where the tub had been. This turned out to be much more complicated than expected.

MATCHY MATCH

First, I ordered tile samples from B&W Tile in Gardena, Calif. Unfortunately, my original tiles are a coral pink, not the traditional "Mamie" pink, so those available from B&W didn't match at all. Even if I installed a large border tile separating the two pinks, they were such different shades that it would have been a major eyesore. It was time to research companies that could color match tiles.

I found an amazing artist, Patricia Kaszas of Patricia's Tile in San Diego. She was instrumental in the success of this endeavor and exceeded my expectations. Since this was my first home renovation project, she basically held my hand, offering encouragement and support throughout the entire process. Not only did she submit excellent design concepts, she emailed photos of past and current projects, gave me outstanding advice and was able to color match the new tiles so perfectly that when the glass company came to install the shower enclosure, they couldn't tell original tiles from the new ones. I highly recommend her services.



The original chrome wall heater still works well, and has been joined by NOS Hall-Mack Aristocrome 400 towel bar posts and a matching robe hook, a Hall-Mack Coronado tumbler and toothbrush holder, and a period 24" vanity light fixture.

Next, I had an extremely difficult time finding a contractor who appreciated vintage homes and understood how important it was to me to keep the integrity and style of the pink bathroom and my 1950s ranch home. No one got why I wanted to keep the tile, let alone spend a small fortune to color match them. Almost all of the contractors proposed to take a sledgehammer, destroy the entire shower enclosure and install big-box generic tiles. I interviewed more than eight contractors during six-plus months of research, but was unable to find anyone who had a similar approach and appreciation of vintage homes as I did.

Needless to say, it was quite a frustrating experience and I almost quit the project. Out of desperation, I contacted B&W,



who recommended a tile man who turned out to be the perfect fit. He is an expert and his first priority was to make sure that I was happy every step of the way.

BUDGET BUSTER

While I had envisioned this to be a small project and originally budgeted \$3,000, I quickly realized that I would not be happy with the final renovation unless I committed to the custom tile color matching. This ran \$1,160 for 162 4"-square tiles, some quarter rounds and a soap dish—well worth the cost. I also decided to forgo the less expensive linoleum sheet flooring in favor of B&W hexagonal porcelain tiles recommended by Patricia. The sea foam green tile blends well with the coral pink and retains a period look.

I chose a Guardian ShowerGuard glass enclosure, which has a sealed surface that minimizes cleaning. I decided to stray from a vintage-style enclosure with frosted glass because it would have hidden the pink tiles, and I wanted something very clean and simple in design. And rather than the clear ShowerGuard glass, which has a greenish tint and made the pink tiles look awful, I chose the more expensive UltraWhite.

I wanted a soft buttercream wall color to complement the pink tiles. Benjamin Moore 'Swans Mill Cream' in Aura semigloss was a stronger yellow tone than I had intended, so I decided to paint the front of the vanity drawers in 'Whispering Peach.' (Despite taking a piece of tile to the store to color match with the paint chips, the actual peach paint turned out to be several shades lighter than the tile.) The sink faucet and shower fixtures date from when the house was repiped with copper several years ago. A Sayco 308-2, a three-part shower faucet with very cool handles, was what I wanted, but I was told that it doesn't meet California code, so I'm still looking. For now, an inexpensive Waterpik handheld showerhead serves the purpose and enables me to rinse the tile and glass walls after use.

Since we have extremely hard water in this area, I also installed a whole-house water softener. Although the budget quickly exceeded the original amount by more than four times, I am extremely happy with the result. The only thing that would have made the renovation better would have been finding a matching pink toilet.

On a side note, my neighbors originally had both a pink and a blue bath, with matching sinks, tubs and toilets. They gutted both of those unique bathrooms when they remodeled. Looking at their home today, you would never guess it was once a custom ranch. I sure would have loved to have gotten their discarded sink, toilet and tub, which probably ended up in pieces at the county dump. Of course, they thought I was completely out of my mind to spend so much money on such a tiny bathroom. But since it's my one and only, I wanted to appreciate and enjoy all the quirks of a pink bathroom and living in a 1950s ranch house.

Janice Hong supports animal rescue efforts; visit ruff stuffusa.com to see her custom pet gear. She enlisted the help of friend and photographer Stacy Ransom for this article. Resources page 72



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homepage

Daytona Beach, Fla.

An unlikely location to a find a midcentury modern home would be on the barrier island location of Daytona Beach. My husband and I found a 1956 split-level ranch that had not been loved or cared for in many years, but had great bones. We purchased it in October 2012 and just completed an extensive renovation. At a spacious 2,200 square feet, it offered an oversize Florida room with quarry tile floors and banks of vertical windows, hardwood floors throughout, an asymmetrical stacked-stone fireplace and an original Sputnik light in the foyer. Our goal was to honor MCM design while returning this home to its original beauty and the respect it deserves.

Sally & Hal Bunzmann

Sinking Spring, Pa.

I'm a carpenter, architect and Realtor specializing in architectural properties. Three years ago we bought our 1960 stone home on two acres outside of Reading after it had been let go for some years. The heat pump, flagstone side-walk and the boiler from the basement were stolen while it sat empty. I replaced the wiring and much of the plumbing, installed new Andersen wood awning insulated sashes inside the original window frames, refinished the oak floors, replaced interior doors and trim, and restored the original Nutone radio/intercom and the foyer's stone planter. It has taken me two years to get ahead of the overgrown plantings and I'm still waiting to finish the kitchen.

Steve & Yang Musselman

Davenport, Iowa

When we started our home search, the exterior of this house attracted us with its long sloping roofline and MCM appeal. We walked in the front door and I said to the agent, 'This is the one; cancel all of the other showings.' The back wall of the living/dining area is covered in floor-to-ceiling windows that let in tons of light and overlook the woods. My girlfriend and I loved this house and could see ourselves living here and nowhere else. We painted and remodeled the entire interior and did the landscaping; it's hard to live in a house like this and not have new ideas every day!

Eric Schneider

We can always use homes for 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.







Sinking Spring, Pa.



text & photography Scott Parker



The first time I watched Hitchcock's classic North by Northwest, I was perhaps 10 years old. While I was enthralled by many parts of the film-the pursuit of Roger Thornhill by a cropduster, Eve Kendall's gigantic Lincoln convertible and, of course, the perilous escape over the solemn faces of Mount Rushmore-it was the house that completely caught my attention. The Vandamm residence was all glass and limestone, cantilevers and soaring space. And although it was but a matte painting, it existed in my head to the point that, while other boys in Mrs. Torres' classroom furtively sketched ample women or Rat Fink hot rods, I was perpetually drawing elongated, horizontal houses jutting from improbable desert outcroppings. As to The Girl From Ipanema, there was something just so right about bossa nova, and it usually sounded best when emanating from the speaker of my mom's 1962 Continental convertible (repossessed from a bankrupt Texan).

Now, there'll be a long jump forward in time. In late 2009, I found myself leaving San Francisco apartment life, headed to Austin with an overpacked U-Haul and an overheated cat. Now I had the opportunity to own a home. It had to have a garage big enough to hold a '62 Continental and another car, preferably just like Eve Kendall's. It had to have glass and rock walls and a low, flat roof.

My realtor gamely showed me a number of houses and all failed to meet the criteria. Finally, he called to suggest I swing by a new listing in the south part of Austin on my way back to California. The house had suffered from serious remuddling and a pointless big-box remodel to entice a buyer, but I also found a string of clerestory windows, post-and-beam construction and an odd but appealing connection to outdoor living. It was the first house I'd seen that spoke to me, the first on which I'd make an offer and, as it turned out, my first house. I went back to San Francisco in a bit of a daze: What had I bought?

The 1959 home had been in probate for three years and was a bit of an eyesore in the tidy '50s subdivision of modest redbrick ranchers. It was clearly the odd house,



and it was suggested that it was by A. D. Stenger, a local MCM architect and builder. While I question the Stenger attribution, the iconic style was there, just trapped under years of deferred maintenance, unhappy prior owners and 15 coats of paint.

In my first few months of ownership, I came to a few conclusions: Little to no original detailing remained in the kitchen or baths, so full remodels were okay; I'd be on a strict pay-as-I-go budget; remodeling would not involve
Doing Wright by Hitchcock

My 1960 Continental Mark V, a sister to Eve Kendall's 1958 Mark III, in the driveway. F4-F44

A boyhood fantasy drives a newbie house hunter



Undersize faux-mullioned French doors leading to the courtyard were replaced with larger, singlelite doors. The old bookcase sat atop the base cabinets, extending up to the soffit and over to the window wall; bypass doors were hung in the void between, turning the house into a warren of small, dark rooms. A rescued vintage George Nelson saucer lamp took the place of a Victorian-style ceiling fan over the Crate & Barrel dining table, while the Thompson chairs around it are from Gus and the area rug is IKEA.



changing the floor plan or moving walls; and the end result would honor the home's clean MCM lines and ideals, but updated in a warm, comfortable way that was neither '50s kitsch nor severe minimalism.

The plan of the house is a 'T,' with the foyer, living room, kitchen and breakfast and dining rooms in the stem of the T. Three bedrooms—one small, two generous—form the crossbar, with baths at each end. Clerestory windows illuminate the living and dining rooms and the master bedroom and bath. A carport accessible from the kitchen had been converted at some point into a garage. Curiously, the house was oriented sideways on the deep lot, and public rooms faced the side with no connection to the large back yard, except for a doorway from the smallest bedroom.

The first task was to reduce the bulk of a massive built-in hutch and bookcase that divided the dining room from the living room. The upper portion was simply sawed off by a handyman, leaving the lower cabinets in place. I stained and finished a bit of birch plywood to create a buffet top. Claustrophobic louver doors further divided the foyer, the living room, the dining room and the kitchen. These doors were removed, the openings heightened and the expansive space now features an unbroken soffit running the length of the room. The fireplace had been refaced with truly ugly ceramic tiles-think McDonalds, circa 1979. These were quickly tamed with a coat of khaki paint. Inside the soffit under the clerestory windows, the original fluorescent lights and ballasts merely thrummed and smelled bad. I replaced them with incandescent track lights on Lutron dimmers. The sectional and entry hall table are from Crate & Barrel, the coffee table is from Macy's and the pendant light is a Jonathan Adler design. Artwork includes two serigraphs by French artist Daniel Airam and, on the stone wall, an image on silk by Salvador Dali depicting Dante's Inferno. That's Chester on the couch.





The kitchen was next. Mismatched cabinets were removed and the new big-box appliances were put on Craigslist. Walls were taken down to the studs, wiring inspected, insulation added and new drywall went up a day before IKEA's expert team arrived. The store's designer worked with me to extend a new run of narrow cabinets into the former breakfast room, creating additional plate and glassware storage. One of the ideas I borrowed from a friend's custom kitchen remodel was to place all light switches and electrical outlets on the underside of the wall-mounted cabinets, which keeps the tile backsplash free of any visual clutter. With the cost savings on the cabinetry, I splurged a bit on white Caesarstone counters.

Prior to moving to Texas, I helped a friend think through an extensive and expensive remodel of his Austin home. I learned a lot from that involvement—especially how costs quickly mounted—and I also befriended one of the contractors. Quite sure my modest remodeling plan and budget would be of no interest, I was pleased when Rusty Shepard instead agreed to personally convert my sketches, clipped magazine images and harebrained ideas into reality. This relationship proved to be key to the success of the remodel as a whole.

I gave Rusty the test of remodeling the master bathroom. We added a skylight in the enlarged shower, a larger window, and I designed a new wall-mounted vanity with ample towel storage. But the crowning achievement (and biggest headache) was the

Red paint, a white loveseat and a sunburst mirror changed the formerly dull breakfast room into a lounge, perfect for entertaining guests. The narrow cabinetry holds dinnerware, and wine storage is built into the bumped out wall.

I took a risk choosing several lipstickred lacquer accent panels in the IKEA kitchen, where a former hanging cabinet was removed to open up the space. New under-cabinet task illumination offsets the room's lack of natural light, and the stainless steel KitchenAid appliances include a gas range that replaced an electric cooktop.





The new en suite master bath has a spa-like feel instead of the small tub in a dank enclosure, mismatched 4" tiles peeling from the wall, too-small window and all but useless vanity we began with. mosaic tile walls and ceilings. To assure perfect tile lines, the ceiling and walls had to be at absolute right angles, which required extensive plaster floating.

Of course, one can't have a stylish master bath and a dumpy master bedroom. Intending to just paint and fix the soffit lighting—which led to floating out the textured walls—it occurred to me that there was an opportunity to connect the house to the back yard. Cheap 4' aluminum slider windows were replaced with single-lite doors with operable sidelights. Now I had access to a deck that was on the verge of collapse. And so work began to build a clean-lined deck with built in planters, ambient lighting and 20 feet of benches.

Even with these changes, the house still felt disconnected from the outside and the hallway remained dark. I realized that if the hallway walls were removed, the flow and feel of the house would utterly change. At the same time, this would be converting a three-bedroom into a two-bedroom home, potentially harming a future sale.

After due consideration, lots of blue-tape lines on walls



Top: Recent additions in the master bedroom include vintage pendant lamps, a spray painted sunburst mirror [additional view, page 2], a Modern Fan Company ceiling fan, an opaque glass door and a Scandinavian headboard with floating nightstands, circa 1962.

My most recent project was replacing the corner windows (above, right) in the guest bedroom with nearly floor-toceiling thermal panes. We found evidence of the original windows being a similar conformation. The English-made Ladderax wall unit by Avalon likely dates from 1960.



and at least one bottle of wine, Rusty knocked the offending walls out and the small bedroom became a den, one that can be easily converted back into a bedroom. I wanted three openings of equal size in the wall between the kitchen and the exterior French doors to the deck, but a significant load-bearing portion of the kitchen wall needed to remain. With the help of another bottle of wine, a yardstick and more tape, I designed a series of openings that would not interfere with the structural load. Rusty finessed my scribbles, created the openings and trimmed them out in dark oak. This simple architectural gesture has become a favorite feature of guests.

Like the master bathroom, the hall bath had decaying shower tile, no windows, a small vanity with cracked tiles and a warped linen closet. As Rusty began the demolition, there was a sharp intake of breath when we discovered the live oak outside had found access at the floor plate, and the interiors of the walls and tub were spiderwebbed with tiny roots. After assuring that the tree would not be harmed, the roots were removed. And having learned the



New doors lead to the recently completed deck off the small bedroom I use as a den. The decorative wall openings let light pass through and appear to be original to the house. Naturally, this project meant the hallway also needed a bit of work—more taming of the offensive wall texture and a couple of eyeball ceiling lights to accent artwork. And even though I would prefer terrazzo or bleached oak floors, I matched the ceramic tile the house came with when we took up the carpet in the middle bedroom. challenge of mosaic tiles, I chose instead 8"x20" ceramic tiles in a cream color. Removing the linen closet gave us space for a large mirror over a custom floating vanity with circular access openings.

Base moldings were unified throughout the house at minimal cost, as was changing the remaining outlets and light switches to Lutron models. All interior doors were replaced—most are now opaque glass to admit light—as was the hardware. With the remaining funds



A Kohler sink and toilet, Grohe fixtures, dark brown Caesarstone counters and tomato-red paint in the new guest bath. Note the copious tree roots we found during the demo, below.



allotted to remodeling, I felt the best bang for the buck would be in a new entry and a walled courtyard off the living and dining room. From Atomic Ranch I found Doors and Company right here in Austin. The existing Early American–style front door and small double-hung window were replaced with sleek, reeded-glass units sized to the original architect's plan.

In the four years since I purchased my first home, I've learned a lot along the way, including the "twice as long; twice as much" project mantra. I've also learned to seek the support of friends and family, about the value of a careful and engaged contractor, and to ignore that weird sinking feeling of "It's too late to turn back now" when looking at a pile of rubble. But mostly I've learned to trust my instincts.

Resources page 72



A simple plan of square pavers, low benches and a recirculating fountain were placed with regard to the health of an old oak; the area is largely surfaced in decomposed granite to permit the passage of water to the tree's roots.

A derelict deck that once held a questionable hot tub is now a clean-lined entertainment area with multiple access points and tons of seating.



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Plastic, molded wood, wire, fiberglass, upholstered—there are now even more ways to order your Herman Miller Eames Shell chair. The fiberglass chairs were first produced in 1950, then phased out in the '80s due to the environmental risks involved in the manufacturing process. Now that they've perfected a safer method that includes robots and a drybind process, Herman Miller has reintroduced the iconic fiberglass version.

Each material has its attributes: the matte-finish polypropylene is softer to the touch, while the semi-gloss fiberglass shows off its variegated strands. The sculptural wire or the veneered wood offer their own pleasures, while who could argue with the comfort of a chair upholstered in Alexander Girard hopsack? Prices range from \$299 for a plastic side chair to \$499 for a fiberglass armchair and \$739 for an upholstered rocker. Options and retailers at **hermanmiller.com/collection**.





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The open-plan view includes a George Nakashima table, refinished Hans Wegner Wishbone chairs and an Eames lounge chair and ottoman courtesy of Todd Saunders' grandfather. Next to the Polder sofa is a Hip Haven bullet planter, and to the left of the purse on the floating hearth is the entry to the kitchen. Through the windows we see a vintage Brown Jordan set and on the wall, prints by Thomas Campbell.

ITC



text Michelle Gringeri-Brown

photography Jim Brown

odd Saunders might consider himself a Richard Neutra geek—or maybe more of a dork—when it comes to closely studying the designs of the Vienna-born architect. He's toured as many of Neutra's structures as possible, including 10 homes in the Silver Lake neighborhood of Los Angeles where the architect's design office still stands. He's shot dozens of photos of details and measured the tolerances between, say, a wall and a door hinge. And he tracked down the FSB hardware used in Neutra homes in the required aluminum finish for his own raised ranch in Long Beach, Calif.

A producer for fashion shoots, the 38-year-old was living in a post-and-beam apartment with his wife, Ranae, a flight attendant, when they began researching the real estate market in 2009. "We had been focusing more on ZIP code than on [architectural] style," he says. "We looked at Cliff Mays and some Eichlers in Orange. By 2011, we had decided on Long Beach for its location and rich architectural history." The fireplace hearth was stripped chemically, the concrete block sandblasted, and the firebox repainted and plumbed for gas logs.

In the office portion of the public space, two restored Eames fiberglass shell chairs team up with a Richard Schultz Petal table, a 1948 Nelson bench and a George Nelson drop-leaf desk. The Eames pedestal chair was rescued from a dumpster, and the artwork above is by Isamu Noguchi.





The Pro

"We invited Doug Kramer over to our apartment and showed him our furniture and gave him a pretty clear idea of what we were looking for," says Ranae, 34. "He really got it. Doug had already seen the house about five years before and was already in love with the structure."

"I told Doug, Let's give ourselves three or four years to find the right house," Todd adds. "Of course it only took two weeks."

Doug Kramer of SoCalModern.com is a Realtor specializing in Cliff Mays and other modernist homes in the area. "I first viewed the house in 2006. It was pretty much carpeted throughout, with the exception of the kitchen and bathrooms, which had what appeared to be the original linoleum floors. The walls were a pale green and the place look tired, though still sexy," he recalls.

"When the Saunderses toured, it was a bank-owned property and, while it had been cleaned up a bit, it was far from its original luster. This was not a negative, however, as it gave Todd and Ranae the opportunity to purchase at a discount and still have resources left over to bring this gem back to life."

Reflective of the rollercoaster housing market, the 1,700-square-foot, two-bedroom home had sold for \$362,500 in 1998 and a breathtaking \$891,000 in 2006. Five years later, it was much more affordable. Located in the Alamitos Heights neighborhood of well-kept postwar homes, an added cachet was the handful of Neutra houses nearby.

The bank that owned the 1959-built property had installed a new kitchen and laminate flooring, so the Saunderses found it very livable during their walk-through and only anticipated cosmetic touches. "It was the first house we looked at with Doug and we both just knew," Ranae recalls. But once they started exploring, one thing led to another and six months later, most elements had been touched.

"A couple of layers of the unfortunate onion that had grown on the structure had been peeled back," Todd says. "We undid a lot. The first thing was sandblasting years and years of paint off the fireplace, then we took up the Pergo flooring, followed by old linoleum and Masonite. We kept peeling back to see what we had to work with, and built back up from there. In the case of the floors, we ended up with the subfloor, then new ply, then white oak.

"We didn't plan on doing the gas lines, rewiring the house or doing the plumbing," he continues. "I had worked with most of our contractors previously and trusted them. They said, We can get you by or we can do it now while we're in there and you won't have to touch it for another 15 or 20 years. So we opted just to go for it. The hard part was redoing it correctly and installing period-correct and/or contemporary pieces and hardware that would jibe with the midcentury style."

A David Carson silkscreen hangs over a vintage Arne Vodder credenza near the Eames Hang-It-All by the front door. For privacy sans light-blocking curtains, frosted 3M film was applied to the windows near the front door. Next to the Hella Jongerius-designed sofa—which is positioned away from the wall to show off the detailing on the back—is a white Yo-Yo sofa table and a Fjord pouffe.

The Punch List

- ✔ Roof: returned to original spec'd white gravel; venting, exhaust hardware and original sheet metal gutters replaced
- ✓ Plumbing: gas lines and most water pipes replaced; Hansgrohe Axor fixtures in baths and kitchen
- ✓ Electrical: all outlets inside and out rewired, reground or repaired; rewired and repaired original recessed lighting fixtures
- ✓ Baseboards: redone to original specs throughout
- ✓ Door hardware: FSB aluminum hardware from Germany
- ✓ Glass: repair sliding glass door rollers and tracks, install vintage handles & hardware; replace glass in ceiling fixtures in bathrooms; new mirrors in bathrooms
- ✓ Exterior/interior: prep and paint all; remove unoriginal hardware
- ✓ Landscape: new Ipe fencing and deck; new concrete where needed to return sidewalks, curbs, stairs and retaining walls to original; score poolside concrete and form in-ground planters; install succulents, bamboo and palms



"It's very fulfilling to bring together a midcentury modern gem with buyers who will care for it."

W Later



"We did take on more areas than we originally planned on, but it seemed necessary," Ranae adds. "We wanted a home that we wouldn't be working on for years, to be able to move in and actually enjoy it."

The Deets

"The sandblaster was hesitant about our job, thinking the fireplace corners might get rounded off, but Todd was confident that that's what he wanted to do," Ranae explains.

"For sure, a sandblasting gun in the hands of the wrong person could dig a hole right through it," Todd concedes. "The concrete block maintained its sharp edges and, while there may be a couple of places where the grout was degraded a little, other than that, it's very uniform and beautiful. It's such a pleasing texture; everyone comes in and walks up and touches the fireplace."

This couple's dynamic places Todd in the role of tastemaker, while Ranae brings a more pragmatic approach and helped steer the budget through the shoals of ambition overreach. "I'm much more practical, and aesthetically there are some things Todd likes where I would prefer something more functional. He's definitely the expert and I'm still learning," she says.

This meant that when he wanted to pull out the IKEA kitchen cabinets, she lobbied that they worked well and suited the flow of house. "Restraint was my biggest challenge—what to pull back on, what to focus on," Todd acknowledges. "I love spending time and money on the house. We went out to Orbit In in Palm Springs one weekend, and they had gorgeous new aluminum doors and windows. I got on a kick of doing research on replacement windows for a while."

Instead, they had the tracks of the existing sliding glass doors repaired, and 3M safety film, which offers both breakage and UV protection, installed instead of changing out the windows. Bonus points for maintaining the original





A few tears were shed over missing ceramic mosaic tile counters and robin's-egg-blue and yellow sinks in the baths. The shower tile had been reglazed in white, and dark stone floors installed by the sellers. Today, new glass shower doors, mirrors and Axor faucets by Hansgrohe complete the hybrid look.

IKEA cabinets, Caesarstone counters and a glass tile backsplash had been installed just prior to purchase. Space constraints dictated a 30" stove, and the couple found a restored Wedgewood model that fit. The microwave is a Maytag. look and saving a bucket of money.

Whenever possible, Todd summoned up the aesthetic ghost of Neutra. "At the time this house was built, here in Long Beach you had a handful of Neutras going in, and Edward Killingsworth was designing a lot of the major structures at Cal State Long Beach. We took cues from their work, figuring that the builder of this house would have done the same. There are subtle details that are a tip of the hat to those legends."

An example was the glass and aluminum exterior lamps Neutra used on many of the homes Todd had toured. "I had photos but couldn't find them anywhere, not even the name or manufacturer," he says. "Through trolling and keyword searching on eBay and Craigslist, I found a couple that came off a house in the Midwest. That was one thing I totally dorked out on. We have them now by the front door and the entryway to the kitchen. It does the house justice and, hopefully, the other way round."

The Payoff

Unbeknownst to them, the local preservation group had been tipped off about the home and, as they wound up the project, they received a historic preservation award from Long Beach Heritage. "That was quite a surprise," Todd says. "We would have worked just as hard and diligently on this house, but to receive a nod from a city that has such a number of beautiful Spanish and Craftsman homes, to have our midcentury home recognized—I was over the moon."

"It's very fulfilling to bring together a midcentury modern gem—especially one that has been neglected—with buyers who have the know-how, resources and will to care for it," Realtor Doug Kramer comments. "This home has changed ownership four times in the last five years, and it's a relief to say it's now in very good hands."







The couple saw the house as their forever home for raising a family—and here she is, Amelie Ray (named for Ms. Eames), in her Babyletto crib with a vintage Nelson highboy dresser. The Marimekko print from Todd's own childhood has been moved from the office to this wall.

The master bedroom opens directly to the pool patio. The white Legnoletto platform bed has an integrated headboard/nightstand, while the Fjord chair is by Patricia Urquiola. Satin stainless Omnia knobs on the storage units are consistent throughout the house.



Dion Neutra, the architect son of Richard and Dione Neutra,

has written *The Neutras, Then & Later,* the first of what he optimistically says could be 10 volumes covering his father's nearly 400 built works, many of which included Dion as project architect. The 192-page book covers 20 prominent designs, the Neutras' early years and a snapshot of family dynamics.

"In my memory Dad never played pure games with me like cards, chess, Scrabble or other similar games," Dion writes. "He had no interest in sports, either to witness or support in me. Our interaction seemed to be exclusively in the area of intellect and primarily in the verbal arena. Of course there was the whole area of architecture, which was the underlying and continuing theme in all its iterations.

"One day when I was about 11, Dad approached me and said, 'Would you like to learn to draft? It's



something I could teach you and it might be a useful skill at some time in your life.' He never said, 'I want you to be an architect.' ... So that's how it started."

Last year's destruction of the Gettysburg Cyclorama has only strengthened the 87-year-old Dion's sense of urgency to document his father's work and help save other commissions from a similar fate. Hence the book, which was in gestation for more than a decade.

Youngest son Raymond Richard Neutra, now 75, pursued medicine instead of joining the family business. "Since we grew up in a live-work space, Dion and I knew what our dad did, who he did it with and who he did it for," Raymond says. "After a few summers in the drafting room, it became obvious that I was not gifted in that direction. Instead I was influenced by my father's interest in architecture's impact on health, neuroscience and perception."

In his retirement years, Raymond is focusing on the restoration of the VDL Studio and Residences, the live-work residence in the Los

Angeles neighborhood of Silver Lake where the sons grew up. "Its design addressed timeless questions like 'How can we bring distant and nearby nature into our living space?' and 'How can we use appropriate new technology to enhance well being?' " he says. Most of Richard Neutra's projects were designed here and architects like Gregory Ain, Harwell Harris, Raphael Soriano, Joseph Allen Stein and Donald Wexler started their careers in this office.

Over the last six years, the Cal Poly Pomona College of Environmental Design, Friends of VDL, Dion Neutra and the firm of Marmol Radziner have carried out a \$300,000 restoration, which includes the rooftop penthouse and reflection pool. Fundraising continues, but for now, the preservation of this piece of Neutra history looks assured.

There are tours of the Silver Lake compound, an iPad app and much more information at neutravdl.org and neutra.org; copies of The Neutras, Then & Later can be ordered at goo.gl/67q0ur. Back issue no. 40, available at atomic-ranch.com, features Richard Neutra's Hassrick House.



text Bromley Davenport images courtesy Dion & Raymond Richard Neutra







Clockwise, from upper left: A tour group on the roof of the VDL Studio and Residences; Richard and Dione Neutra; Dione on the terrace of the live-work space; Raymond (left) and Dion Neutra in 2008. On page 3, Dion and Richard circa 1964.







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Parker House



was first hooked on the midcentury modern aesthetic when I bought a 1967 ranch in the Hudson Valley region in 2001. Nine years later, I was dreaming of a place to escape the winters of upstate New York and began to look at listings in southern Florida. It didn't take long to find the house of my dreams.

South Florida is bursting with wonderful examples of midcentury modern, many of which are being torn down or gut renovated, with the resulting homes barely resembling the original idea. To my great fortune, I purchased a relatively untouched 1954 Alfred Browning Parker home in the Riviera section of Coral Gables—sight unseen and spent the last two years restoring its original beauty.

fules

text Linda Meredith *photography* Barbie Painter



* 2012

Prolific modernist

Parker began his practice in South Florida in the mid-1940s when most of the existing residential architecture was in the Spanish Mediterranean vein. He is referred to as the Father of Miami Modernism, and his tropical modernist style, where the structure flows organically into nature, was greatly influenced by Frank Lloyd Wright. Over the course of his 65-year career, Parker produced designs for more than 500 residential projects prior to his death in 2011.

During his prolific midcentury years, the architect designed some of his most well-known residences, including Woodsong and Royal Road—Parker's own home—both in Coconut Grove. But the mainstay of his residential work at that time was modern, middle-class homes such as the one I now own.

My 2,270-square-foot ranch sits on a double lot in a neighborhood of modest singlestory homes from the '50s and '60s. Originally built for pilot John Randall and his family, the floor plan is airplane-shaped, with the wings housing a master bedroom and an adjoining bath on one side, and two smaller bedrooms with a Jack-and-Jill bath on the other. The central 'fuselage' holds the kitchen, living room, three sets of persiana doors (typically nine to 12' louvered doors with glass interiors that offer extra protection from hurricane-force winds) and a covered terrace that leads to the back yard. Both the exterior and interior walls are stucco over concrete block; excepting the kitchen, the floors throughout are original terrazzo and tile. There are vaulted wood ceilings, built-in bookcases in the living room, and original cupboards and turquoise laminate countertops remain in the kitchen. With the exception of an old oak tree and a stand of palms, when I bought it there were few landscape plants and the grass was dying. A neighbor told me the house was called 'the bunker.' The addition of a pool, a stucco privacy wall and new landscaping means I can now take full advantage of the interior and exterior living space. The curvilinear wall conceals the open carport and kitchen entry from the street.





Challenging conditions

The previous owners had deferred maintenance on the 55-year-old house, especially the rather specific needs of a pedigreed midcentury modern. They had gone through the process of securing historical designation for the house, but also had plans before the Coral Gables Historic Preservation Board for a large addition to nearly double the total square footage—an idea that runs counter to the aesthetic of an early environmental conservationist such as Parker.

When I purchased it, almost none of the original jalousie windows worked, and the wood ceilings were stained a variety of mismatched colors. The covered terrace had been screened in, but the material had golf-ballsize holes everywhere; the outside wooden shutters were dried and cracked. Sections of the exterior also had poorly repaired termite damage, the AC needed replacing and the roof leaked, while a coral-rock wall was falling down. Repairs had been attempted over the years, but the results were poor.

I replaced the central air conditioning on day one-it being July in south Florida. Next I found painters Ana Bikic



Top: A vintage credenza sits in the sun behind two rehabbed period chairs. Above: The opposite vantage shows Dixie on my Adrian Pearsall couch and Louis Ghost chairs around a vintage Milo Baughman dining table. The floors are terrazzo and the ceiling is now the original color after being treated with a penetrating stain made of rosewood nut oil and green oxide pigment.



Eames DCWs surround a reissued Platner table, and beyond is the lounge area with a vintage armoire and artwork by Ana Bikic. This room was a covered terrace, but now has custom, removable casement windows and screens to provide year-round living space without changing the footprint of the house. Many of Parker's residential projects featured persiana doors like these.





In the background, the master bedroom is separated from the sunroom by wooden shutter doors. The contemporary daybed's platform becomes a side table holding midcentury planters, and the Delta Magazine coffee table is from Futurama.

Resources page 72



Two guest bedrooms are connected to a shared bathroom by pocket doors. The original tiles in both baths were in good condition, and the wall-hung vanities were painted to match the original tile, seen here in the master en suite.

and William Coulthard, who are actually more artists than traditional painting contractors. Over the course of the following year, their meticulous craftsmanship, together with work from several other artisans in the Miami area, was chiefly responsible for restoring my neglected midcentury modern masterpiece.

A section of untouched ceiling in an attic crawl space was used as a color guide for restoring the ceilings throughout. The interior walls had been badly patched in many areas, and the previous owners had installed wallpaper and star stickers in one of the children's bedrooms. The baseboards throughout the house had been painted white, so they were restored with a wood-grain technique using a combination of paint and stain.

After much searching, a craftsman was located who rehabilitated the two-stage jalousie window cranks and replaced missing and broken glass. On the exterior, the shutters were restored using a technique similar to the one used on the baseboards, and the stucco was painted to match the original color found beneath a back window. The coral-rock wall running the length of the The kitchen is diminutive but functional. Blue laminate counters and the wood cabinets are original, while the range hood and motor were restored; the flooring is Marmoleum 12" tiles. Replacing the appliances necessitated special ordering smaller than standard models to fit the space. I found a Kenmore cooktop, Maytag wall oven and Frigidaire dishwasher that fit the bill.



driveway was thoroughly rehabilitated.

The permitting process for the landscaping, exterior lighting, swimming pool and privacy wall took almost as long as the entire interior and exterior restoration. Coral Gables has an active historical preservation department, and since the house had been designated previously as historic, the exterior plans and permits were heavily scrutinized. It was during the time that I prepared for three historical board hearings that I became a self-taught expert on Parker, the historical permitting process and the tropical plants of south Florida.

Alfred Browning Parker's homes intertwine the interiors and exteriors through his use of wood, glass and stone or block, with the ceiling beams appearing to pierce the windows. Such is true for my modest gem, where every minute of the day, some portion of the house features an interesting light pattern, and where inside and out become one.

Linda Meredith is the CEO of Sui Generis Health, a marketing and medical education firm.



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ranchdressing

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

Q:

This original light fixture in my 1968 house was broken during a remodeling project. Do you have any leads as to a replacement shade? It measures roughly 12.5"

tall and 4.5" in diameter.

I also have another similar fixture with a wood piece separating two suspended lights, but its shades are composed of red and yellow glass pieces. I am not using that fixture now that the remodel is complete; I wanted to learn more about both fixtures so I can fix mine and find a new home for the other one.

Brian Morgan



A: Two of our lighting authorities had comments, but not a definitive ID. "It could be anybody—everyone had a foot in this game," writes Bo Sullivan of Arcalus Period Design in Portland, Ore., (arcalus.com). "There is enough detail in the star spreader that it could probably be ID'd going through vintage catalogs. The glass might be Swedish, Czech, Yugoslav, Italian ... "

Christian Widmer, who specializes in American MCM lighting dating from 1950 to 1962, sent this reply: "I would guess that this is definitely a mid- to late-'60s piece, which I'm not as familiar with. The date of the house is a clue, but it looks European to me. The shape of the canopy can provide a big clue, and the manufacturer's label is usually under it; this fixture looks like a three-person job to install, so I'm not sure if Brian has ever been able to look there.

"Regardless of who made it, the bad news is that it is nearly impossible to replace that glass shade. His best bet is to scour eBay, etc., for a vintage match; this fixture probably came in a single pendant version and other variations so you never know what might come up. I've found replacement glass online that I never dreamed I'd find—but it took some persistence."



Q: I found this amazing Overman Pod chair with the original tags still intact on the bottom. The style number is M24 made in 1968. Can you tell me the value? Patricia Van Stroe

A: From Judy Engel of Modern on the Hudson (modernonthehudson.com): "This chair was created and designed for A.B. Overman by Carl Eric Klote (pronounced Klote-uh). In the late '50s and early '60s Klote developed a technique used to produce upholstered furniture frames that had no screws, nuts, bolts, dowels or glue joints. This new technique produced a 'one piece, lightweight, yet extremely durable frame on which a sofa, loveseat or chair could be built,' according to kloteinternational.com. Overman produced these pieces in Sweden and Germany before establishing Overman USA in Knoxville, Tenn. In 1977 the designer opened Klote International Corp., also in Knoxville, which still operates today using the same techniques and designs developed by Klote, along with newer designs.

"The good news is that these pieces were mass produced and quite affordable, making them somewhat easy to find in the usual vintage haunts—Etsy, eBay, Craigslist and good ol' garage sales and local thrift shops. Factoring in the desirable color and style of your chair, and researching some recent eBay sales, I'd value it between \$200-\$300."

Q: I recently purchased an interesting MCM lamp on eBay. It measures about 9" tall, but I couldn't find any markings on it. I have never come across one like this before or since, and I'm wondering if you have any information about it.

Bruce Ross

A: Christian Widmer replies: "I'm familiar with this lamp; it's an evolved version of a more Art Decoinspired lamp, which had a curved, round metal base that completed the lines of the shade holder. Its shade was a trumpet-shaped solid white opal glass; this '50s version had the same trumpet glass shade, but with black spatters on it (Jackson Pollock inspired, I assume).





Q: I found these chairs at a local thrift store and paid \$24.99 each. I'm certain I got a good deal! But I'm having a difficult time finding any information on the designer, Torben Strandgaard, as well as a timeframe for when they were made. I was intending to sell them, but have since decided to make room for the pair. I would also like a value; there are some minor scratches, but they are very solid otherwise. The cushions, although dirty, are in perfect condition and I plan to have them recovered later. The main flaws would be two broken Rotex straps on each chair, but thanks to your magazine, I think I can find a suitable replacement. **Eliza Stevens**

A: Judy Engel took a look. "These chairs were made in the 1960s and do not have the original cushions. The originals were basic squares with piping on the



ranchdressing



edges—very easy for any upholsterer to make if you have interest in reproducing them. With new, originalstyle cushions, I would value the chairs between \$1,000 and \$1,500 for the pair, depending on the type of fabric or leather used to upholster. You definitely got a deal; great find!"



Seattle upholsterer Bill Herzog of hmdukedesign.com had suggestions on the cushions: "Another great look would be box cushions with a 'top stitch' detail that serves to hold the seam return in place. Scandinavian makers often used this, sometimes with contrasting thread color. You should request 'HR' or high-resiliency foam, which will last longer and give better spring-back since the foam is doing a lot of the structural work. Also request that the zipper go around to the back of the seat and back boxing, instead of ending on the sides. If you want the cleanest possible look, the last seam can be hand stitched closed, leaving no zipper at all; you see that style on the higher-end Danish manufacturers and designers like Grete Jalk, Finn Juhl and Fritz Hansen. In Seattle, it would run \$75–\$150 per cushion with foam, depending on the fabric and pattern repeat."

Q: My husband and I are the second owners of our 1961 MCM home, and there are a number of things that need to be addressed. Last year we tackled the electrical, and this year we would love to address the original windows. We're wondering if we can have them repaired or if there are companies that make widows that would look appropriate (without spending a fortune). The kitchen has its original cabinets and countertops (complete with a penny in the laminate from 1961). The cabinets are a bit grubby, so we are looking for advice on how to spruce them up to their former glory, and the



handles are losing their electroplating (should we buy new or try to spray paint?). The appliances are torture.

Any advice or guidance you could provide would be amazing! We would hate to make a bad decision during the restoration of our home.

Courtney Hahn

A: Thanks for asking—seriously. We've featured a few homes where original metal windows were painstakingly refinished, and broken mechanical parts repaired or replaced. If you have the time to research such a local resource, that would be the best solution. It looks like the design of your windows contributes heavily to the aesthetics of your home, so be hesitant to consider changing the style; that said, finding someone to repair the windows will be a challenge and might be impossible. If the issue is more pitted, grungy surfaces, steel wool and a good cleaner can help.

Various companies make metal-frame windows, and an upcoming California home used louvers from the



Metal Window Corp. (metalwindowcorp.com); see a sneak peek on pages 7-8. Other possible manufacturers include Fleetwood and Arcadia, two companies that provided windows and doors for postwar homes originally. Know that replacement windows will be quite pricey and anything to do with vinyl cladding should be avoided. If your original sizes aren't standard or the frames need to be replaced, you're looking at patching both the exterior and interior walls of the house.

Regarding the kitchen, wonderful that you want to keep your cabinets! The 'Working Class Heroes' article in Spring 2014 showcases similar ones that were refinished with Daly's ProFin, an oil finish; nothing wrong with satin polyurethane, either. If you're not experienced refinishers, you might want to consult with a painter or wood refinisher and hire out the job. For the handles, the existing screw hole placement will determine if new pulls will work for you. If you like the originals' design, getting them replated or spray painting are two options. Unless you find NOS vintage ones online (not impossible), they're no longer available, but not precious.

Our Atomic Ranch Midcentury Interiors book tackles both contemporary and more retro kitchens, and includes appliance recommendations. IMO, changing out a last-legs electric cooktop for gas, or finding a wall oven that works for your cabinetry dimensions is still within the umbrella of renovating, not remodeling.



Magic Chef and Thermador are a good place to start, and how cute would a Smeg, Big Chill or Northstar fridge in classic white or blue to match your laminate counters look?

—ar editor

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.

atomicevents

Through May 25 San Antonio Robert Indiana: Beyond LOVE

This Whitney Museum of American Art survey of the artist's work—best know for his 1966 typographic 'LOVE'—includes 90 paintings, sculptures and other works on paper at the McNay Art Museum; mcnayart.org.

May 31 Indianapolis

Back to the Future: Midcentury Modern Home Tour

A tour of five homes in the Avalon Hills and Devonshire neighborhoods; tickets and info at goo.gl/QlX3br or indianalandmarks.org.



June 11–15 Fort Lauderdale The Hukilau 2014

The 13th and final Polynesian gathering at the Bahia Mar Beach Resort includes surf and rockabilly bands, cocktail author Jeff 'Beachbum' Berry, a tiki bazaar, fire dancers and plenty of tats; thehukilau.com.

Through June 15 Princeton, N.J. Alexander Calder

Two landmark Calder stabiles, 'Man' and 'The Kite That Never Flew,' are on display outside the Princeton University Art Museum entrance. More info at artmuseum.princeton. edu/campus-art.

June 26–29 Lake George, N.Y.

Ohana Luau at the Lake

Vendors, music, a live Polynesian show, retro cocktails and food at the historic Tiki Resort; luauatthelake.com.



Raymond Loewy, Studebaker Avanti, 1964

Through July 6 Salem, Mass.

California Design, 1930–1965: Living in a Modern Way More than 250 MCM design objects on display at the Peabody Essex Museum, including furniture, fashion, industrial design and vehicles like this Avanti. Organized by LACMA, this is the exhibition's only East Coast venue; pem.org.

Through July 27 Los Angeles

Calder and Abstraction: From Avant-Garde to Iconic

Alexander Calder's kinetic sculptures, aka mobiles and stabiles, are on display at LACMA in an installation designed by Frank Gehry; lacma.org.

August 22–24 Denver

Denver Modernism Show

A tiki lounge, vintage car show, live bands, lectures, home tours and art gallery are among the special events at the midcentury show at the National Western Complex Expo Hall; denvermodernism.com.

September 26–28 Sturbridge, Mass. The New England Shake-Up

Rockabilly, surf and Polynesian Pounce music is the emphasis at this retro event, plus vintage cars, an indoor pool party and vendors; newenglandshakeup.com.

Through October 1 NYC

Designing Modern Women, 1890s–1990s

MoMA's exhibition focuses on women's contributions to 20th Century modern design, including a 1952 kitchen by Charlotte Perriand and Le Corbusier, and furniture and other designs by Eileen Gray, Eva Zeisel, Ray Eames, Leila Vignelli and more; moma.org.

October 12–13 Palm Springs Modernism Week Fall Season Kick-Off

Check for updates on specifics, but expect some of the same great activities you can enjoy at the February extravaganza—the Paul Kaplan Group's yard sale, double-decker bus tours, cocktail parties—in a less-mobbed setting; modernismweek.com.

Ongoing Miami Beach

Cleaner, Healthier, Easier: Improving the Modern Home



Wayne Husted, Joe Philip Myers for the Blenko Glass Company, Architectural Series, 1955-65.

Interiors, furnishings and timesaving appliances popularized in the early 20th century illustrate the drive to make one's home modern, wolfsonian.org.

Ongoing Toledo, Ohio Blenko Glass

The Toledo Museum of Art has acquired 16 midcentury Blenko vessels, including five from the Architectural Series. Designed by Wayne Husted, the large-scale vessels were to be displayed outdoors, and few early examples still exist; toledomuseum.org.



Autographed copies \$40 atomic-ranch.com





resources

The John Entenza House, pp. 12–23 Restoration: Michael W. Folonis Architects, folonisarchitects.com

Rosy Outlook, pp. 28-29

Tile matching: Patricia Kaszas, Patricia's Tile, 619.293.0844, patriciastile@cox.net ***** Floor tile: B&W Tile Mfg., bwtile.com ***** Shower enclosure: Guardian, showerguardglass.com ***** Vintage chrome accessories: Daisy's Attic, etsy.com/shop/ DaisysAttic ***** Vintage light fixture: Auction Annie, etsy.com/shop/auctionannie

Doing Wright by Hitchcock, pp. 34-42

Contractor: Rusty Shepard, 512.366.0735 ***** Front door: doorsandcompany.com ***** French doors & windows: homedepot.com ***** Hardware: schlage.com ***** Light fixture dimmers: Lutron Diva, lutron.com ***** Kitchen: Nexus cabinets & Abstrakt accent panels: ikea.com ***** Counters, caesarstone.com ***** Appliances, kitchenaid.com ***** Master bath: Fixtures, kohler.com ***** grohe.com ***** Tile, hakatai.com ***** Guest bath: Sink, kohler.com ***** Counter, caesarstone.com ***** Fixtures, grohe.com ***** Master bedroom: Mirror, Martha Stewart, homedepot.com ***** Ceiling fan, modernfan.com ***** Living room furnishings: crateandbarrel.com ***** macys.com ***** Capri Bottle pendant, jonathanadler.com ***** Dining room: Chairs, gusmodern.com ***** Rug, ikea.com ***** Table, crateandbarrel.com ***** Vintage furnishings: uptownmodernaustin.com

Keen on Neutra, pp. 46–55

Plumber: Go Green Plumbing, Long Beach, Calif., 562.787.2218 * Flooring: California Hardwood Floors, calhardwood.com * Doors & hardware: onestopwindowsanddoors.com **× Vintage** Stove: antiquestoveheaven.com **X** Sliding glass door repair: Mike Broders, traksrus.com **X** Window film: ADEC, adec3m.com **X** Cabinet pulls: omniaindustries.com *** Bath faucets**: hansgroheusa.com **× Living room furnishings:** Polder sofa, vitra.com X Yo-Yo table, Fjord pouffe, moroso.com X Bullet planter, hiphaven.com *** Cafe furniture:** Tolix (powdercoated in Safety Orange), dwr.com **× Vintage furnishings**: Xcape, xcapemodern.com **×** Studio 111, Palm Springs, 760.323.5104 Wright, wright20.com ¥ Jules Seltzer Associates, jules seltzerstore.com **# Furniture restoration**: humemodern.com **#** aandaantiguerestoration.com **X Hudson crib**: babyletto.com **X** Master bedroom: LegnoLetto bed, alfredo-haeberli.com Kelax chair, moroso.com

Parker House Rules, pp. 60–64

Vintage furnishings and accessories: Neven and Neven Moderne, nevenmoderne.com ***** gueridon.com ***** Dining area: Louis Ghost chairs, yliving.com ***** Sunroom: Daybed & coffee table, futuramafurniturela.com ***** Platner dining table, Eames DCW chairs, yliving.com ***** Artwork, anabikic.com ***** Fabrics: donghia.com/collections/textiles ***** Rogers & Goffigon, delanyandlong.com ***** maharam.com ***** Kitchen: Floor, marmoleum.com ***** Appliances, frigidaire.com ***** maytag.com ***** kenmore.com





comingup





- The Stahls' Case Study icon
- ▼ Florida fixer on a budget
- ▶ Canadian retro style



Plus, Wendell Lovett's architecture on the cover, a Palm Springs renovation and keeping up bath surfaces.

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