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# fall 2014

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### cover

This 1957 modernist home near Seattle was designed by Wendell Lovett. The second homeowners opened up the compact kitchen to the living and dining areas, as well as the striking view, while respecting the rhythm of the post-and-beam architecture. Near the floating fireplace hearth with its Darth Vader hood sits a vintage Z chair paired with an IKEA side table and a West Elm rug. The killer view is of the Cascades and Lake Sammamish. Story page 12.





# my2cents

In the Winter 2013 issue, I wrote about a teardown of a midcentury house here in Portland, Ore., and a loophole that allows developers to skip the 35-day neighborhood notification if they apply for a demolition and construction permit the same day. The two structures that are going up on the former ranch home's double lot are about what you'd expect: two-and-a-half stories, tiny side and rear setbacks, and a pastiche of faux period details thrown on the front facades, making these 'heritage homes' according to the developer.



Jim Brown (2)



Same view, different lens ...

The resident to the south now has a fishbowl for a side yard, while the owner to the north has listed his house for sale.

A few blocks away, on another double lot across the street from the bucolic Reed College campus, a white clapboard ranch faced a similar future. When neighbors heard of the developer's plans to raze it and build two new homes, they marshaled forces and began fighting city hall. Atomic Ranch wrote a letter in support of those efforts, and a large crowd at the appeal hearing made known their objections. The city still approved the plans, but in April, two neighbors signed an agreement to buy the developer out.

Earlier, I'd been invited to walk through this ranch house to comment on original elements and its potential appeal for buyers. There were nice hardwood floors, unpainted woodwork, a spacious kitchen and original-ish baths; this was a custom home and looked it. Unsurprisingly, the real conversation during that tour was between one of the neighbors and a remodeler who claimed to have a feel for homes like this. If the plan is to renovate and resell, I'm pretty sure you will be able to stand on the sidewalk and smell the granite and stainless.

The story—affluent neighborhood throws money at the issue—was covered on local KOIN television news. On air, Mayor Charlie Hales commented, "This issue highlighted the larger problem; I'm not sure we've got it right yet. Even if they worked out a truce this time, there are still big questions we all have to work on." Where's Kyle MacLachlan when you need him?

Vic Remmers, the developer who is walking away, claims lot splitting is a fiscal imperative. "It's necessary because the prices of land, the prices of homes, are getting to a certain point to where, if you just bought one and built one, it financially probably wouldn't be feasible," he said. "When it's done responsibly, when it's done right, I think it's a good thing."

I disagree.

In late-breaking news that our Eastmoreland association termed a 'Big Win,' the Portland bureau of Development Services has changed the demolition policy: Now, a notification has to be posted for 30 days, and neighborhood organizations can request additional delays up to 120 days, but only if the developer plans to replace one vintage house with two or more new ones. You want to bulldoze a 'dated' '50s ranch and put up a McMansion? Have at it!

Am I the only one who thinks permit-fee- and tax-revenue-driven development policies show how few cities really get it? Isn't restoration of quality period homes another viable option?

*Michelle Gringeri-Brown*  
Editor



# atomic ranch®

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Publisher

**Jim Brown**

Editor

**Michelle Gringeri-Brown**

Art Director

**Nancy Anderson**

Advertising Design

**Carol Flores**

Logo Design

**John Skelton**

Editorial Assistant

**Cheyenne Tackitt**

Web Design

**Josh Tackitt**

Copy Editor

**Marcelle Heath**

Advertising Manager

**Christina Walker**

503.297.5605

atomicranchadvertising@comcast.net

## Publishing Office

3125 SE Rex St.

Portland, OR 97202-8573

503.771.4171 p 503.771.4172 f

editor@atomic-ranch.com

atomic-ranch.com



facebook.com/groups/friendsofarmag

## Subscriptions & Address Changes:

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# modernwisdom

I am restoring a 1958 Flamingo mobile home in a 55-plus park in Palm Springs. For us baby boomers, there is a huge movement to live smaller and for less money.

Once I closed escrow, I drove past a 1965 Cambridge doublewide prototype I'd seen online over the years; an older couple was out decorating for Christmas. I



The Cambridge prototype



stopped and told them I had just bought in the same park, but that I have always loved their place and if they ever decided to sell, I'd love to buy. This was their last season here and they were, indeed, selling; right place, right time.

The bottom photo is of a Spartan travel trailer, one of the first in the park. At the time, these trailers cost what a modest home would. The person who created the park had their choice of where to put it in 1955, and its location is fab.

**David Izenman**  
*Palm Springs*



*David's cowboy ranch in Sherman Oaks, Calif., was one of our boldest covers—Winter 2006, No. 12—and even then his trailer obsession was evident, with a 1948 Glider in the front yard.*

—ar editor

✳ While I still don't subscribe, I read AR regularly. This article has amazing photos: [goo.gl/gzVNQH](http://goo.gl/gzVNQH). Keep on keeping' on...

**Joy Falloni**  
*Lakewood, Colo.*

✳ Over the past 29 years I have been a resident of Rockford, Ill. Rockford has had more than its share of problems and negative press. But this note is a shout-out to the city's stunning residential '50s architecture.

My husband, Jeff, and I have been the proud owners of a 1955 atomic ranch for four years now. It is rich



with detail and nuances specific to this era. Ours is just one of the homes in the city that would certainly be suitable for a spread in Atomic Ranch. If you're ever looking for an area rich in 1950s architecture, or just want to give a degenerating city something to be proud of, we'd love to hear from you.

**Marybeth Sundberg**





✱ I chose my 1959 rancher at the Jersey Shore for its beautiful view of the river. The furniture I brought with me from my previous home, a 1929 Tudor, struggled for acceptance by a tiny house with such simple lines. Over the past three years I replaced the dark, heavy pieces with more suitable furniture.

Oh, but what to do with a small, narrow room at the back of the house? Fortunately, in this part of the state, midcentury items are still cast aside and easy to find at flea markets and estate sales. This is now my favorite room!

**Marie Sylvester**  
*Brick, N.J.*



✱ Our 1970 timber-frame house just enjoyed a remodel with the goal of keeping everything period or older. Much of the furniture comes from my boyhood home and is a constant reminder of my excellent childhood surrounded by art. This is not all of it.

**Daniel Mainzer**



✱ When I moved back to Newport, R.I., four years ago, I fell in love with these two MCM homes, located next door in Middletown. Side by side, separated by a lot, they sit incongruous to their urban-sprawl surroundings. (I stood in the parking lot of a shopping plaza to take these pictures.)

I admire them as much for what I perceived to be their stalwart resistance to development, as well as their designs. The green one, for the details: the all-over scalloping, the repeated diamond motif and, well,

the color! The white one more for how the owners decorate the front lawn in the summer: lots of plastic flowers and ceramic figurines. This dreary day in January did not show them at their best.

So it was with shock and horror that I noticed the For Sale signs from the same realty company, along with the empty lot and—Oh No!—the suggestion that someone combine the properties for '225 Feet of Frontage!!! Make an Offer for Both!'

**Elena Garipey**

# morewisdom



✱ In 2011 my wife and I realized one of our dreams—to live on

the coast—moving from Sacramento to the Monterey Peninsula. We purchased a nondescript, 'ugliest house on the street,' built in 1971, shown in the before listing photo.

We immediately replaced the carpet with bamboo floors, and researched paint colors and new windows. Last year's shot shows the fresh paint, replacement windows, drought-resistant garden and a fence that we designed and built. In 2013 we also added about 400 square feet for a family room, bedroom/office and utility room—all on a tight budget.

We still get compliments on the remodel, with some folks stopping to take photos of the work.

**Mike & Karen Gunby**  
*Pacific Grove, Calif.*

✱ Just recently I discovered your wonderful publication and I am absolutely stunned. However, it has turned out to be a physical hazard for me: I just spent the entire weekend stripping all of the old wallpaper in my bedroom, leaving me feeling like a cripple.

I have been overwhelmed with an avalanche of creative thoughts, thanks to Atomic Ranch. Here in Melbourne, there is a silent revolution in favor of all things 'retro,' as Australians call it, but the media tend to treat this style with disdain.

My parents built the house in the early '50s from

designs that were mass-produced, created by a government initiative for the postwar population boom. All of these homes were box-shaped, with slight but simple variations; building materials were hard to come by back then.

I absolutely adore the '60s era, although I was quite young at that time. I recall a favorite TV series, *77 Sunset Strip*. It was synonymous with wonderful mid-century architecture, good instrumental jazz and classic sleek autos, such as Thunderbirds, Mustangs and Galaxies. What a magical era that was.

With the growing popularity of this architecture, I



think all that is needed to cap it off is for Ford and other motor companies to reintroduce similar designs into their new production models. I realize I'm just pipe dreaming; what do you think?

I'm now forever a fan of Atomic Ranch!

**Georg Sajer**  
*Melbourne, Australia*



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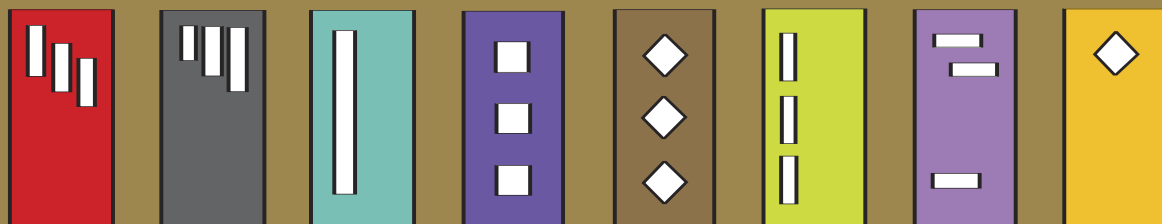
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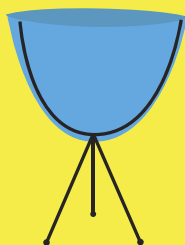
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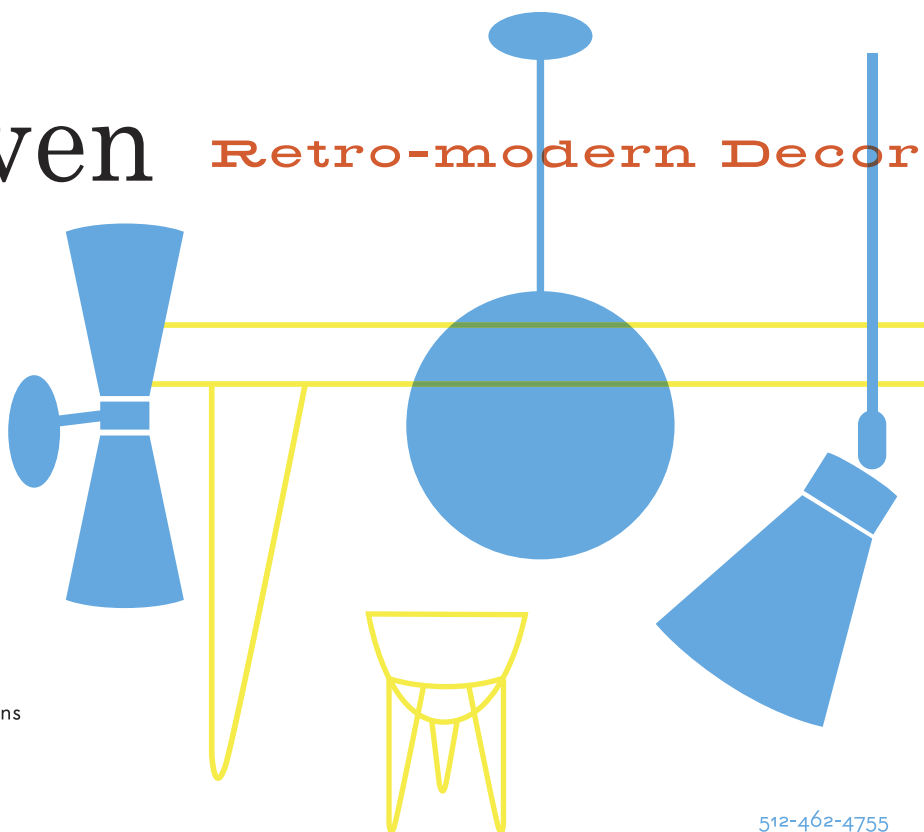
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# I Lovett

text Michelle Gringeri-Brown

photography Jim Brown

**W**endell Lovett was one of seven architects who developed a 63-acre residential parcel in Bellevue, Wash., beginning in 1947. “Hilltop is an area well known by MCM aficionados in our area,” says Kirsten Robertson, a Realtor with 360° Modern in Seattle. “It is a unique community in that all of the 40 homes were constructed in a modern style and must stay

that way—the Hilltop architecture committee ensures that. The lots are large, at over an acre each, and the homes range from 1,740 to well over 4,000 square feet.”

In 2012, Robertson had the listing for a distinctive Lovett home designed for Gervais and Connie Reed that had been feted in *Domus*, *Arts & Architecture* and several books when it was built in 1957. The hovering, split-level plan took advantage of views of the Cascades and Lake Sammamish by placing the public rooms on the upper level.

“The home was in original condition,” Robertson remarks. “Some upgrades had been made to the systems, namely converting from oil to gas heat, but not much more than that. The Reeds raised three kids there, and it was well loved but in very good condition for its age. There was a wall in the kitchen that still had the kids’ heights marked on it.”

## The Buyers

Courtney and Patrick Stanton had already sold their 2004 Craftsman-style house and were looking for a smaller home on a larger lot closer to town. Coincidentally, both had grown up within a mile of Hilltop, but were unaware of its existence.

"I saw the house online on a Sunday night and found the exterior really different," remembers Patrick, a 44-year-old program manager for Nokia. "We looked at it on Monday and made an offer that night." He liked the unique design and open floor plan, all of the windows and the fact that it was a house on a hill.

"I've always loved midcentury modern, but there aren't a ton of them in Seattle, so that wasn't a priority on our list," says Courtney, 38, a buyer for Nordstrom.

"I was in awe when we walked in. There's a great openness to the house—even though we were going from a

5,000- to a 2,000-square-foot house—and it has a very homey feeling. When I came up the stairs and saw the spectacular view out the back, I was like, Done! You can write up the offer."

The couple liked most things about the house—the location, the lot, the two bedrooms, one bath and kitchen/dining/living room on the top level—but not the rabbit-warren lower level nor the original kitchen. "It was very closed off," Courtney says. "There was a tall bookcase by Wendell Lovett that blocked the view through the family room, and the side that adjoins the dining area had a standard refrigerator with hanging cabinets and just a low pass-through."

"It was like a little cave in there," chimes in Patrick. "We really liked the architectural style of the house, so when we decided to redo the kitchen, we wanted to maintain that; that's why we brought Mike and Grace in."





The Hilltop home is next door to another Lovett house featured on the cover of Fall 2009, No. 23. Original pendant lamps, extensive windows and a glass backsplash in the kitchen bring welcome light into the Pacific Northwest house.







## The Architects

Patrick had attended college with architects Mike Mariano and Grace Kim, now principals of Schemata Workshop in Seattle. They already knew Lovett's work and this home, specifically.

"Lovett was one of the early modernists. This piece is considered to be an important project for him, done during an early phase of his career when he was heavily influenced by the Miesian idiom and the idea of using production components to create minimalist dwellings," says Kim. "A good example [of that] would be the kitchen cabinets. They were not made of high-quality materials: The lumber was pretty low-grade plywood, and the cabinet faces were Masonite, while the drawer pulls were simple aluminum angles screwed to the faces.

"The kitchen was almost the first thing you saw as a visitor or resident returning home; it was a very forward-thinking move to liberate the kitchen and give it prominence," she explains. "But despite Lovett's good intentions, the kitchen is tiny and, with the bookcase and cabinets, it felt very hemmed in. Courtney and Patrick wanted to feel more connected to family and guests when preparing meals, so we removed the upper cabinets separating the kitchen from the dining room, as well

White and blue Abet Laminati laminate teams with plywood for the Kerf cabinetry, topped by poured terrazzo countertops, a glass back-splash and rubberized cork flooring in the updated kitchen. The appliances are KitchenAid, and the range hood is a Faber. Opposite, top, decorative vents in the sink apron and a white pullout recycling/trash bin in the cabinet run adjoining the dining area. The before view just below it shows the original refrigerator location and pass-through.

Three drawer refrigerators and a freezer unit are in the island that replaced a taller bookshelf cabinet (opposite, bottom two views). "No more shopping for vegetables at Costco; I have to market more frequently and save less leftovers," says Courtney Stanton, who also opted to omit a microwave from the new kitchen design.

as the bookshelves that closed off the living room."

One of the first decisions Schemata made was to bring Kerf Design into the project. "Kerf has a certain aesthetic that doesn't always lend itself to all projects or clients," Kim says, "but it suits our sensibilities as a firm—Nathan's work is very honest and clear—something we strive for in our work, also."





Before



Before

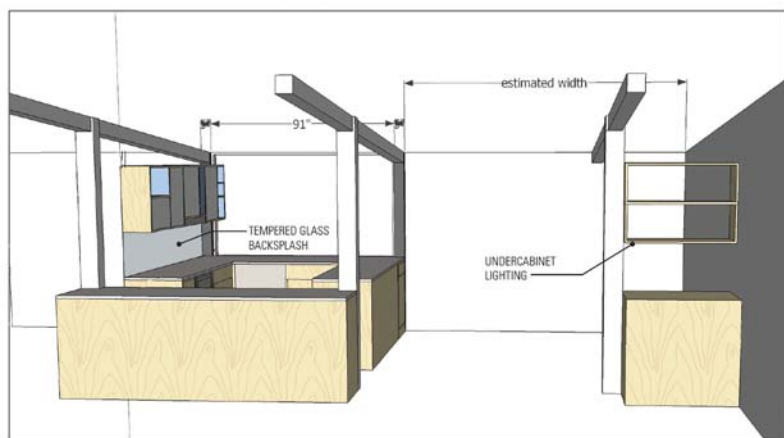












Courtesy Schemata Workshop







Opposite, top: The Stantons paired Eames molded plastic Eiffel-base chairs and two Eames DCMs with the stainless steel-topped table from their past home. The blue pendant lamps and windows are original, while the West Elm Dumont buffet and Tolix Marais counter stools are new.

Left: "Picking up the cues from Lovett's original design, we knew it was important for the new cabinetry to fit between the structural columns," says architect Grace Kim. "All of the original built-ins were distinct from the structure, which clearly reads throughout the home." A cabinet with open shelving between the dining area and the hearth holds barware, and a wine fridge handles beverages.

Opposite, bottom: Entering the front door, you step onto a terrazzo landing with stairs that lead down to the compartmentalized basement or up to the living space. That's Slayer, the 130-pound puppy at the kitchen doorway, one of three household dogs.

## The Cabinetmaker

Nathan Hartman runs a tight crew of five at Kerf Design, working with architects and homeowners to design and build furniture and custom cabinetry from plywood and laminate. The through-tenon joinery is visible, and instead of applied knobs or pulls, there are hand notches.

"I'd seen the listing when the Lovett house was on the market; I thought it was a cool house, so we were really excited when we got the call to work on it," Hartman says. "It seemed like if Kerf had been in business when the house was built, there's a pretty good chance we would have been the cabinetmakers for the project. The things the architect and the [original] owners were trying to accomplish were very similar to the style that we do."

Both the Stantons and Schemata agreed. With a typical turnaround of about six weeks from final CAD drawings to finished cabinets, Kerf also fit the bill for a quick project timeline. "We work on the micro level—drawers over here, a door here, a pullout for a specific need you've identified. Sometimes the first design we show a homeowner is the way it goes, and sometimes it takes a

few iterations," Hartman comments.

"We were worried that the homeowners were going to miss all of the upper cabinet storage," says Kim. "I first suggested some open shelves between the kitchen and dining room, but Courtney was smart: When they moved in, she didn't put anything into any of the uppers to see if she'd need them. She confirmed that she wouldn't."

To open up the space to the dining area, Schemata proposed losing the fridge and opting for Subzero drawer refrigerators; these would go into an island cabinet facing the living room, giving the homeowners that view they wanted. Some details from the original kitchen were incorporated into the new design: the way the cabinet cases would attach to the posts with spacers, the slanted backs and the use of blue laminate.

"Kerf seemed very European or Scandinavian, with the exposed edges and simplicity; we lived in Finland for two years, so we really liked that style," says Courtney. And so Patrick and his dad razed the kitchen, beginning the 10-week process.



## The Contractor

The kitchen remodel was both simple and detailed, requiring a project manager who sweats the small stuff. That would be Gary Timpe, co-owner of BrightWork Builders.

BrightWork—a name that refers to clear-finished wood that precludes using filler to hide any sloppy cuts—specializes in residential projects, with about half of their work in a contemporary style. “I was immediately interested; it’s such a beautiful home and it matters to us what we’re building,” says Timpe, who oversaw and coordinated the subcontractors. Electrical, plumbing, gas lines, flooring, glass, countertop fabrication and even roofing were required, with most activity occurring during a three-week window.

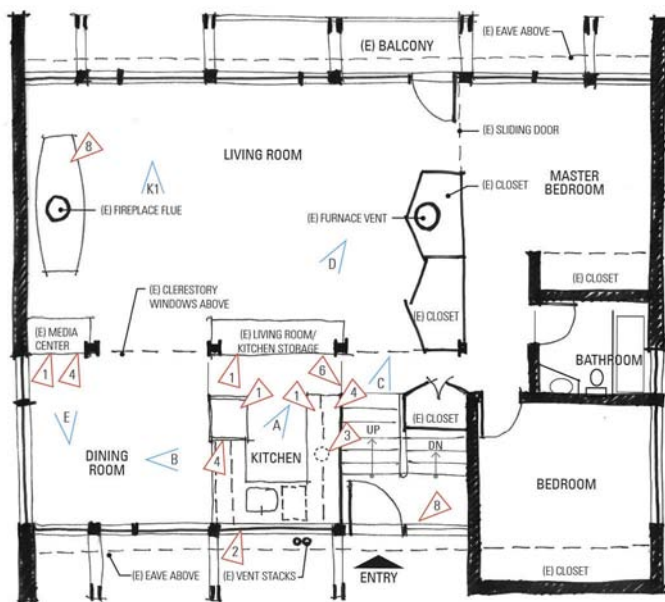
In addition to the systems upgrades, a fixed window with a vent hole was replaced, a reeded-glass backsplash installed, terrazzo countertops cast and new appliances, fixtures and lighting installed. An exhaust fan over the gas cooktop necessitated piercing the membrane roof, and significant time was spent weighing options before selecting Expanko rubberized cork flooring for its visual simplicity and durability in a household with an 8-year-old and three large dogs.

The minimalist living room furniture in place for the photo shoot includes a vintage sofa lent by contractor Gary Timpe, a live-edge Elpis & Wood coffee table and a West Elm ikat area rug. The Stantons have since purchased a Reese leather sofa and chaise from Room & Board. In the background through the bypass doors is the master bedroom, and daughter Rian’s room is seen with the lamp on.

An example of the project’s attention to detail is seen in the flooring install. Twenty-four-inch tiles were chosen because sheet goods would have had a seam at an unfortunate area. BrightWork demoed down to the floor joists, installed a subfloor, then the Expanko installer put in an additional, very smooth 3/8" subfloor and floated out the seams so they had a perfectly flat surface. Today, the kitchen floor is slightly lower than the surrounding original floors, but that’s because the hardwood is due to be sanded and refinished shortly.

“It was mostly a logistical challenge—scheduling all of the subs and keeping things moving so we could return





Courtesy Schemata Workshop

A distinctive metal hood and raised concrete, terrazzo and brick hearth draw your eye to the fireplace wall; the angled back of the bar cabinetry is visible on the left.





The storage divider that separates the master bedroom from the living room stands in for a pantry. Kerf Design replaced the warped doors, three of which open on the living room side, and the homeowners matched the bedroom dresser drawer paint to the laminate color.

the kitchen to the homeowners as quickly as possible,” says Timpe. “It was well thought out from the beginning, and the cabinetmakers did an excellent job. There were none of those fire-drill moments where you scramble and freak out because something didn’t work.”

Future plans include remodeling the upstairs bath, opening up the small rooms downstairs that were constructed in the '70s, and adding an outbuilding for an office/exercise room. Bringing in the pros was the right approach, the Stantons feel.

“The neighborhood that it is, and the house that it is, really deserved a kitchen designed specifically for the home; we didn’t have that expertise personally,” Courtney says. “We feel we made very deliberate choices that both fit this house and our needs.”

Others apparently love it, too: “When an inspector came to look at the house when we were buying, he was like a kid in a candy store and offered to buy if we wanted to sell in five years,” Patrick recounts. “It’s such a simple design: There’s not anything complex about the structure, and the original owners did a good job keeping everything up.”



Resources page 71





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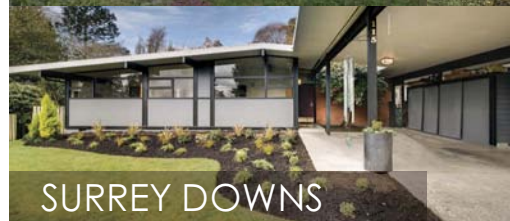
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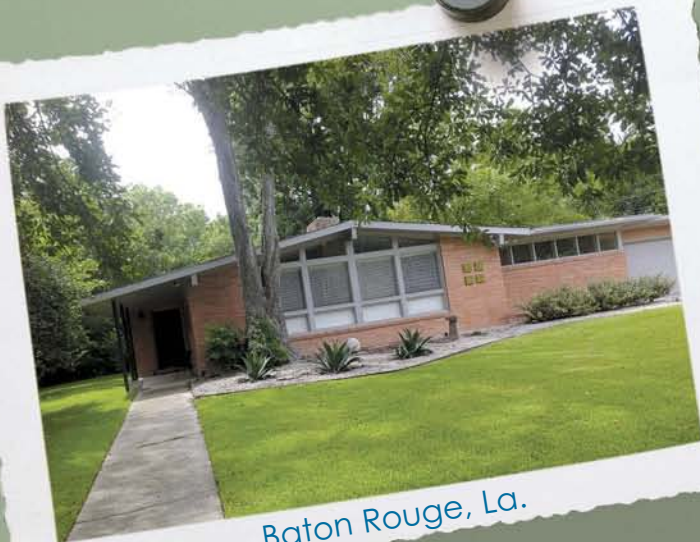
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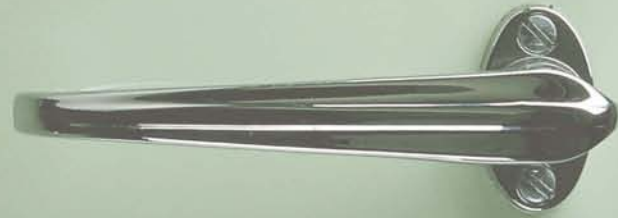
Galesburg, Mich.



Bexley, Ohio



Baton Rouge, La.







# home **page**

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## Galesburg, Mich.

My home is an original Frank Lloyd Wright, designed in 1948 with construction completed in 1951. The house was built with concrete block and Honduran mahogany. There are 12-foot-tall windows and French doors facing southwest, which allow the sun to heat the home during cold Michigan winters; the concrete floor also has hydronic radiant heat. And 70 acres of forest surround the house, providing a true organic architecture experience.

**Dean Ankouny**

## Bexley, Ohio

Our 1960 Californian ranch was designed by Harold S. Schofield. There were two owners prior to us—the original family who built the home, and another who did some wonderful updates to the bathrooms and kitchen. A pleasant surprise was finding the original plans, which included a large koi pond in the living room, and we also fell in love with the two-way fireplace/indoor grill and the kidney-shaped pool. This ranch has amazing natural light from all the windows and glass sliders throughout, making the high ceilings and wood floors appear ethereal.

**Amanda Hayden**

## Baton Rouge, La.

I have been in my midcentury house for four years. I was lucky to find an affordable home in the style I wanted that wasn't too small. In my area, midcentury houses were either built by the well-to-do, or they are tiny tract homes. A few things had to be redone (like an unfortunate tile design in one bath that resembled a swastika), but I've kept as much original as possible—including the metal kitchen cabinets. The closing papers listed the house as being built ca.1949, which has to be incorrect, as the subdivision was not developed until 1955. I'm guessing the actual date as between 1959 and 1965.

**David Coco**

We're running low on great homes; 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.

# The Stahl House:



*text* Erika Thomas

*photography* courtesy the Stahl family





# Legacy of a Midcentury Icon

---



In a city chock-full of glamorous homes, how did a house that was occupied for five decades by an ordinary, working-class family become one of the most recognizable midcentury icons in the country—if not arguably the world?

Owner Mark Stahl said when his father first conceived the idea, “He never intended to build something famous. He was just building his dream house. But what ended up happening was the world saw it through Julius Shulman’s eyes.”

The 2,200-square-foot residence perched high above Los Angeles in the Hollywood Hills started as a plot of uncultivated, unstable land with a spectacular view. Buck Stahl, a graphic designer working for an aircraft supply company, and his beautiful wife, Carlotta, purchased the property in 1954 for \$13,500. Building their house would first mean finding a way to stabilize the land it sat on. As a result, the Stahls would spend more than two years hauling up leftover concrete for a retaining wall from construction sites around L.A.—one carload at a time—in their Cadillac convertible. While the precarious location made it nearly impossible to secure a loan, eventually they did.

The couple would meet with a number of architects before choosing Pierre Koenig. Innovative and forward thinking,

Koenig proposed the project to John Entenza, editor of *Arts & Architecture* magazine, for the Case Study House program. Shortly before breaking ground in 1959, Entenza accepted.

Completed just over one year later, the stunning new home featured a breathtaking 270-degree view and was made almost entirely of glass. An impeccable example of midcentury modern style, the home was featured in the ‘Living’ section of the *Los Angeles Herald Examiner*.

People fell instantly in love with the house through Shulman’s photograph of two pretty models seated elegantly in the living room at night. After that, as Mark Stahl explained, “He became a family friend who visited often. Shulman never photographed the house after that initial *Examiner* piece, but he liked to bring colleagues up to see it.”

Although its popularity within architectural circles was apparent, Stahl noted that for many years, he and his siblings, Bruce and Shari, never knew their house was anything special. “Other than being interrupted from time to time for the occasional studio rental, to us, it was just like any other place you’d grow up. Dad did all the window washing and gardening himself—that is until we were old enough to help,” he laughed.

“As we got older, I guess we knew it had some degree of fame. Friends did tend to want to come over a lot, but I figured it was because of our swimming pool. When architects began showing up on a regular basis to study our house, and especially after they filmed the pilot episode of *Columbo* with Peter Falk here, my family started to realize its significance,” Stahl said.

Although both parents have died—Buck in 2005 and Carlotta in 2011, the Stahl children continue to maintain the property themselves. “Probably out of everything, the glass has been replaced the most. The frames are original, but none of the glass is. Between windstorms, earthquakes and age, they’ve all had to be replaced. Every time there’s an earthquake we lose a couple of windows,” Stahl said.

When it comes to replacing materials, “While we’re not strict restorationists, we do try to make any changes fit the period as much as possible. When we changed the kitchen tile last year, we went through lots of midcentury books for accuracy. Originally, the whole house had polished concrete floors. The first kind of flooring my parents ever put down was 9” asphalt tile, which was what a lot of people used back then.

Previous spread: A view of the corner of the house immortalized by Julius Shulman’s famous shot, facing south east. Summer 1961, Buck Stahl holding Bruce and Shari on the diving board.

Above: Buck on the south-facing slope of the house planting ivy, from a 1961 photo shoot by *Life* magazine.

Opposite: An Eero Saarinen Womb chair in Buck and Carlotta’s bedroom, and the living room at dusk.







“One of our biggest [projects] recently was rebuilding the retaining wall on the east side of the house,” he continued. “We needed to reestablish the property line and recover what dirt had fallen away over time. Our neighbor split the bill with us, so cost-wise we were really fortunate—and luckily, commercial and film shoots pay for most of the major restoration.”

As one can imagine, the family has received numerous offers to sell. When asked what their highest offer has been, Stahl replied, “We don’t really want to know what someone would offer us for it and we don’t ask. We constantly make it clear that it isn’t for sale.”

Something else that’s clear is the family’s dedication to preserving the integrity—not only of their parents’ dream, but the historical and cultural significance that their home and others like it have gained. “We do need to work over-time to protect these iconic pieces,” said Stahl. “At the same time, to try and save every single Eichler or every Wright might not be realistic. But we have to try. Preservation is important.” ☼

*Mark Stahl shot the contemporary color images of the house in 2013 before he passed away unexpectedly last December. Our condolences to the Stahl family and friends who remember him as a passionate preservationist and a kind and caring person.*

*Erika Thomas is a freelance writer living in Los Angeles. For much more on Case Study House No. 22’s history and info on tours and sundry, visit [stahlhouse.com](http://stahlhouse.com); for a look at John Entenza’s 1937 home, back issue no. 42 is available at [atomic-ranch.com](http://atomic-ranch.com).*



Top: The bedroom once shared by Bruce, Shari and Mark Stahl, with furniture on loan from Design Within Reach.

Above: July 1961, with baby Shari lying on the kitchen counter. Some of the family’s best memories were when seated at that counter, Mark Stahl recalled. Carlotta used to make steak and potato pancakes, one of their favorite meals, and Buck and the kids would have pancake-eating contests, downing them as fast as Carlotta could get them out of the pan.

Opposite, top: All of the light fixtures are original, though the globes in the living room were broken during a film shoot and replaced with Plexiglas. The rock on the fireplace was added by Buck in the mid-’60s, as was the planter to its right that stored firewood.

All of the kitchen cabinet faces were replaced and the dropped ceiling redone in the late-’70s. Mark remembered his mother baking and decorating all kinds of cakes for weddings and parties over the years.







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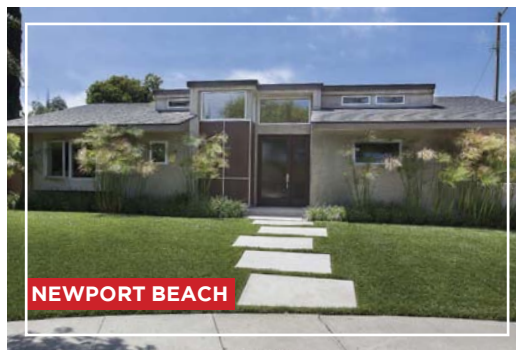




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# Working Class Heroes

All  
in the  
Family



*text* Shauntelle LeBlanc

*images* Riddle Inc? Photography



**M**ike Freeman always said that his daughter Mackenzie, a.k.a. ‘Shermy,’ Freeman-Willan had an old soul in a little body. By 16, she was working on the 1966 Dodge Dart she still owns, as well as refinishing furniture and sewing her own vintage-style clothes—all to the soundtrack of Perry Como. Her mother, Laurie, goes so far as to say Shermy was an oddball child: “When a kid under 10 listens to Frank Sinatra and the show she watches is Lawrence Welk, you start thinking...”

You start thinking that maybe she’s going to do things a little differently.

So, it was no surprise to her family when the then-21-year-old and her boyfriend (now husband) Frazer Willan, wanted to purchase a house and do most of the renovations themselves—with some judicious family help. “We had been toying with the idea of buying a house,” Shermy says, thinking back to the summer of 2009 when she was working for her dad’s school bus company. “We weren’t engaged yet, but the market was good.” Her parents were tired of storing all her auction furniture finds, so it made all kinds of sense.

“Dad mentioned the house down the street was for sale; on our way to see it there was a garage sale, so we stopped. We got talking to the owners, and they’re like, ‘We’re selling the house, so why don’t you come look through it?’ ” Almost a year passed before Shermy and Frazer got serious and revisited the house on Scugog Island, northeast of Toronto. “We’d gotten engaged, and by spring the rates were still really good, so I just phoned up and said, ‘So, about that house...’ ”

They bought in April 2010, but waited until after they were married before moving in, giving them two years to get it ready.



Slate patterned resilient flooring in the former entry meets new VCT in the kitchen and bamboo with a walnut-look finish.

## Wading In

The house looked tired and was last renovated in the '80s; dubious carpeting was the first thing to go. "There were stains all over the plywood underneath, and we thought that we would just seal it to make it fresh and new again," says Shermey. Additionally, after an overnight stay, Shermey and her younger sister, Georgie, came home with bites all over them—spiders maybe? Once Mike taped off the windows and spray painted all of the rooms, they've never had a problem with that again.

In the kitchen, the mahogany-veneered cabinets were covered with about an inch of cooking grease, Shermey recalls. Instead of replacing them, the doors were removed and brought to her dad's workshop, where they were scraped, sanded and painted with enamel to emulate vintage metal kitchen cabinets. Completing the makeover are new pulls from Rejuvenation and polka-dot shelf paper on the inside to display the couple's impressive vintage kitchenware collection. In keeping with the new color scheme, Shermey repainted the brown accent tiles dotting the original backsplash a vibrant turquoise to match the rest of the kitchen, then sealed them with Krylon Triple-Thick Crystal Clear Glaze.

Their 27" Viking stove is a family member, too. Originally her great-grandmother's, it passed down to her grand-







The kitchen flows into the dining room, where we see more vintage finds next to the stairs. The bullet planter is from the author's Toronto shop, and these are the drapes that Shermy Freeman-Willan affixed to the existing blinds. Mike Freeman rewired the vintage Sputnik light fixture that hangs over the 1969 Quebec-made, Saarinen-style dinette set with original green vinyl cushions, all from Ethel—20th Century; the harlequin chalkware figures on the wall are from there, too. A vintage birdcage houses another family member, Clark, the budgie.

Opposite, top: To the left of the dining set, sideboards hold more of the couple's vintage kitchenware and dishes, including Midwinter Cassandra, Kathie Winkle and Salem North Star, along with a Hamilton Beach milkshake machine and an Orange Crush sign.

The kitchen island consists of two salvaged barbershop stations, installed back-to-back. "Dad screwed them together and body-filled down the sides," Shermy points out.

mother and then to Shermy. Like most vintage appliances, it has a history and a few quirks: "My grampa was a tin-smith, and he actually made a new bottom for it after [the original] rusted out," Shermy says. She jokes that the button controls have a tendency to jump off the control panel into whatever's cooking.

## Reuse, Repurpose

At Mike's suggestion, Shermy reused the existing canvas vertical blinds on the dining room window by cutting off the bottoms and sewing vintage curtain panels to the remaining 5" tops. The valence covers the tops and the original cords still work. Mom and dad also suggested leaving one wall white so the room wouldn't be overwhelmed by all of the turquoise.

Next to one of the original built-in room dividers is another of Shermy's favorite projects, an old Nortex tele-



"The partitions are glass in wood frames, and probably why we bought the house," says Shermy. A new area rug grounds the vintage grouping in the living room, which includes a chunky armchair with original Lurex-thread upholstery, a pole lamp and a combo table/lamp/cup holder/bowling trophy. To the left of the chair is a fiberglass lamp topped with a ceramic ashtray, and the terrarium footstool inflates like a beach ball. "The stuff inside just bounces around when you pick it up; when they get cold, they partially deflate," she laughs. "Everyone that sees them asks about them."

Below: Across from the red chair grouping, a freestanding fireplace from a Quebec cottage now sports a faux electric log. The MacGyvered storage unit houses the couple's TV, while the wallpaper came with the house. "I'm not really into that era of wallpaper, but I don't possess the strength to rip it down," Shermy says. "In some weird way, I think it actually works."

phone table sporting a new lampshade she made using turquoise fiberglass from Moon Shine Lamp and Shade. "I marked it out on a piece of wood and shoop, shoop, it was really easy to do. As long as you have a frame, you can make a cardboard template," she adds, noting "it was cheaper to order just the fiberglass instead of a whole new shade, 'cause they could ship the fiberglass flat."

Replacing the flooring throughout the kitchen and dining area with speckled Armstrong Harlequin White VCT was another project the couple took on. Mike got them started in the center of the room, and then they took it from there.

"When we bought this place, it had radiators in it," says Frazer, 29. "We had to cut around them in the living room when we installed bamboo flooring." But the kitchen floor was installed after a new furnace was put in and the radiators removed, so that project was smooth sailing.

"You figure with the amount of money you spend on something like [the flooring], you want it done right and you want it to look good," Shermy chimes in. "A good attribute of Frazer's is that he says, 'Okay, I'm going to take a break,' and takes his time."







Two vintage lamps with matching shades sit on tiered side tables next to the sofa; on the wall above is a mirrored shadow box. The Danish-style coffee table came from Ethel—20th Century, and the framed prints are by Vladimir Tretchikoff. “Tretchikoff actually did a tour in Canada at Eaton’s [a now closed department store chain], signing prints in the ‘60s; I can only presume that must’ve been where they came from,” Shermey says. “Three bucks apiece!”

In the corner is a Kuba stereo and bar. The wood section holds a turntable and tuner, while the bar shelves are backed with harlequin-patterned stretched vinyl.

## Thrift Minded

The wall-spanning, vintage drapes in the living room are one of Shermey’s favorite things. “They’re not original, but you’d think they were; the hardware was up there [and all] I had to do was bring them home and throw them up there.” The rest of the furniture, lighting and accessories in the living room are mostly from auctions, antique barns, church sales and hospital auxiliary stores, some of it found



The Nortex telephone table sits near the dining room's vintage bullet planter

before Shermmy met Frazer. "She's the decorator and I'm just the farm boy," Frazer, a welder, jokes.

The coral-colored sofa and matching chair were purchased at an auction for \$25. A TV cabinet was 'hacked' by Mike, who made the bottom portion a little taller so they could squeeze a modern TV inside.

In the bathroom are pink flamingoes and the original sandy-beige fixtures, while the poodle-theme spare bedroom has a pink vanity and dresser and a hand-me-down wrought-iron bed frame.

The ranch house was built in 1965 by township reeve [a town council president] Joe Dowson, a local character and part-time welder. A law had been passed that you couldn't build a house smaller than 800 square feet, according to Mike, a lifelong resident. Because the house was smaller than allowed, Joe opened the top and added a second-story room. The space now houses the Riddle Inc.? office for Shermmy and Mike's photography business,



as well as her sewing studio, replete with a collection of vintage patterns stored in a metal comic-book carousel.

Another 1950s couch, purchased at the same auction as the set in the living room, lives up there. "You know how much that couch was? A dollar!" Shermmy enthuses.

Future projects include turning the sunporch at the front of the house into an Asian-themed lounge, and possibly putting in a kidney-shaped pool in the back yard. But right now Shermmy and Frazer are focusing on the restoration of their vintage 1957 Fleetwing trailer.

They can't wait to go antiquing on the way to the campground. ✿

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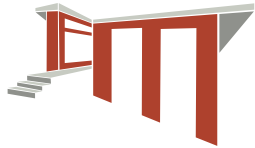
*Shauntelle LeBlanc is a reformed interior designer, owner of the midcentury furniture shop Ethel—20th Century Living in Toronto, and lives by the motto 'Life is Too Short for Beige.' Shermmy Freeman-Willan and Mike Freeman specialize in wedding photography with an attitude; see their work at [riddleincphotography.com](http://riddleincphotography.com).*



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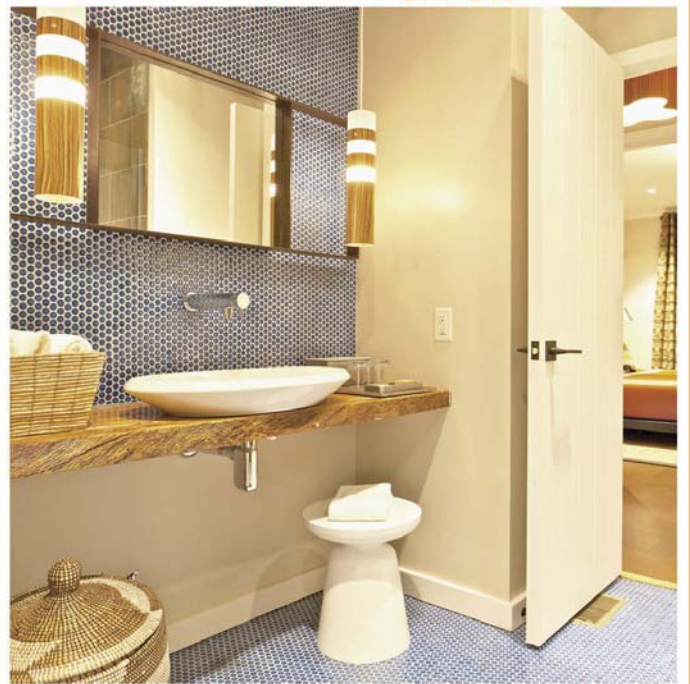
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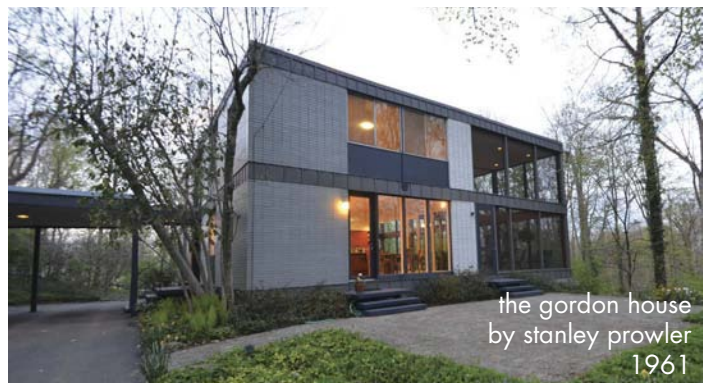
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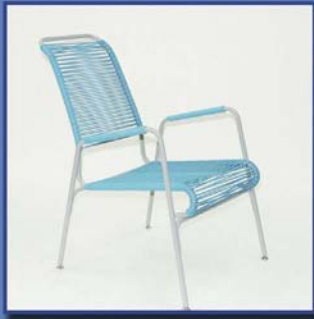
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A desert home viewed through a time machine

# v.Belle Vista

*text* Michelle Gringeri-Brown

*photography* Patrick Ketchum/iView1st







## Todd Hays just spent 10 months rehabbing a 1946 home in the Albert Frey—designed Bel Vista development in Palm Springs.

Original colors, period-correct windows and doors, and new hardscape for this lucky Bel Vista house. The garage door on the carport gives privacy to the expansive back yard, with its new pool and entertaining areas. The second curved masonry structure hides the pool equipment, and vintage Tamiami chaises by Brown Jordan were powder coated and given fresh straps.

The 52-year-old Realtor has restored almost 20 homes—from Craftsman bungalows to Spanish Revivals and midcentury moderns—since he bought his first fixer some 30 years ago.

“Frey deserves credit for developing the first modern subdivision in Palm Springs, preceding the Alexander Construction Company’s [initial] project by more than 10 years,” says Hays, a member of the local preservation community.

“During the war, Frey designed two housing projects in the city, Bel Vista and Villa Hermosa, an apartment complex, but they were not built until the end of the war, due largely to cost issues.”

The 15 single-family homes in Bel Vista demonstrated how variety could be achieved through flopping floor plans and varying the setbacks and placement on the lots. Intended as war workers’ housing, the designs allowed for future expansion, and Hays’ home is one of only two that still have the original footprint.



Other residences in the small tract now have enclosed carports, additional bedrooms and Spanish-style and traditional details applied to their original modern aesthetic. "I was taken by the possibilities of being able to restore a piece of Palm Springs history and save one of the last, mostly intact Bel Vista homes," he says. That's restore, not renovate or remodel, an important distinction to Hays.

His goal was to remove anything unoriginal from the house and return the rest to as close to period as possible. Many of the original wood doors and windows were gone, but remaining examples were used to replicate the correct vintage look. An exterior aluminum awning was removed, the garage taken back to a carport, and architectural forensics (scraping through layers of paint) used to determine the '40s colors inside and out. When Hays had no original specs to work from, he used period specs instead, primarily in the kitchen and baths.

Opposite, top: Hays built a copy of a 1941 Jens Risom table and paired it with reissued Eames dowel-leg chairs. "I began researching what style of rugs would have been most '40s appropriate," he says. "I found that braided rugs were popular at the time and would have been used." The two we see are new, and the stone wall hangings are from West Elm.

Opposite, bottom: This vantage shows a cube covered with vintage laminate displaying collectible glass and a Steam Punk floor lamp designed by Jamie Young. Doorways lead to the bedrooms and kitchen, and in the dining area, three wooden clamps holding Ansel Adams photos are displayed on the wall.

A Brasilia dresser that the seller kindly left in the house, a tile-top coffee table and a bullet planter are all vintage, while the couch, armchair and Nelson Cigar sconce are new. The mask is from Papua New Guinea, and the view out the side door is of the carport lounge area.

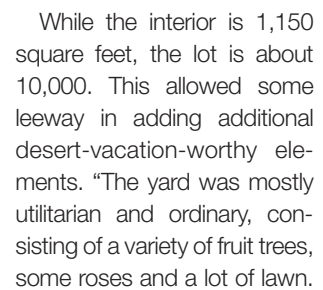






Hays' home is one of only two that still have the original footprint.

"The kitchen was perhaps the most difficult to faithfully restore," says Hays. "Since it had been completely gutted and I could find no reference to its original details, I made the decision to refinish the cabinets that were there—my thought being that the simplicity and clean lines of these cabinets were



I designed the new pool and spa to be as close to a 1940s pool as possible,” explains Hays. “The cantilevered, poured-concrete coping replicates what is at the Raymond Loewy house, built around the same time. The light blue tile is what most likely would have been used, and a new circular wall that encloses the pool equipment takes its cues from the original wall that hides the clothesline.”





Hays' home is a flopped version of the shown floor plan.

All of the vintage bath fixtures were in good enough shape that nothing needed to be rechromed or painted. The matching vanity lamps are new old stock, still in their factory packaging, while the tub is original to the house.

Other than the dishwasher, the kitchen appliances are also vintage, including the Gaffers & Sattler range and GE fridge.



A vintage Brasilia bedroom set with two carved alabaster table lamps in a guest bedroom.

Opposite: The twin beds, nightstand and Colormates dresser by Morris are all period pieces, while the ceramics are a mix of new and vintage. Hays did the orange and turquoise graphic piece to coordinate with the collection.

The master bedroom with the added second bath in what was formerly a patio space.



A previous owner who annexed patio space added a '70s en suite bath to the master bedroom.





Hays' research into the development's history revealed that the Home Owners' Loan Corporation, a government-sponsored mortgage lender created by President Roosevelt as part of the New Deal, backed the project. "The only specific guideline I found is that construction had to be cost-effective, with standard wood framing, wood lath and plaster, and stucco. I also found notes that Frey had originally spec'd metal casement windows, but since metal was scarce following the war, he used wood instead."

Inside, the original concrete slab was ground, sealed and polished, and Hays'



avored mix of vintage and new furniture, accessories and art now fills the home. “I get bored easily and find it healthy, creative and productive to get constant visual stimulation from my environment,” he says. “My taste has evolved into a unique combination of ethnic art, contemporary art and vintage industrial design. Keeping all of those present, while not creating an overly crowded environment, can often be challenging.

“I tend to work my own personal style into a home through artwork and furnishings. I would rather let the original architecture stand on its own—that seems to be the authentic thing to do. It’s an understanding of restoration vs. renovation.” ✨

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I would rather let the original architecture stand on its own.





# PALM SPRINGS



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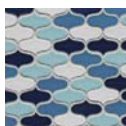
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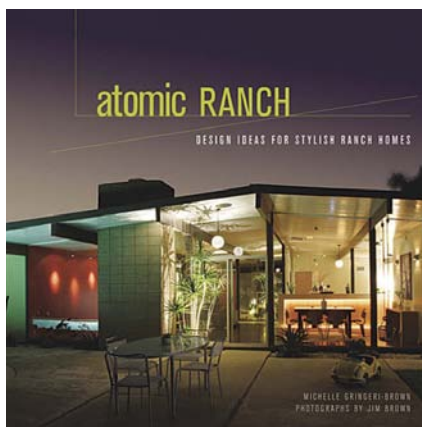
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# atomicbooks



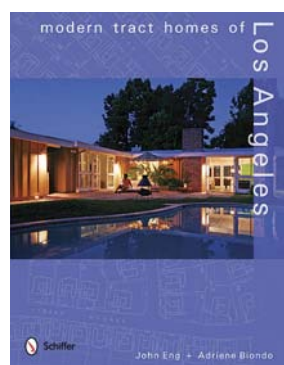
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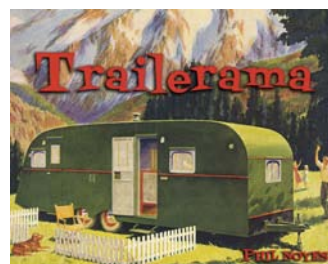
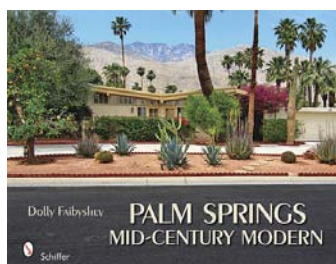


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Take a tour of Eichler's Balboa Highlands, May's Lakewood Rancho Estates, Palmer & Krisel's Northridge homes, the Ain Mar Vista tract and more through vintage marketing materials and contemporary color interiors and exteriors. John Eng & Adriane Biondo, hardcover, 144 pp., \$40

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## Trailerama

If you like midcentury Americana, this appealing travel trailer book is for you: vintage ads, illustrations, family snapshots, Hollywood stills, postcards, toys and more on the topic. But you don't have to be a trailer enthusiast to enjoy its picture-book charms, and Phil Noyes' tongue-in-cheek text makes for lite reading. Hardcover, 192 pp., \$30

Order books & back issues at [atomic-ranch.com](http://atomic-ranch.com)

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# Ft. Lauderdale

*text & photography Paul Ziotas*



South Florida is a gold mine of affordable '50s ranch homes just waiting to be rediscovered, especially in the Wilton Manors area of Fort Lauderdale. There the average price of a fixer-upper is between \$150,000 and \$250,000. Once considered one of Fort Lauderdale's worst high-crime neighborhoods, now it's known as the fastest-growing gay city in America.

The Army Corps of Engineers built many 1950s houses here for returning WWII soldiers and their young families. Every home, including mine, is made of concrete, even my roof. What they achieved then is today's building standard in this hurricane-prone part of the world.

It was love at first sight when I stepped into my three-bedroom, two-bath, 1,500-square-foot bank foreclosure. While it was run-down, I saw the originality as a positive and wanted to restore rather than renovate. The first thing I did was to have the gold-speckled terrazzo floors—which run throughout the whole house, even in the closets—cleaned and polished. It was a messy job, but after three days of grinding, a beautiful, shiny floor emerged. As a Realtor, I see a lot of homes, but it's hard to imagine that many in this area have just such a treasure covered with carpet or tile. Every time a neighbor sees my floors, they rush home with plans to rip up their carpet!

The next thing I tackled was the bathroom. Since I was on a budget and 1950s bathrooms were built to last 100 years, I decided to restore rather than gut. The tiles were professionally sprayed with white paint, and I added lighting, a vanity, mirror, toilet and some glass tile trim that I glued on myself from The Home Depot and, voila!, a new bathroom for under \$2,000.

My Saarinen Pedestal table has four salmon-colored fiberglass Eames armchairs around it and a CB2 drum pendant overhead. The legs of the chairs were in such bad shape that I painted them white; I know I should have stayed with black, but I like to put my personal stamp on things.





BEFORE





To boost the curb appeal, I changed the ugly '70s door, light fixture and mailbox for contemporary versions; the new hurricane-resistant glass door has the added benefit of bringing tons of light into the living room. I painted the house light gray with white trim. To bring out the brick detail framing the door, I placed two tall, black planters in front of it, added a canopy and continued the black accent theme with additional pots and two Adirondack chairs. The front patio, made of 24" concrete pavers with Mexican beach pebbles in between, now welcomes my neighbors. I made a simple bubbling fountain out of a yard sculpture and planted blue bamboo that has tripled in size in less than a year; what's a retro-contemporary house without at least one bamboo plant?

An elderly neighbor, who has lived in the area since it was developed, told me my Florida room used to be a carport that the original owners enclosed shortly after con-

Opposite: I feel like I live in a park, benefiting from more than 50 years of tree and plant growth, lovingly installed by previous owners.

In the carport turned Florida room, the barbecue and Frank Lloyd Wright-esque lamp are focal points. The fixture first hung in a church and came from a Habitat for Humanity outlet; it's made from bronze-colored rods and gold fiber-glass. I designed the chairs, which were made by a craftsman in L.A., and the vintage table was part of a set of Barcelona-style outdoor furniture I found in Brooklyn in the 1980s.





struction. Lucky for me, they continued the same terrazzo floors and kept the beamed wood ceilings exposed. They also installed what at first glance looks like a fireplace, but is really an indoor barbecue.

The kitchen was small, dark and impossible to cook in. I sealed up the door at the end of the galley space to create a more functional L-shaped cabinet configuration. I also replaced the dining area window next to it with a pair of French doors that lead to the outdoors. I paid honor to the '50s with gold pendants from Lamps Plus over the peninsula.

I love accent walls, so in the entrance area I installed horizontal, rough-cut stone and, at the end of the hall, I created a Mondrian-inspired glass tile mosaic using primary colors framed in black—very *Partridge Family*.

My furniture is a mix of junkyard finds, midcentury classics and knockoffs. When I walk through my house I can sense the original owners smiling happily as their place is once again much loved. ✿

Resources page 71

*Paul Ziotas combined his dizzying affection for the '50s with a real-world need to pay the bills by becoming a Realtor and amateur designer.*







For the new kitchen, I chose frosted glass subway tile for the walls, Silestone counters on the custom cabinetry and Bosch appliances. With a small drill, I added a ton of small holes to the gold pendants for a '50s diner look.

The terrazzo, seen above in the office area of the living room, is as modern and fresh today as it was when it was first poured. My orange Verner Panton Cone chair was made in Germany in the '70s, while the refinished Paul McCobb desk has the legs painted black and the pulls gold-leafed. I added vintage legs to the knockoff Barcelona daybed, the floor lamp is a Tolomeo and the purple chair is a Little Tulip by Pierre Paulin.

# keepitup



## Housekeeping with Sandy 2.0

In our Summer 2014 issue, Sandy Wright, owner of My Wright Hand in Portland, Ore., discussed maintaining various kitchen surfaces and materials. This time, she addresses baths ...



### Cleaners

None of the natural 'green' products do as well as old-fashioned, supermarket cleaners, but they're getting better. Probably the best is Simple Green, but be sure to follow the mixing directions on the bottle, erring toward a weaker solution. Seventh Generation is another widely available brand that works pretty well; generic cleaners are money down the drain, in my opinion.

While hot, soapy water is the best bet in kitchens, don't use it in bathrooms, where you're dealing with shampoo, toothpaste, hairspray, etc. To cut through such residue, I like Soft Scrub with bleach, Comet or a pump spray (not aerosol) basin-tub-and-tile cleaner. After you rinse, dry the surfaces with a clean rag.

### Glass

Glass tile will watermark double the amount of ceramic tile, especially if you have hard water. And you cannot keep water spots off of glass sinks; while they're beautiful, I don't think glass is meant for bathrooms. One exception is glass blocks—they don't show watermarks at all.

Glass shower enclosures really need to be squeegeed after use, but people

rarely do it. Treatments like Rain-X that make water sheet off do work, and everyone should get them.

For mirrors, I prefer aerosol glass cleaners, which have less streaking and smearing issues, applied with paper towels or a non-lint-producing cloth. Windex and other liquid glass products tend to build up and create terrible smears. If there are streaks that you cannot get rid of, wash the mirror with water and a little dish soap, then dry and that should bring it back to a smear-free appearance.

### Tile

Everybody used to have glazed ceramic tile, but today natural stone is popular and the style of grout has evolved as well. In a bathroom, you do not want dark grout unless it's on the floor. On counters and in showers, dark colors show soap scum, toothpaste and shampoo runs. Like in kitchens, the best grout for easy upkeep is earth shades; if you have white grout, use Zap! restorer once or twice a year, followed by resealing to keep it looking its best.

With heavily sanded grout, grit will run down the wall when you use a scrub brush on it. A client of mine redid

his bath with white subway tile and charcoal grout, which looked great. But we tried several different cleaners, and when I would spray them on, black would just run down the wall.

To tackle mildew in your shower, X-14 is the best product I've found, but it's tough to breathe the fumes. The least harmful, yet effective, is Tilex Mold & Mildew cleaner. Overall, the best way to avoid the problem is to run your bathroom exhaust fan for 30 minutes after a shower.

### WCs

Toilet bowl cleaners are pretty standard; generic brands, once again, do not work as well. You can use powdered cleanser, but to keep a ring or mildew growth from happening, a true toilet bowl product works best. Give the seat, rim and other parts a good cleaning with Soft Scrub with bleach every few cleanings. And a pumice stone is nice to keep around for use if a hard water ring forms. Any flush-activated product can help maintain a clean toilet bowl, and does keep you from having to scrub as often. If you don't use one of those products, I recommend a once-a-week bowl cleaning, or every two weeks, at a minimum.





## Delicates

In bathrooms, the substances we use are much more damaging to surfaces than in the kitchen—so many toothpastes today have bleach in them and a cleaning product will only compound that. Some high-end baths with marble, granite or man-made surfaces have finishes you can't use cleaner on at all. Manufacturers usually recommend water, a rag and drying, or their own stone cleaner.

The paint on reglazed bathtubs only lasts a couple of years. Even if you use the products that the refinisher recommends for cleaning, everything will start eating at it, even standing water. Non-aerosols like Mr. Clean or Spic and Span probably do the best job, but the surface will still degrade no matter how careful you are.

Gold and brass fixtures show wear and are harder to keep clean than chrome or brushed metal. Some finishes hold up better than others, and cost is not always going to

determine how well a faucet finish will last. But drying off your chrome fixtures with a hand towel after a shower keeps them spot-free and looking new.

## And don't forget

One last area to pay special attention to is the room's wood molding. It gets dusty very quickly due to toilet paper lint and blow-drying, so vacuum or wipe it off when cleaning the bathroom floor. Also, dust the vents on your ceiling exhaust fan; vacuuming with a brush attachment and occasionally removing the cover to scrub the slats does the job.

And remember, if you only have 30 minutes before company arrives, you can fake a clean house by tackling the bathroom counters and toilet, washing and drying kitchen counters, dusting the most visible living room surfaces and vacuuming major lint off of rugs. ✿



Jim Brown (2)

# ranchdressing

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

**Q:** My husband and I picked up four of these dining chairs, along with a teak table at a consignment shop near Vail a number of years ago. The table is marked 'Made in Denmark' and appears to be early 1960s. There are no markings on the chairs at all. We had them reupholstered, but the fabric is very similar to the original.

The chairs closely resemble the dormitory desk chair

that a manufacturer would have bothered knocking-off such an obscure design even though the designer himself was very famous.

**Laura Bennison**

**A:** Dealer Judy Engel of [modernonthehudson.com](http://modernonthehudson.com) has a couple of thoughts: "I pored over some old *Mobilias*, a Danish magazine from the '60s and '70s that has a number of articles and ads for furniture of that time. I couldn't find this exact chair, which does resemble the design of many of the bent-plywood dining or desk chairs of the Arne Jacobsen/Fritz Hansen/Alvar Aalto era.

In reality there were hundreds of renditions of chairs similar to this one that were made all over the world by many different companies. From the photos it appears that the bent plywood is most likely ash or beech. Chances are the chairs and the table were not a set, although I am sure that they complement each

other well. Beside the extra bar between the legs, I also noticed that there are wood plugs covering the screws on the sides of the chairs. This would be indicative of more affordable furniture lines, not of the higher-end furniture makers such as Fritz Hansen. As to why a manufacturer would imitate this design? My guess would be because this chair was practical, popular, durable and sellable.



#4135 that Arne Jacobsen designed in 1962 for St. Catherine's College at Oxford. I emailed Fritz Hansen, the manufacturer, about our chairs and, while they acknowledged that there is a strong resemblance, they said they never produced a modified version such as ours. The only difference appears to be that our chairs have spindles between the front and back legs.

Any guess as to where they came from? It seems odd





**Q:** I bought this lamp at an estate sale and am unsure of how it should mount. It appears to be a ceiling fixture with paint around the top edges where it would have mounted, yet I

think there may have been a rod extending it from the ceiling. It has no labels or markings. Any ideas?

**Annie Mondecarr**

**A:** Lighting enthusiast Christian Widmer weighs in: "This is an unusual fixture. It is a simple flush mount that just requires four #8/32 screws and a standard tapped crossbar. The knurled nuts on the outside of the center cone remove for relamping. This cone would be removed for mounting as well, and the bracket screwed to the ceiling box with two additional screws pointing down. The fixture's holes are aligned with the screws, and it is affixed to the ceiling with standard lamp lockup knobs, like the ones on the fixture that lock on the center cone—all standard parts available at any hardware store. It would not have had a down rod originally, but a cap to cover the wires and a down rod could be attached—however, that would spoil the clever flush-mount design. If I was mounting this fixture

in my home, I'd replace the sockets and cut some pink fiberglass insulation for the ceiling contact on all six of the sockets.

"As to the manufacturer and date, it is probably 1960s and made by one of the 'value' lighting companies (like Lincoln Lighting or Markstone) not one of the more expensive major companies such as Moe Lighting, Lightolier or Virden. The tell is the interior of the cones: a higher-end fixture company would have painted these white for maximum reflectivity; these have raw aluminum, which was much cheaper to manufacture. It is quite unique, though, and a very interesting design with the outer cones flush to the ceiling in harmony with the center cone—an MCM delight!"



**Q:** I inherited a total of five fiberglass chairs in a range of colors when my grandparents died in the mid-1990s. I have been slowly restoring them (the fiberglass was embedded with 50 years of smoke) and painting the original black legs navy blue. There are no markings or manufacturer's name on the chairs, and in talking

# ranchdressing



with my mother, she remembers them being purchased before she was a teenager. Our family has fond memories of sitting in the chairs, and I am now using them in my dining room. Any information or leads would be greatly appreciated.

I also have two sideboards; Grandma always had them stacked, so in memory of her, I have done the same. The lower piece is marked the Mengel Furniture Co., which I think was founded after the Civil War and was purchased in the 1950s by Kroehler Manufacturing, who discontinued the furniture lines by 1960. The upper piece may be Mengel as well, however,

it has no markings. Both are solid wood with wood laminate, and the lower piece has a plastic laminate top; the pulls are original. There is water damage to the laminate on the lower piece that I need to gently restore. Any information or confirmation of my findings would be greatly appreciated.

Finally, for all pieces, if there is any idea as to the original purchase prices, that would be of interest as well; Mom and I have a little friendly bet going.

**Don Dinkel**

**A:** Our editor writes, "I think your chairs are Luther Conover for Lloyd Mfg., though I am by no stretch of the imagination an authority. Check out this link: [goo.gl/NKXBY7](http://goo.gl/NKXBY7). Then again, here is an attribution of Lawrence Peabody for Selig: [goo.gl/k05U6V](http://goo.gl/k05U6V).

Perhaps the base details or other construction specifics shown in the blog photos will lead you to a positive ID based on what you can see first-hand. The Selig link includes a vintage ad with original pricing for your intra-family bet—\$39.50.

On the credenzas, although only one is marked Mengel, both have the same metal detail just above the legs; it seems like you could conclude they are related. We would heartily encourage you to give that thirsty-looking wood a drink once you repair the water damage. Our Fall 2012 'Keep It Up' column on lightly refinishing MC furniture can give you some pointers; that issue is available at [atomic-ranch.com](http://atomic-ranch.com).

**Q:** I recently picked up this hutch at a flea market. There are no tags or embossments to tell me who the manufacturer is. Can any of your experts lend a hand?

**John Kean**







Oh My Mod (2)



**A:** We found a direct match and examples of other case goods from this Perspecta line by Kent-Coffey, a North Carolina company that produced furniture from 1907 to the mid '80s. Collector Lathen Kamas (facebook.com/ohmymod and ohmymod.net) is a fount of knowledge on Perspecta: "Most people are more familiar with the ever-popular and similarly styled Brasilia line by Broyhill [see page 48]. Given that Brasilia was produced in greater numbers, and that Harold Coffey and James Broyhill, the two companies' founders, were neighbors/friends/competitors, it's not unusual to confuse the two lines.

"The easiest way to differentiate between them is the use of the smaller, more symmetrical rosewood arches on the Perspecta line. Other giveaways are the construction of the legs and bases; the differences in hardware on drawers and doors; and, of course, the combination of walnut/rosewood/pecan on Perspecta as opposed to walnut/pecan on Brasilia. I own pieces from both lines and, in my opinion, Perspecta is of equal, if not higher, quality than Brasilia. Both are solid wood, which provides sturdy, long-lasting pieces, but also utilized wood veneer to help keep the pieces affordable.

"While most Kent-Coffey pieces are stamped on the inside of a drawer, I have come across a couple that were unmarked. I've never been able to determine why some are sans stamp, but if I had to fathom a guess, it would be that those pieces were earlier productions. I can say with 99.9% certainty that this hutch is from the Perspecta line and likely made between 1963 and 1965. Everything I can see (symmetrical rosewood arches, hardware on drawers and the construction style of the legs) is spot-on for this piece; if I had the dimensions, I could probably account for the other .1%.

"It usually comes down to personal preference when considering which manufacturer and line is supreme. Much like when it was introduced, the combination of Perspecta's quality, style and smaller production compared to Brasilia makes it very popular amongst MCM-minded individuals today. Pieces from the line that have been properly cared for over the years are capable of

fetching rather handsome prices. I fell in love with Perspecta the first time I encountered it and it remains near the top of my list of pieces to add to my permanent collection."

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



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# atomic events

**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](http://newenglandshakeup.com).

**Through October 6 San Francisco**

## **Designing Home: Jews and Midcentury Modernism**

The Contemporary Jewish Museum looks at the contributions of Jewish architects, designers and merchants to



Kaufmann House, Julius Shulman 1947

©J. Paul Getty Trust



Honeywell round thermostat, Henry Dreyfuss 1953

Johanna Arnold

the postwar domestic landscape, along with broader cultural and social themes of the era. The work of Henry Dreyfuss, Marcel Breuer, Anni Albers, Julius Shulman and many more is explored through 120-plus items; [thecjm.org](http://thecjm.org).

**October 10–13 Palm Springs**

## **Modernism Week Fall Season Kick-Off**

Expect some of the same great activities you enjoy during the annual February event—double-decker bus tours, a retro yard sale, architectural tours, cocktail parties—four months earlier; [modernismweek.com](http://modernismweek.com).

**October 11 Nationwide**

## **Docomomo Tour Day**

An annual celebration of tours and lectures for architecture enthusiasts across the U.S.; annoyingly, details aren't available until 30 days before the event. Go to [docomomo-us.org/tourday](http://docomomo-us.org/tourday).

**October 12 Palm Springs**

## **Modernism Garage Sale**

Browse the furnishings, art, collectibles and clothing at a retro yard sale sponsored by the Paul Kaplan Group; 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. at 1701 N. Palm Canyon Drive. More info at [paulkaplangroup.com](http://paulkaplangroup.com).

**October 20–26 Houston**

## **Houston Modern Market Week**

Lectures, architecture tours, a preview party and shopping for fine art, furnishings, jewelry and more at the Winter Street Studios; [houstonmodernmarket.com](http://houstonmodernmarket.com).

**November 9–February 22, 2015 Palm Springs**

## **An Eloquent Modernist: E. Stewart Williams, Architect**

The Palm Springs Art Museum opens its new Architecture + Design Center, housed in a 1961 former bank building designed by Williams, with an exhibition of models, photos and renderings covering the architect's 50-year career; [psmuseum.org](http://psmuseum.org).

**November 9–March 22, 2015 Los Angeles**

## **Larry Sultan: Here and Home**

Sultan, a California photographer, explored themes of



family, home and facade during his career. An exhibition of more than 100 prints at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art gives a look at his works from 1970 through the 2009; [lacma.org](http://lacma.org).

**November 11–14 Savannah**  
**PastForward, 2014 National Preservation Conference**

The National Trust for Historic Preservation's annual big-deal conference typically has a handful of events specific to MCM; updates and details at [preservationnation.org](http://preservationnation.org).



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

**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](http://toledomuseum.org).

# resources

**I Lovett, pp. 12–24**

**Architect:** Mike Mariano, [gracemkim.com](http://gracemkim.com)  
✖ **Realtor:** Kirsten Robertson, [360modern.com](http://360modern.com) ✖ **Cabinetry:** [kerfdesign.com](http://kerfdesign.com) ✖ **Contractor:** [brightworkbuilders.com](http://brightworkbuilders.com) ✖ **Electrical:** Queen Anne Electric, 206.579.7225 ✖ **Flooring installation:** Flying Carpet, [fixr.com/sp.flying-carpet.html](http://fixr.com/sp.flying-carpet.html) ✖ **Plumbing:** [stalwartplumbing.com](http://stalwartplumbing.com) ✖ **Countertop fabrication:** Matt Muhsam, [novustone.com](http://novustone.com) ✖ **Countertop installation:** Johnson Stone Countertop, [johnsonstone.com](http://johnsonstone.com) ✖ **Cork flooring:** Expanko Ivory XC1008, [expanko.com](http://expanko.com) ✖ **Coffee table:** [elpisandwood.com](http://elpisandwood.com) ✖ **Vintage furniture:** [modernous.com](http://modernous.com) ✖ **Area rug & buffet:** Ikat Links in Frost Gray, Dumont, [westelm.com](http://westelm.com) ✖ **Tulip-style table:** [ikea.com](http://ikea.com) ✖ **Dining chairs, Tolix Marais bar stools:** [dwr.com](http://dwr.com) ✖ **Appliances:** [kitchenaid.com](http://kitchenaid.com) ✖ [faberonline.com](http://faberonline.com)

**Working Class Heroes: All in the Family, pp. 36–42**  
**Vintage furnishings:** [ethel20thcenturyliving.com](http://ethel20thcenturyliving.com) ✖

[garyhillauctions.ca](http://garyhillauctions.ca) ✖ **Vintage curtains:** [gadaboutvintage.com](http://gadaboutvintage.com) ✖ **New curtain fabric:** [tonicliving.com](http://tonicliving.com) ✖ **Lampshade supplies:** [moonshinesthades.com](http://moonshinesthades.com) ✖ **Kitchen pulls:** [rejuvenation.com](http://rejuvenation.com) ✖ **VCT flooring:** [armstrong.com](http://armstrong.com)

**Belle Vista, pp. 46–54**

**Steam Punk lamp & Nelson Cigar wall sconce:** [ylighting.com](http://ylighting.com) ✖ **Eames Dowel-leg chairs:** [yliving.com](http://yliving.com)

**Open House: Ft. Lauderdale, pp. 58–63**

**Kitchen:** Cabinetry, Robert Quinones, [fourseasonpainting.com](http://fourseasonpainting.com) ✖ **Counters,** White Zeus Extreme, [silestone.com](http://silestone.com) ✖ **Appliances,** [bosch-home.com/us](http://bosch-home.com/us) ✖ **Similar Bronx pendant lamps in black,** [lampsplus.com](http://lampsplus.com) ✖ **Dining:** Saarinen Tulip table, [knoll.com](http://knoll.com) ✖ **Drum pendant,** [cb2.com](http://cb2.com) ✖ **Office:** Little Tulip Chair, [goo.gl/eBvEZ](http://goo.gl/eBvEZ) ✖ **Cone chair,** [vitra.com](http://vitra.com) ✖ **Tolomeo floor lamp,** [ylighting.com](http://ylighting.com)



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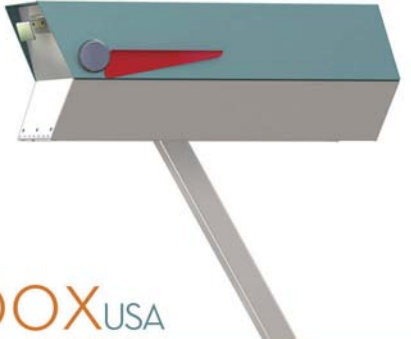
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