

atomic ranch

MIDCENTURY MARVELS

WINTER 2014



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From a rundown wreck of a house, a Palmer & Krisel in Palm Springs expanded into the ultimate weekend entertainment venue. An additional 1,100 square feet and energy-efficient features are some of the new interior amenities, but it's hard to compete with the outdoor custom furnishings, sparkling pool and fire pits; story page 46.



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meanwhile... back at the ranch

This summer, a poster on our Facebook site vented her ire at an HGTV episode of *Flip or Flop* that unleashed a torrent of 142 'likes' and, at last count, 116 comments. Calling it a 'lively discussion' would be an understatement, and AR readers know that we are not fans of this style of repetitious, shallow and fake-crisis presentations. "Mid-Century Flip" followed Tarek and Christina El Moussa's efforts to bring to market a Cliff May located in Rancho Estates in Long Beach, Calif. The synopsis pretty accurately stated, "[They] step out of their comfort zone when taking on an architecturally significant midcentury modern home."

T&C may be adept at turning over sad, bland units, but encountering an intelligently designed home required some conceptual back flips for them. In their defense, another reader posted that the 1953 home burned in 1956 and was then rebuilt sans original features—plus it had already been gutted when T&C arrived. But I suspect that if they *had* encountered a time-capsule kitchen and bath, they'd be swinging sledgehammers at the two-minute mark.

The attributes of midcentury design are not always immediately apparent, but once explained and experienced, they make lots of sense. The hidden entry to the Rancho house confused Tarek, but we know that is a hallmark of the style—a private face to deflect the outside world and direct our attention to the interiors and secluded backyard, which functions as an extra room. The Flip/Floppers wisely consulted Doug and Rochelle Kramer of SoCal Modern for expert guidance and a bit of Cliff May background, but one really has to wonder at the El Moussas' lack of knowledge: How could Realtors/flip-pers operating in the area find the midcentury aesthetic and values so unfamiliar?

A recurring complaint among AR posters was the perception of arrogance and capricious decisions—knock out a wall, close off that exit door, expand the kitchen. Was that edited to speed the narrative, or does it reveal personalities unused to careful consideration? On a purely personal note, if I were in the renovation business, I don't think I'd roll up to a project in a blingy Escalade wearing flip-flops.

The two choices that brought the biggest howls of protest were the barn doors on the master closet and the stomach-churning idea to stain beautiful birch doors and paneling throughout the house gray. On the plus side, they replaced the aluminum sliding glass doors with wood-framed glass, actually more typical of a Cliff May home. The decision to topcoat and stain the concrete floor turned out well. After an amazing 37 days, the finished home was staged and ready for sale. From a purchase of \$520,000, they added \$125,000 for renovations and \$30,000 for staging and closing costs; it sold for \$725,000, just four grand under asking.

While most of the Facebook comments deplored the whole mindset of imperious, slap-dash remodels and vowed to give up their cable service, I did notice that a few days later there was a new posting and another unified discussion about the next terrible flat-screen desecration of a midcentury home.

Home 'improvement'—the TV we love to hate.

Jim Brown, Publisher



Philco Predicta TV in
a Cliff May, Summer
2005, issue no. 6



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My wife and I recently acquired a custom Cliff May property in Tucson. We are living in a modest, big-builder, ordinary home in Denver while looking for something with a bit more character. Needless to say, after enjoying Cliff May's genius, I've been bitten by the modernist bug!

Each night I'm on my iPad researching his (and other similar architects') history and influence. I landed on your page while looking for a book of a similar name. Our property was featured in *Cliff May and The Modern Ranch House*, celebrating the best of his work—more art than architecture. It's so difficult to put into words the tranquil feeling that overcomes you after a few days living in one.

I look forward to reading more from your terrific site and publication. If you know of other suggested readings I'll surely purchase them. Excellent work!

D. Coble Thurman

Several early issues included articles on Cliff May homes; those still available at atomic-ranch.com include a Long Beach, Calif., tract home in No. 4, and a large custom home in California's Santa Ynez Valley in No. 27.

—ar editor

✳ I haven't subscribed to your magazine as of yet because I've been waiting to see what direction it will go in. It seems that [Atomic Ranch] is heading toward a readership of the same very narrow percentage of people who can actually afford to buy an atomic

ranch house—much in the same manner that the now defunct *Modernism* magazine geared itself from a publication with a wide variety of articles about modern design that most readers could afford to buy, into a very high-end-oriented magazine that mostly featured articles about homes and architecture designed and built only for the super-rich, who, being only five percent of the U.S. population, is such a small population of subscribers and magazine buyers that *Modernism* magazine folded up and is out of business.

I'd like to see your magazine have a long life, so I'd like to suggest that you put a little more effort into more articles about the history, designers and companies of midcentury modern decorative objects, lighting, furniture and other decor ... things that the general population can still afford, and less about the atomic ranch homes themselves, that are increasingly being priced out of affordability, as much real estate is these days, for the majority of your readers and subscribers.

Richard Claycomb

✳ Congrats on the BIG TEN [anniversary]! I wish I knew about you way back when. I don't know if you've ever done anything on my hometown, but here's a link to a little photo tour we took last weekend: goo.gl/d0j1jy.

Thanks for the work you do!

Kim Pedersen

Fremont, Calif.

✳ We really enjoy Atomic Ranch and have gotten so many ideas over the years from perusing your pages. A few years ago, we decided to have a '50s travel trailer rehabbed and picked this great little '58 Deville, which was truly sad looking on a lot in New Mexico. Materials that could be salvaged were put into the rebuild, and we really enjoyed finding everything else—from the '80s reissue boomerang laminate (found in Toronto) to just the right flooring and '50s auto paint colors from original paint chips. The final touch was making the curtains and quilts from a variety of chenille bedspreads. It's now bright and cheery and will mainly serve as a guest house for our



soon-to-be-built MCM ranch, but will occasionally be seen out and about, too.

Caroline Roe
Lockhart, Texas

✱ The article *Doing Wright by Hitchcock* (No. 42) and a trip to Warroad, Minn., gave me an idea for a possible article. You're perhaps asking yourself, What is in Warroad and where is it? Warroad is just six miles from the Canadian border and has two things to offer in a town of 1,700 people. First, it is the home of the Marvin Window factory, which I toured, and secondly, it has 'The Shed.'

The Shed is owned by the mayor of Warroad (who just happens to be a Marvin), and houses about 100 U.S.-made cars from 1926 to 2012. There has to be about 40 or so cars that were designed and manufactured during the MCM era in the collection. This has been compared to Jay Leno's collection, and all the cars are in pristine condition.

John Conroy
Lawrence, N.J.



John's meticulous basement remodel was featured in Summer 2013, available at atomic-ranch.com; visit virtually at theshedwarroad.com.

—ar editor

✱ I enjoyed the article by your housekeeping expert, Sandy Wright, in the Summer 2014 issue. I thought it was very informative, but I did want to submit a couple of corrections.

'Solid surface' is a technical term for material made of approximately 2/3 alumina trihydrate (a white powder distilled from bauxite) and 1/3 acrylic or polyester resin. The best-known brand is Corian, invented by scientists at DuPont in 1967. In the right color or pattern, it is a very era-appropriate choice for midcentury-modern home renovations. Silestone (mentioned in the article) is a brand of quartz composite surfacing that is not the same thing as solid surface, and the two have very different qualities.

Quartz composite is primarily available in a lustrous, polished finish, while solid surface is primarily installed in the matte finish Sandy referred to. While 'material porosity' does matter for natural stone countertops (which can absorb liquids and oils), it does not for these two man-made countertop materials, which are nonporous—liquid, bacteria and stains cannot penetrate the surface. Surface-level stains can be sanded out of solid surface countertops; this is not true for quartz counters like Silestone.

Darker colors of solid surface are actually more susceptible to scratching than lighter colors; this is why manufacturers and fabricators recommend these colors for lower traffic areas like a wet bar or powder room,

morewisdom

rather than an island countertop. There are so many more countertop options available today that it's important to know the proper care instructions for the particular surface installed in your home so you can continue to enjoy it for many years to come.

Chris Zibert
San Diego

✳ For Jim Brown: Loved Old Man Rant No. 13. Looking forward to No. 14.

Thanks for your hard work and dedication putting out the magazine—I enjoy it very much!

Old Man Vince Malcangi in Michigan

✳ My family and I have lived in our 1959 William Floyd house since 2005. When we purchased, it was in almost original condition, which, as many midcentury mod homeowners know, is both a good and bad thing. As an architect, I was thrilled.

Over the years we remodeled the kitchen, guest bathroom, atrium, exterior facade and landscaping, keeping the midcentury modern aesthetic in mind. (By the way, the front of our home can be seen in your book, *Atomic Ranch: Design Ideas for Stylish Ranch Homes*, on page 47, photograph number 5.) We have also bought furnishings that complement the house, includ-

ing a Bertoia Bird chair favored by many members of the family, including our corgi, Silver.

Allison Schmidt
Houston



✳ We were in issue No. 33's 'Home Page' a couple of years ago and are getting ready to move from our Emporia, Kansas, ranch to a Colorado condo. Bittersweet, but the mountains will be so nice; someday we will have another MCM!

We had a cash offer within hours. Our Realtor showed all the agents copies of *Atomic Ranch* and held a little session on how to sell this house; she did a great job. When we bought the house it had languished on the market for 18 months.

I absolutely think your magazine has changed the market and your message is really getting out there! (I have been leaving extra issues in our local coffee shop for years—maybe that paid off.) I'm so happy to see people in Kansas understanding MCM—better late than never.

Thank you for what you do; it really, really makes a difference!

Jennie Erickson

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.



Allison Schmidt

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Nick Tershay aka Nick Diamond
Owner/Founder Diamond Supply Co.

"Danny Montoya went above and beyond our expectations. He was more than willing to go the extra mile to make our purchase happen. As an independent contractor, I hit a few bumps with our bank, and Danny was right there to help get everything sorted with a lender who specialized in situations like ours. Without Danny I really think our purchase might not have happened. We can't speak highly enough about him, and would recommend his service to anyone who is looking to purchase or sell a house."

John & Angela Bradford
Master Lensmen & Volcom Accessories Designer

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Thinking Outside



the (War) Box

text Michelle Gringeri-Brown

photography Jim Brown



Homeowner Kevin Eustice constructed the Lindsey Adelman lamp over the Moretti dining table from parts and directions found online; the chairs are Helge Sibast for Søborg Møbler. The Drexel Declaration room divider holds Japanese and Scandinavian vases, pots, planters and serving pieces, while the area rug is from Jonathan Adler.



Collectors make a worn-out ranch their own

Moving from L.A. to Seattle for jobs in 2008, Alison Walker and Kevin Eustice ended up living in a dank granny flat during a winter when the city got its fair share of rain and 23 inches of snow. Ready to buy a house, they looked and looked for three or four months with absolutely no luck.

“The real estate market was trending down, but sellers were in denial,” Walker, 35, says. “We put in offers and people would just laugh at us. When we went to an estate sale for this home, we said, This place is a pit; we would never live here!

In retrospect, famous last words, right? This house was the right price and we ended up with it—but it was far from our dream home.”

Their West Seattle neighborhood was considered transitional six years ago, and consists of bungalows and ‘war boxes’—a somewhat derisive term for boxy postwar tract homes—built between 1955 and 1965. Coming from sunny Southern California, the couple was desperate to get out of the depressing basement apartment.

“We weren’t scared of putting in sweat equity,” says Eustice, 37, a software engineer at Google. “There was no landscaping except creosote-soaked railroad ties and a dandelion-infested dead lawn. It had a small, dark, floor plan with the living and dining areas separated by a wall. It was carpeted throughout, and there were nicotine stains up and down the walls. A cat had lived in the half bath for probably 10 years.”

"Our home looked like somebody had lived hard in it," his wife adds. "The previous homeowner had done some upgrades—covered flower-power wallpaper with '70s paneling in the kitchen. Every time we took something down, there was something worse underneath."

Coming home from their full-time jobs, nights were spent ripping out rank carpeting, washing down walls and painting the 1961 ranch. "One of the first things we did was tear the living room wall down," Eustice recounts. "And we pulled up the carpeting, hoping to find hardwood."

No such luck. "Everyone does that, finds great floors underneath, right?" interjects Walker. But there was hardwood in only one room, so new flooring was on the list.

A year after they moved in, the couple tackled the kitchen, a hodgepodge of choppy spaces, worn out surfaces and homeowner disimprovements. Walls were moved, the electrical panel redone and the old back door closed off, resulting in a modern space open to the dining and living rooms.

They chose elements like the tile, counters and appliances, designed the island bookshelves and cubbies, and kept the sink and dishwasher in the old locations. A contractor and local cabinetmaker took care of the hands-on aspects, and new sliding glass doors now bring in more light.

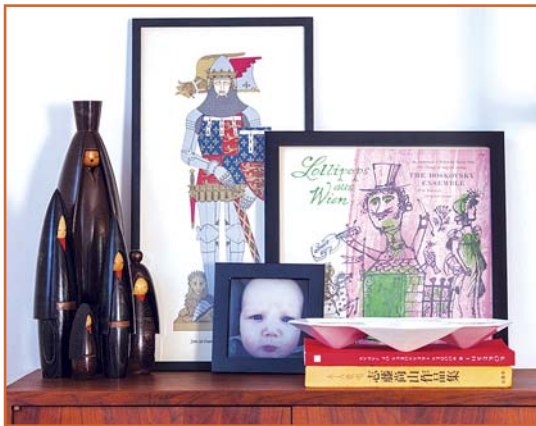
In the new kitchen, the refrigerator was recessed into a former doorway to the laundry room, and a window was replaced with sliding glass doors. The large island holds vintage cookbooks and offers seating on two tall Cherner barstools; overhead, the Dora pendants are from Rejuvenation. Fridge, microwave and dishwasher are KitchenAid, while the stove is a Kenmore and the exhaust hood and cabinet pulls are from IKEA. The counters are PentalQuartz and the custom cabinetry has cubbies for decorative pottery and wine storage; the backsplash is white ceramic penny rounds. To the right of the sink are two 1958 LaGardo Tackett cookie jars.





Burnt orange paint on the fireplace wall makes the Drexel Declaration bar cart and framed Harris Strong Viking tile pop; the table lamp is a rare Gordon Martz design and the ceramics are ikebana vases. The white upholstered chair is a Finn Juhl Japan chair, and a matching couch sits by a Gerald Thurston Lightolier floor lamp (right). On the raised hearth is a Blenko aquarium vase by Winslow Anderson, while the fireplace has an enameled hood.





Enthusiastic collectors of midcentury furniture and smalls (more about that in a sec), weighing authenticity, function and dollars was a challenge on this project. “That was really hard, actually,” Walker says. “I’m not sure if we would do everything the same now.”

“I know we wouldn’t,” her husband retorts.

“A lot of problems we ran up against were because of our budget. Our pendant lights are from Rejuvenation, so they’re high-end replicas,” explains Walker. “We like them, but now we’d source original Scandinavian lights. There aren’t a lot of entry-level, good-looking midcentury products out there.

“Instead of putting Formica countertops in and getting vintage metal cabinets, we tried to make things as clean and modern as possible and then add midcentury touches. There are so many different types of modern; ours is clean Scandinavian rather than Sputnik or Google.”

“I like our penny rounds backsplash,” Eustice adds, “but practically speaking, I might have made a different choice: white penny rounds with white grout are difficult to keep clean.”

Clockwise from top, left: Tut Fog vases (top row, center), Kenji Fujita pieces (middle row, left and right), a Gordon Martz coffee pot and cups (bottom row, center), and Aldo Londi for Bitossi (bottom row, right) in the dining room. A Danish Digsmed spice rack. The McCobb bookcase holds ikebana vases and planters, figurines by Taisto Kaasinen and Victoria Littlejohn, and more pieces from Kenji Fujita. Yukinko Kokeshi figures, a framed album cover and a Kaj Franck origami bowl in the living room wall unit.



Now open to the dining area, the living room has a Natuzzi couch chosen for its comfort and toddler-friendly qualities.

The vintage coffee table is from the Drexel Declaration line, as is the bookcase under the front window. Merbau (a tropical hardwood) runs through the public rooms and down the hall to the four bedrooms and two baths.

Prior to the move, the couple jettisoned their graduate-school IKEA pieces, which were at the end of their shelf life. “We needed furniture and it was our first chance to figure out what our collector’s style was,” says Walker. “You kind of have a clean palette: you don’t have your parents around, we didn’t have a lot of friends, it was What do we like? What do we want? So we started going on Craigslist and to estate sales to furnish the house.”

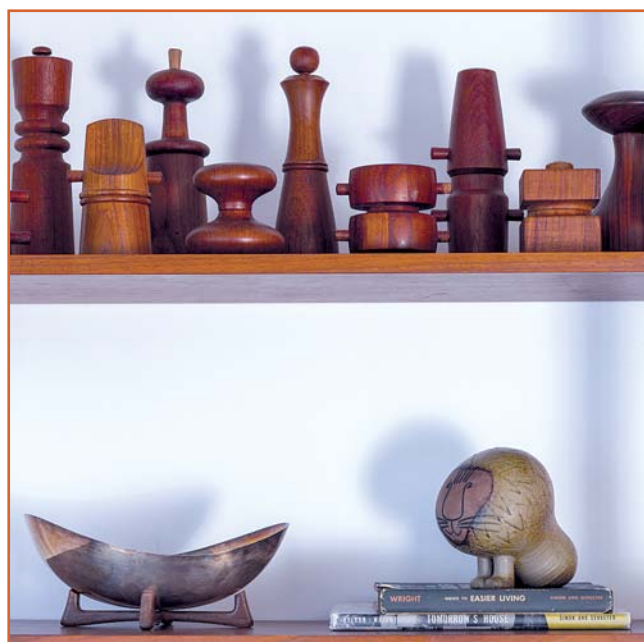
They were both drawn to the Scandinavian designers and collectibles we see decorating the house today. Friends would come by to see what was new and started requesting help finding similar things for their own homes. And ‘Bit of Butter’ was born.

“I was finishing up my dissertation and wanted something to do other than sit and write, so we started the [vintage retail] business,” Walker, an academic specializing in medieval manuscripts, explains. The name alludes to a Scandinavian adage that butter makes everything better. “We both have our PhDs and we’re researchers, so a kickin’ Saturday night for us is to get our books out and research a chair. We really like the stories behind the furniture, so something will become even more appealing once we find out its background. We have the stuff we have because we really love the designers.”

The Aughts might be considered hopping on the MC bandwagon a bit late, but the couple say they got into it when they were able. They’ve definitely seen more savvy sellers in recent years, with Goodwill starting to post anything with a Scandinavian label on their website, and Eustice cites *American Pickers* as another popularizer.

“We’ve upgraded as our aesthetic changes. We still love teak but I think you can

By the front window, Gus naps on an Arne Vodder armchair near a Hans Andersen Hex table with a red top; the George Nelson-designed Omni wall unit displays some of the couple's favorite midcentury collectibles—Jens Quistgaard pepper mills, a Lisa Larson lion and Scandinavian art glass. An Alvar Aalto Stool 60 and a George Nelson floor lamp for Koch & Lowy sit next to the couch. The couple's growing collection of Riihimaen, Orrefors, Hadeland, iittala, Aseda, Nuutajarvi and Blenko art glass on show in the living room and office.





In the home office are a vintage Arne Vodder desk and yellow Eames Times-Life swivel chair. A wall-mounted Nessen Studio fixture and a Kurt Versen floor lamp shine light on the Jenfred Ware tray and vintage Kokeshi.

Jelly graces a Hans Wegner Hoop chair with a sheepskin throw.

Opposite: The couple use a low Drexel Declaration dresser as a changing table for their daughter, Sabine, who sleeps in an Oeuf crib. A Hans Wegner PP124 rocking chair, a Gerald Thurston 1950s tripod lamp for Lightolier and a circa 1960 Creative Playthings child-size rocker are among the vintage items; the Eames Hang-It-All and Nelson owl clock are reissues. Animal figurines, vintage children's books and Japanese Kokeshi dolls are displayed on the Norwegian wall unit, while the two woodblocks are by Kaoru Kawano.





overdo it," he says. "Recently we find ourselves gravitating more toward metal than we have in the past. That's reflected in our new chandelier in the dining room."

Instead of just Scandinavian, they're now venturing into domestic designers. "We love George Nelson," he continues, "and a couple of years ago you would have seen a lot more Selig Z chairs—they're in the garage now and we've replaced them with Hans Wegner and Finn Juhl, better-made furniture."

Their tastes diverge a bit when it comes to smalls. Eustice has a thing for glass: "I'm drawn primarily to Scandinavian glass—iittala, Riihimaen, Holmegaard, Kosta Boda, etc. I love the way the designers play with color, form and texture, for example the icy shapes of Tapio Wirkkala's iittala vases, or the fluid rings and swoops of Tamara Aladin's vases for Riihimaen."

Walker, on the other hand, likes little stoneware animals from Japan. "I know Kevin would prefer those not come home with us," she laughs. "Constantly editing is our way of dealing with collectibles. There's a difference between collecting and accumulating. We both try not to be completists, which can be a collector's dream or downfall. We have pieces that are representative [of a category] so you can enjoy your displays without having a ton of stuff."

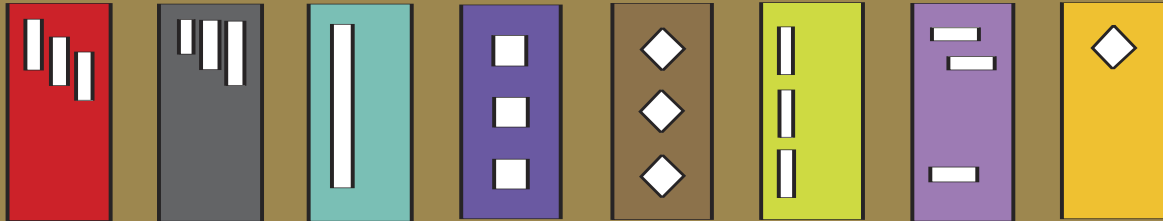
And as Eustice is quick to point out, "We haven't finished furnishing the house; it's a rotating museum, always evolving and revolving." ❁



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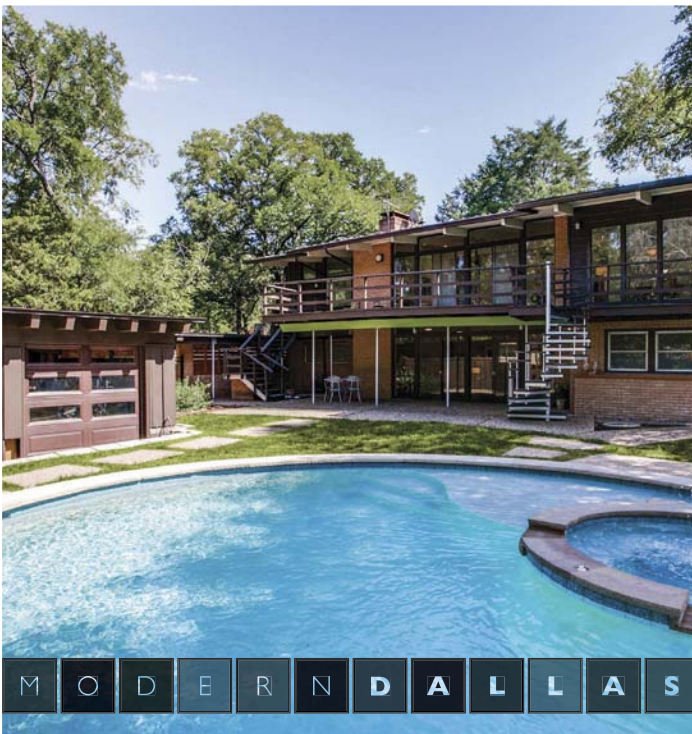
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homepage

Indianapolis, Ind.

My midcentury modern home offers an amazing glimpse into the past. The white-glazed-brick exterior and raised brick terraces encompass 4,500 square feet of living space, or a total of 6,500 when the enclosed pool and workshop are included. The sunroom features a rounded exterior glass wall and a gorgeous terrazzo floor; the house also has an entertainment and bar area built in the same glazed-white brick. In the kitchen is original Formica-clad cabinetry, Thermador appliances and a NuTone "in-built" combination mixer, blender, sharpener and juicer.

Jim Barnes

Duarte, Calif.

We purchased our MCM home five years ago. Ours was the eyesore of the neighborhood according to our neighbors, but is now one of the nicest. We are continually making upgrades and improvements, and are down to just remodeling the bathrooms at this point. But I'm sure there will be more projects that pop up to keep us busy. It is furnished with Heywood-Wakefield furniture, a combination of vintage and reproduction MCM chairs, and period '50s lamps, Fiestaware and Hawaiiana artwork as well as abstract art. It is the most comfortable home I have ever lived in and the transformation has been amazing!

Allan Norfolk & Isaiah Cholicco

Decatur, Ga.

We bought our 1959 brick ranch from an estate in 2002 and it was completely original. We have made some updates and changes but tried to keep a happy medium of an old and new feel. Our living room includes a midcentury couch and chair, a Danish coffee table, a mid-'60s Curtis Mathes TV/stereo console and various knickknacks. The table lamp is a 1962 hand-painted Fortune lamp, and the painting on the left is a 1957 Carol Haerer piece. Over the console is a 1957 Philip Wofford painting; both were NY School painters who were married. Haerer passed away in 2002, but Wofford still paints every day.

Tom & Diane Burns

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.



Indianapolis, Ind.



Duarte, Calif.



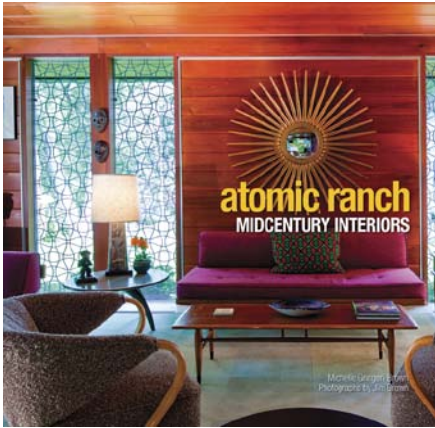
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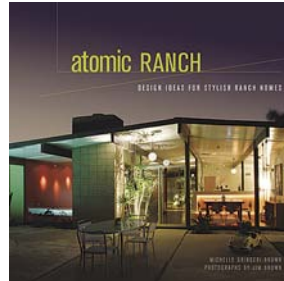
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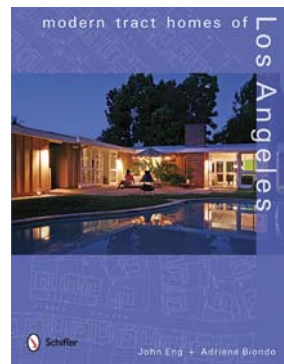
Atomic Ranch: Midcentury Interiors

Explore eight ranch interiors in depth—from warm moderns and split-levels to tract homes and retro traditionals—in our 2012 book. The homeowners share their experiences with economical finishes and furnishings to adding on a master suite and reworking a tight floor plan. Gringeri-Brown/Brown, autographed hardcover, 200 color photos, 192 pp., \$40



Atomic Ranch: Design Ideas for Stylish Ranch Homes

Plenty of ranches from our early issues to inspire you: modern kitchens and baths, DIY landscaping and tips on pulling together a retro interior. Resources, history, decorating on a dime—it's got it all. Gringeri-Brown/Brown, autographed hardcover, color and b&w photos, 192 pp., \$40

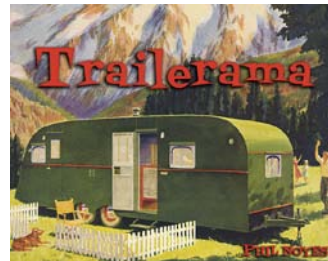
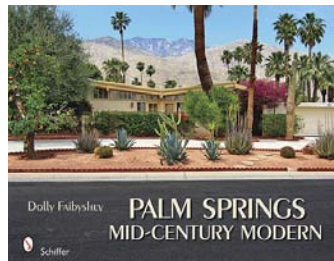


Modern Tract Homes of Los Angeles

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 & Adriene Biondo, hardcover, 144 pp., \$40

Palm Springs Mid-Century Modern

If you've wondered what you'd see on a driving tour of Palm Springs, this book delivers. Covering both iconic homes and typical modernist tracts in b&w and color photos, Dolly Faibyshev keeps the text super minimal in her picture book of the desert city today. Hardcover, 112 pp., \$30

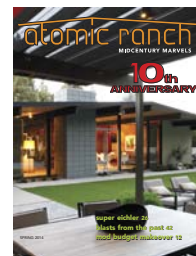
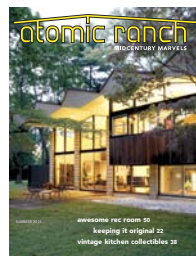


Trailerama

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

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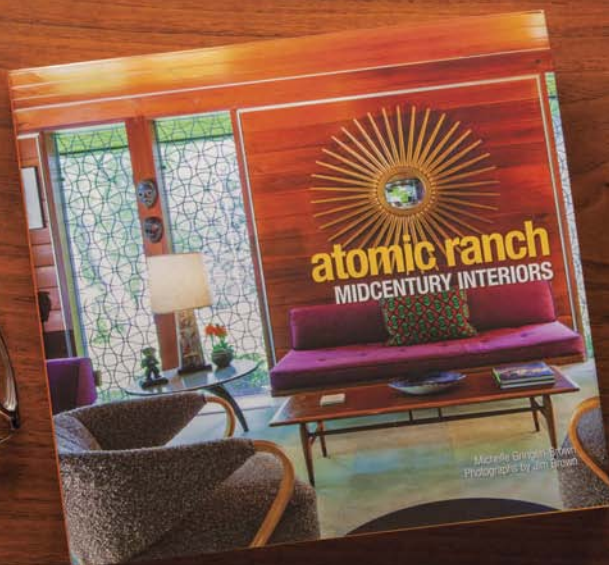
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my favorite space



Upholstered Herman Miller chairs around the dining and kitchen tables and the use of Heywood-Wakefield for all of the storage case goods lend continuity to the furnishings in the multiuse space. The orchids on the bookcases are in vintage McCoy pottery.

photography Christine Reynolds



Some years ago, I upended my conventional life as a business school dean by marrying a fine artist and buying, sight unseen over the Internet, a 2,000-square-foot condo in Tampa. Suddenly design, color and texture became part of my everyday conversation, expanding a part of my brain, which if not somewhat lacking, was at the very least in hibernation.

The condo was affordable and seemed to provide a great vacation spot for visits during inclement Kansas City, Mo., weather. The bad news was that it had been empty for a year and, according to some emails, had urine-stained carpets, broken windows, holes in the walls and broken glass in the dishwasher and garbage disposal. The toilets were barely discussable.

Down the road, relocating to Florida fulltime provided an experiment on how two different people, somewhat set in their ways, could merge their tastes and start a new life together. Lynn, the artist, loved edgy, contemporary furniture and color. I loved Japanese design and Arts and Crafts, and owned some oversized Mission oak pieces. What we found in common was an appreciation for midcentury design. We decided to use midcentury furnishings to create a large, livable room with five areas: an informal breakfast spot, a formal dining area, a media area, an office and space to entertainment.

Reflecting a tight budget and the desire to enjoy the process, our strategy became threefold. First, we pledged to buy new for only a few key items, such as dining tables and couches. Second, to purchase used furniture from independent antique and



The Karastan shag rug and 855 Design Classic Sofa by Milo Baughman for Thayer Coggin are among the new pieces in the living room area. The vintage lamps have pagoda-shaped shades, and the reupholstered Brno chairs, the McCobb desk and Eames Aluminum Group desk chair are all period, too. The Heywood-Wakefield pieces include two side tables, a server and a buffet, and a coffee table. Homeowner Lynn Manos' Venice boat paintings hang on the wall.

In the media area are a powder blue Natuzzi couch and a coffee table on wheels designed by Manos and fabricated by John Noel.





second-hand stores, focusing on whether or not we developed an affinity for the owners. Thus, pieces that came into our home were associated with names like Craig, Keith, Janet, Katie, Hugo, David and Donald, rather than store names. Third, we decided that the largest percentage of our purchases would come from the Salvation Army, Goodwill and thrift shops associated with hospice and a children's hospital—to both support the shops and repurpose abandoned midcentury furniture. To paraphrase the Beach Boys, this gave our home good vibrations.

It took us about five years to furnish the condo, although we are always updating and never quite done. How did this work in practice? We started out by planning our spaces and initially furnishing them with truly junk furniture that was incredibly cheap. Then, when a good piece came along, it slid into its proper place and the original piece was donated back to the Salvation Army. For example, after two years, a \$20 painted coffee table was suddenly replaced by a lovely, round Heywood-Wakefield coffee table.

For the office area, I found a great 1960s Paul McCobb desk in very good condition that had just been dropped off at the Salvation Army. To complete this area, I purchased a Charles Eames-designed Aluminum Group chair from the same era, found tucked away in a used-office-furniture store.

We tied the informal kitchen eating area to the rest of the space by tearing down an adjoining wall and matching a stainless steel worktable with vintage Herman Miller chairs.

McCoy pottery is displayed in the rare H-W corner cabinet. To the left is a Wayne Thiebaud print and on the right, a poster by David Lance Goines celebrating the second anniversary of Berkeley's Chez Panisse restaurant.



Since the table also provides a work/reading area, two Heywood-Wakefield bookcases flanked by two H-W nightstands hold books, newspapers and writing materials.

For the formal dining area, we chose a glass Cassina table surrounded by Herman Miller stacking chairs that had been in a Florida savings and loan. The glass lightens up the room and made the large table seem smaller. Lighting is provided by two Palm Beach Regency floor lamps that came out of a small motel in Miami Beach found in a Charleston antique shop.

In the media area, the biggest challenge was what to do with our flat screen television. We ended up placing it on the largest Heywood-Wakefield buffet they manufactured and using another H-W bookcase so one could also read in this area while listening to music.

Finally, the entertaining area is furnished with a floor-sample midcentury-style couch, two more H-W side tables, the Hey-Wake coffee table and two Miami Beach table lamps. The area is completed with vintage Brno chairs recovered in red leather and a shag area rug.

The end result is that a trashed and unlivable condominium has evolved into a peaceful home with a Zen feeling, a delightful place to entertain. Even the resident artist is content. ✿

Al Page & Lynn Manos
Tampa, Fla.

Resources page 78; Tampa photographer Christine Reynolds' work can be seen at christinereynolds.com.

cool|stuff



Solstice Simplicity

The unadorned, straightforward materials and design of Fruitsuper's modular snowmen and gnomes make you think of midcentury Scandinavian toys. And their brass Lift coasters would look equally handsome under a glass of bubbly or your Pyrex casserole. Let's hear it for a kitsch-free holiday season this year!

Gnomes and snowmen in sets of three for \$44, coasters four for \$68, available from fruitsuperdesign.com.





Stack It Up

Sustainably harvested wood, VOC-free finishes, USA made; check. What else you got? Housefish's Key modular storage pieces come in maple or black walnut, with and without doors and in myriad combinations to fashion just the right storage piece for your house. The units assemble in minutes, with aluminum tenon keys holding everything together. Their Lock chairs and counter stools are even simpler: wood veneer, powder-coated steel and anodized aluminum stretchers, available in four colors. Modular storage from \$494 each piece; Lock chair \$269, stool \$319, available from housefish.com.



Retirement ranches

text Bromley Davenport

images TradeMarek Photography, Shoot2Sell & Photography4MLS

*M*ost older people looking at assisted-living options are faced with generic apartment complexes—hallways leading to elevators leading to a dining/activity room. Wouldn't it be nice if they could continue to live in a neighborhood of single-family homes, perhaps in a one-level ranch house?

That was the dream of David and Terri Green, and their son, Jeff, an architectural and interior designer. In the suburbs of Dallas-Fort Worth, the Greens have transformed three ranch houses into contemporary residential care homes with six to nine occupants apiece.

"Licensed assisted-living facilities have 24/7 credentialed caregivers, but in the setting of an existing home in an existing neighborhood," explains Jeff Green. "We have adapted the houses to the specific needs of our elderly residents and, while I have modernized each one, I have also tried to maintain the original architectural spirit of the home. Using period furnishings, lighting and accessories not only reinforces the style, but also provides a means of connecting our residents to memories of their younger days. In our homes, the midcentury modern architecture and interiors serve not only an aesthetic, but in a sense, a therapeutic purpose as well."

**The midcentury modern
architecture and interiors
serve a therapeutic purpose.**









PBH Residential Care Homes has two facilities in Grand Prairie and another in Bedford. When remodeling a private residence—often one with deferred maintenance issues—to its new function, Green may need to add on or change the floor plan.

“Because we are now required to comply with Texas Accessibility Standards, sometimes I need more square footage for my bathrooms. We install grab bars where necessary, and while every bath fits into each home’s overall color scheme, I try to make each unique,” he says.

“We replace all doors throughout the house with levered-handle, 3’-wide doors to make it easier for our residents in wheelchairs. Sometimes this requires moving walls, which we do to make sure that we have a clear path of travel throughout. In the bedrooms, we have replaced closet doors with drapery panels: This allows residents to easily access their closet without bifold doors coming off the track or having to get out of the way of a door swing. Even being able to do small tasks like using their closets alone and unencumbered goes a long way to allow someone to age with dignity.”





There are hardwood floors throughout, which Green cites as being easy to clean, conducive to wheelchair and walker usage and softer than ceramic tile should a resident fall. Instead of area rugs, they use FLOR carpet tiles, again for their cleanability and low profile. "Another issue I have to solve on each home is making the floor plan as open as possible. We do this primarily for the ease of our residents to move about, as well as allowing in natural light and as many outside views as possible," he says. "I think that most everyone would want these qualities in their own homes."



Each residence has a unique color scheme of typically three accent colors taken from midcentury palettes. Green also uses color to denote interior vs. exterior doors or activity spaces like game areas and caregiver workstations, which can be helpful to residents with memory issues or visual impairments.

"We made the choice very early on that we wanted all of our homes to have bright and cheerful colors," he says. "This helps to create a positive environment for our residents and their families, and I have seen this effect be



Each residence has a
unique color scheme
of colors
taken from
midcentury palettes.

most pronounced with children. It is a place they feel at home and love to come visit, in stark contrast to most nursing homes or other assisted-living facilities.”

The furniture selection is a mix of new and period, with functionality the primary concern. “I do my best to find period furnishings, however, when I am selecting a chair, I must ensure that it is sturdy, has arms from which a person can help push themselves up, has a high enough seat so that it is not difficult to rise from, is not too deep so that residents’ feet can comfortably touch the floor, is comfortable for brittle bones and joints as well as firm enough to provide the support they need,” Green explains. “On sofas and lounge chairs, I look for higher backs where they can rest their heads. We have several pieces of furniture that I have found on Craigslist or at garage sales that have been modified and reupholstered for our unique needs. I must meet the functional criteria while also having furniture that fits in seamlessly with our design scheme.

“The biggest challenge in renovating these homes is to incorporate aging-in-place and accessibility principles





“We wanted all of our homes to have bright and cheerful colors.”

throughout,” he continues. “Hopefully we have proven that you can achieve a high level of functionality while maintaining high design. I cannot tell you how many times one of our residents, and more often their Baby Boomer children, will be drawn to a particular piece—a hutch, pendant light, chair, etc.—which will bring to mind happy memories.

“Our homes demonstrate a perfect balance of modernizing an older residence while maintaining its architectural and design integrity. I love being able to continue the story of a home—creating a clean backdrop for future residents while maintaining some of its history as well.” ✨

For more views of PBH Residential Care Homes and Jeff Green’s projects, visit pbhhomes.com and pbhconstruction.com.



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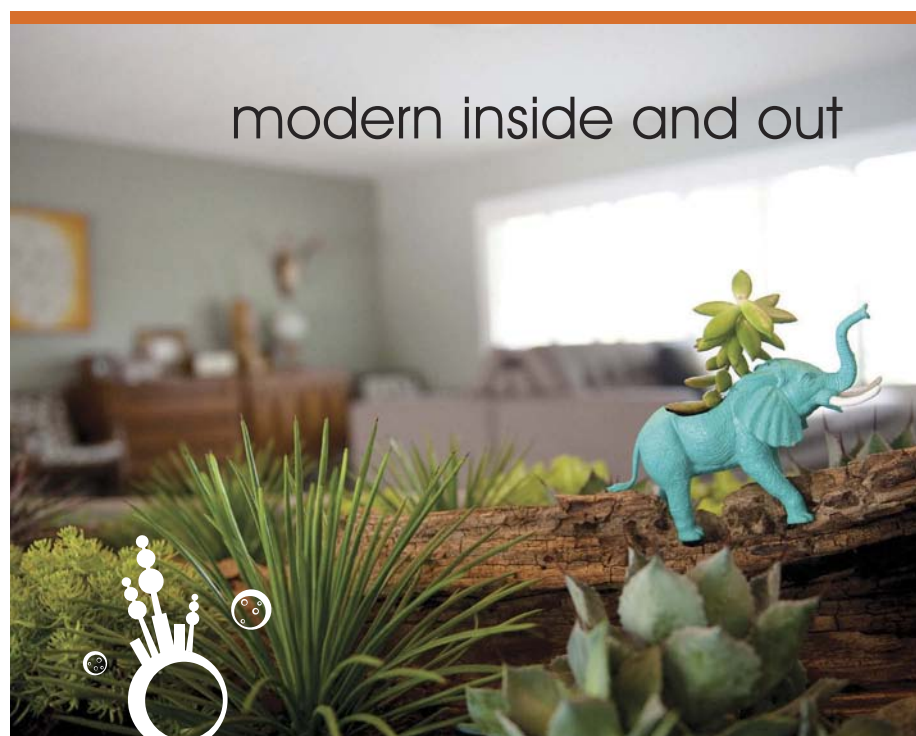
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Working for the Weekend



text Michelle Gringeri-Brown

photography Jim Brown



A couple who live in a 1920s Mediterranean in L.A.'s Hancock Park, and whose businesses have included 17th- and 18th-century European furniture reproductions and ornate drapery hardware, would seem to be an incongruous fit for a modernist home in Palm Springs. But the opportunity to put their imprimatur on a downtrodden Alexander proved seductive. "Vista Las Palmas was the premiere residential area back in the '50s. This is where lots of celebrities—Frank Sinatra, Elvis Presley, Liberace—had their winter homes," says Scott Hunt, 51, a furniture and interiors designer. "I like to call it the old Beverly Hills section. It has had a surge of renaissance in the past 15 years and is all pretty much restored now." The neighborhood has about 300 Palmer & Krisel-designed and Alexander-built homes, along with the A-frame 'Swiss Misses' attributed to Charles DuBois. Among the best-known is the P&K 'House of Tomorrow,' aka Elvis and Priscilla's honeymoon retreat, on offer for \$9.5 million last summer. But Hunt's future weekend home was far from a celebrity hideaway when he and partner Bill Maxwell bought it in 2009.



Before



Before

The exterior details in the master bedroom wing (left) match the original portion of the house nicely. Warped wooden posts were changed to metal on both the new and existing spider legs that support the patio overhang, and the exterior wall of the dining room was taken back three feet to improve circulation near the pool. The Saarinen Tulip table and chairs are vintage, but most other pieces were custom made for the home.



Virtually unrecognizable from its former state with panels that shaded the original clerestory windows, the front masonry facade has been opened up with floor-to-ceiling windows and doors, all new hardscape and plantings, and lighting from Remcraft and Lamps Plus.



Before

Grunge—and not in a good way

The desert climate, deferred maintenance and stylistically unsympathetic changes had wreaked havoc with the exterior—think Spanish-coat stucco, rotting and warped wood, peeling paint—and the interior was, well, tired would be a charitable adjective. But the couple liked the floor plan and saw that there was plenty of room to expand on the elevated corner lot.

“When I first saw the house, I did not visualize how elegantly it would turn out,” says Hunt. “The interior almost looked like a trailer, but the midcentury design was there—it was just covered up with wallpaper and carpet. I was looking for a midcentury weekend house, but as we got into it, [the project] took on its own life.”


“Bill and I planned to do it in a couple of phases: paint it, fluff it, live in it and see what we wanted to do. But we got into it and had to pull city permits, so rather than going through that twice, we decided to grin and bear it and do the whole thing at one time.”

Originally three bedrooms and two baths in about 1,800 square feet, Maxwell and Hunt added 1,100 more, including a new master suite. The dimensions of the kitchen were expanded, while the dining room footprint was contracted to improve the traffic flow



Before





Case goods and tables from the homeowners' former furniture company, Silhouette, join a vintage Dunbar sofa and two Selig Z chairs.





Before

'Kalahari 1 & 2' by Chase Langford hang on both sides of the bespoke Florence buffet, with matching custom benches below. The Laurel lamp's cord is threaded through a carefully drilled hole in the base of the vintage Saarinen table.

The tongue-and-groove ceilings and wood beams visually pierce through the walls of glass, a detail Scott Hunt worked hard to not obscure with window-blind mountings.



near the pool. All of the systems were redone, and great pains taken to make the addition seamless with the original portions and the whole house as energy efficient as possible.

Challenges to the status quo

Hunt chose to serve as general contractor and used a local draftsman to produce building plans instead of working with an architect. "I'd done renovations of apartment buildings and houses, so I had experience," he says. "Architects can be funny because they want to put their stamp on [a project] and take control of it. This

The Saarinen table is matched with walnut Surena chairs, while the credenza is a variation on the Florence buffet in the living room. Vintage Louis Poulsen PH5 pendants hang overhead and the Chase Langford oil painting is titled 'Affirmation.'





was my house and I wanted to have control of the design on it. Having experience with furniture design, I felt comfortable pursuing that."

Several nearly invisible details required plenty of time and money to finesse. Take the roof: The original was removed and reframed with 2x10s on edge, tapered so that the roof still appears flat but meets today's codes for water drainage. To achieve a nearly R-40 value, two inches of foam insulation was sprayed between the framing, followed by radiant-barrier plywood and an inch-thick foam roof. Complicating matters was that the original tongue-and-groove ceilings were 1-3/4" thick, while current code dictated 3-1/2", so the structure had to accommodate that difference. But between the roof and the new low-E, argon-filled windows and doors, the

interior will 'only' be in the low 90s when the couple arrives on a 110° day—a win in Palm Springs.

The window walls are nearly 10' tall with tight tolerances, and installing the units was a challenge. "Because it's an older house, each Fleetwood door was a separate measurement, and they butt up against the beams and ceiling. Each could be like 1/64th off, and there are 32 windows and doors in the house. Just keeping track of which one went where or a wall not being completely plumb created a high stress factor," Hunt recalls. "Fleetwood came out to assist on one door and they were terrific."

Another complexity was his desire to have the window blinds roll up into the roof cavity. "It was a major engineering feat to puncture the roof and install the soffits. I wanted the ceiling and the beams to visually pierce through the



Above and right: In the new master, the bed and nightstands are from Silhouette, as is the pedestal table. The Nelson Bubble lamps, Barcelona bench and Saarinen Model 72 chairs are all reissues, as is the Arco floor lamp. Near the door to the bath is a vintage Womb chair and ottoman, and Umbra wall-flowers were painted to complement the decor. This Langford painting is 'Kauai.'

Nelson Cigar lamps set off the headboard and nightstands in the guest bedroom, variations on a Mondrian commode produced by Silhouette. The Langford commissioned painting is titled 'Retrorama.'





Before



glass to the outside; it was probably one of the most expensive things of the whole project. That was a nightmare," he laughs.

Praise for partners

Bill Maxwell, 75, played the role of pragmatist in keeping the remodel grounded. "Bill was instrumental in this whole project. He has the passion for modern and mid-century," his partner says. "I'm not a licensed architect, and I'd come up with these out-there ideas and bounce them off Bill. It was very collaborative and he helped me stay focused."

Maxwell oversaw the manufacturing process at their to-the-trade furniture company, Silhouette (now sold), which produced many custom pieces for the weekend house. This gave them the flexibility to take a given item, such as

a buffet, and stretch it into a longer credenza with different doors and finishes. Or to interpret original mid-century pieces in a fresh wood or at a larger scale, or to design a new coffee table or console with legs inspired by a Selig Z chair.

Many of the outdoor furnishings are custom as well, from the blue cord chaise longues and the tri-shade sheltering the steps of the pool, to the built-for-lolling daybeds with white concrete bases. Hunt worked with landscape designer Gordon Kurtis on the concept for the front and back yards, which include an outdoor kitchen, multiple fire pits, desert plantings, select insets of turf and three palm trees that were craned into place over the house.

A now-friend, artist Chase Langford (whose own homes will be featured in AR shortly), contributed to the house after a fashion, too. His works now hang in the dining



room, bedrooms and living room. “I took Chase’s paintings in the living room and pulled colors out of them, but wanted to keep it a very neutral background—clean and open and airy,” Hunt says.

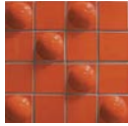
“The re-imagination of this midcentury house continues the original spider legs seamlessly into the new wing,” Langford enthused when he suggested his friends’ home for feature coverage. “The remarkable coherence of the updated and expanded version is extraordinary, making it hard to know what is new and what was added.”

“One of my favorite builders is Joseph Eichler,” says Hunt. “My vision was to interpret what Eichler would do if he had access to the wonderful materials we have available to us today.” ☼

Opposite: A wall of niches holding Per Lütken Holmegaard glass is in the foyer where a shoji screen previously stood. The decorative white screens leading to the front door are wood finished with automobile paint; their orange backlit panels glow at night (see page 51). Powder-coated aluminum dots by the front door are repeated in other colors on the back patio and in the outdoor kitchen.

Caesarstone counters, KitchenAid appliances and glass tile were some of the material selections in the new kitchen. Out the window, Greta Grossman barstools and reproduction Verner Panton chairs are lit by a Possini Sputnik fixture.

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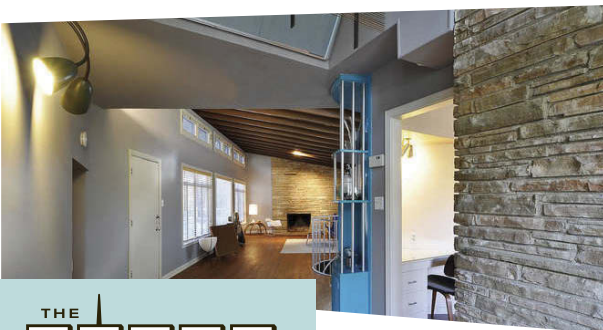
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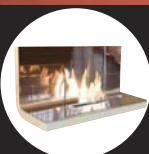
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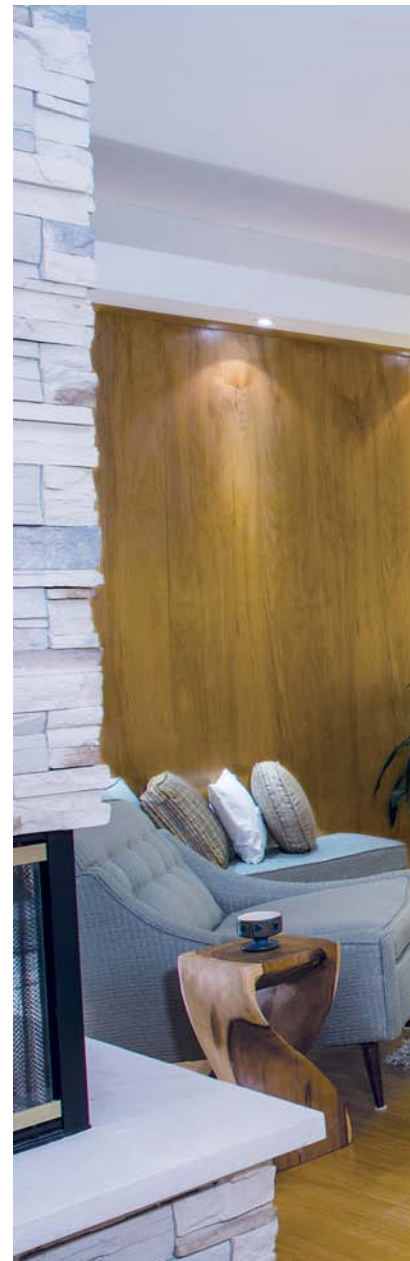


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M REALTY / OREGON BROKERS WITH A MODERN TWIST
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text Dale Herron
photography Jeff Hunter



West IS Best

Ever since I was a small boy, I have been interested in midcentury modern design.

The home I grew up in was a modest ranch in the Midwest that my mother furnished with all of the design cues of the late 1960s. The open floor plan suited our Danish modern furniture, with its simple lines, tapered legs and harvest gold, avocado green and bright orange upholstery. Ours was in sharp contrast to other homes with more defined, box-like rooms and heavy, Early American furniture and hand-carved antiques.

I remember being intrigued by futuristic design and modern conveniences. In our kitchen we had a built-in Nutone food center with myriad attachments. We used it all of the



Previous spread: The long, extremely heavy Craigslist sofa with the built-in coffee tables looks like an Adrian Pearsall, however, we have not been able to confirm this. It came with red and black faux-fur upholstery, which we replaced with a slub-texture fabric applied in a large-block, button-tufted pattern. A good friend who's a carpenter substituted walnut for the faux-wood laminate tabletops. Over the sofa is a print of Shag's *Palm Springs After Noon*, and the Danish-inspired floor and table lamps are period pieces. We were told the coffee table is a Pearsall or Craft Associates, while the blue upholstered chair was found at a local resale shop. Off camera (see page 67) in the right foreground, an Eames lounge chair sits near a period credenza with a floating top. Downlights accent the grain on the new birch wall panels.

time, from mixing a simple cake to making a big batch of ham salad using the meat grinder. We also had an intercom system throughout the house that was mostly used for playing the radio while we cleaned on Saturday mornings.

Fast-forward 40 years, and I found that I had a deep longing to experience that lifestyle again. I was very deliberate in my pursuit, researching the areas of Austin that had homes built from 1950 to 1970, then zeroing in on the neighborhoods that had the best examples of midcentury modern design. I worked closely with my good friend, Realtor Joel Hueske, scouring neighborhoods located close to the central part of town that were in my price range.

Which nest is best?

I fell in love with an area called Western Trails. When it was conceived back in the 1950s, it was considered to be on the outskirts of south Austin. To help attract potential buyers, the homes and the lots were a bit bigger. I stalked this neighborhood for about a year. At the top of my list was the home we eventually purchased in a cul-de-sac with seven other unique homes. I learned later that these houses were featured in the *Parade of Homes*, and all but one were designed and constructed by the same builder.

Several features attracted me: the low-pitched roof, clerestory windows, wood-paneled pony wall at the entrance and a floor plan with a lot of potential. The home also had more than its share of problems from years of neglect. My partner, Ted Yanecek, couldn't understand my vision of what the house could become. I, on the other hand, saw the bones and the makings of what could be a really great space. I probably would have walked away had it been any other house, but this one spoke to me with its interesting design and great location—and it was within our budget.



Finding the right contractor was key. I wanted to work with someone who appreciated midcentury modern design, who was quality- and cost-conscious and capable of both design and construction. After about six weeks of interviews with very talented contractors and my Sputnik-in-the-sky dreams being caught in the gravitational pull of my earthbound budget, I selected Michael Smeets of MJS Design Build. I had seen several of Michael's previous projects and was impressed with his design sense and high-quality work. It was a huge plus that he was dependable and easy to work with. Michael was instrumental in helping determine where to spend a little more to get the wow! factor, and where we could save a bit on a particular finish and still get a great look.

Hip deep in fun

Due to the budget, we had to sell our new, cookie-cutter tract house and move into the ranch. We squirreled away in the back bedrooms and prepared for the onslaught of the remodel. A home built in 1963 has its share of surprises and we quickly chewed up the 15% contingency fund. There were a few things that I was not quite prepared for, because sometimes you just don't know until you know. During the demo we found water and termite damage, wiring issues and some structural problems with the foundation and with the roof. These were not the areas I had planned on spending my remodeling dollars, but we needed to make the house right structurally.

Having a good sense of my design direction prior to starting the project was important. I wanted to update the home with new and modern materials while remaining true to the period and the original characteristics of the home. It would have been easy to get modern fixtures in the local big-box store, but with a little extra research I was able to find a lot of vintage or period reproductions. Obviously Atomic Ranch was an inval-

Opposite: The formal dining room is furnished with a UK-made G Plan table and chairs and a period credenza with no identifiable markings; overhead is a Pulse Sputnik light. The 1950s table lamp is from Room Service Vintage in Austin. The rug was a great find from an old retailer called Storehouse.

The former family room has a Brasilia credenza and hutch stocked with a nearly complete set of Iroquois Impromptu china in the Vision pattern, designed by Ben Seibel. The Danish dining table and chairs have original blue upholstery that coordinates with the Trans-Ocean Amalfi Circles rug and the seafoam J.C. Penney pinch-pleated drapes. The four-light pendant is from IKEA.



able tool for my own education and inspiration, as well as a tremendous resource to locate vendors that specialized in midcentury modern decor.

The design choices were fun at first, and then they became almost overwhelming. Michael created a project plan and timeline so I could anticipate what would be happening and when. That allowed me to prioritize decisions on finishes in time for orders to be made so the materials would arrive on time.

Nuts and/or bolts

We reworked the entry of the home with new solid-wood double doors. Michael and I collaborated on an applied design inspired by a front porch screen on a nearby home. Instead of creating one distinct pattern across both doors, we landed on an arrangement that we really liked and then mirrored it on the other door—less busy and more appealing. We also put in clerestory glass above the doors, replacing the trapezium-shaped molding that was originally over the entry.

Just inside the front door, a pony wall is now clad in birch, in lieu of the original paneling that had been painted. We repeated the birch accent in the formal living room, adding a soft-fit with hidden rope lighting to create a nice, warm glow. Originally there was a turned-spindle room divider separating the living and dining areas. In its stead is a three-sided gas fireplace clad in limestone-look veneer with a limestone hearth. That inspiration came from another home here in the neighborhood. We really wanted this to be a standout feature of the home and worked closely with the contractor on the design.

Ted and I decided on vertical-grain bamboo flooring throughout to create continuity and make the spaces look larger. The previously remodeled kitchen had '90s big-box cabinetry and solid-surface counters. We chose walnut flat-front KraftMaid cabinets, Silestone counters and a glass mosaic tile backsplash. After searching for a long time for lights, we kept coming back to some from IKEA. They are a great look, relatively inexpensive and create a bit of consistency with the lighting, as my tendency was to keep going for more wow! when they just needed to be part of the chorus.

After a burglary, we decided to enclose the carport and make it a functional garage while remaining true to the original spirit of the house. Our idea was to tie it to the house by matching the T1-11 siding and installing clerestory windows.





Put a bow on it

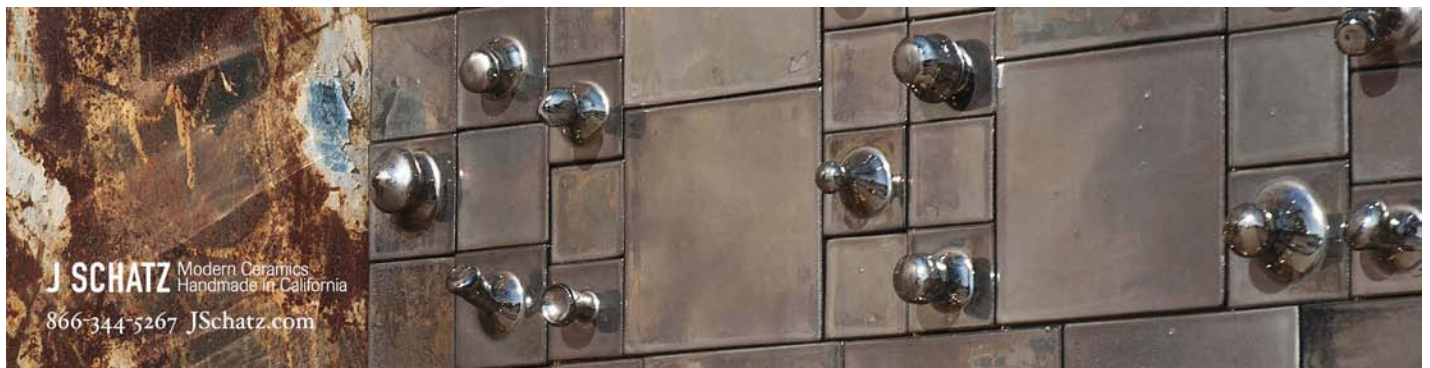
The house is now just over 2,400 square feet, with three bedrooms, two baths, a living room and two dining spaces. A covered patio off the kitchen was enclosed to become a new den. For me, the extra spaces meant more fun looking for furniture. I worked with Merri Gale Hieger, an interior designer with Retrofit Austin, to help pull the furnishings together. She is extremely knowledgeable about the midcentury modern design aesthetic and is great with color. She culled my collection of favorite pieces into cohesive, thoughtful arrangements that I really enjoy. We found that rotating collectibles and furnishings in and out of storage or from room to room can create a fresh, new look. After it was all completed and furnished, Ted really loves the place.

As an avid collector and willing student of all things MCM, I am always learning something new about a designer or an architect of the era. I'm intrigued by their influences and the inspirations for their designs. The joy for me is in the pursuit and discovery when it comes to collecting. I have determined the very important difference between liking a particular thing and loving it. There is simply not enough space or resources to acquire everything that I might like; however, I do have room for things that I love. While we have a few classic pieces, I find that I am more attracted to items that are unique representations of the era, but are perhaps not all that well known. This house is the perfect showcase for that collection. ✨

Resources page 78

Dale Herron works in human resources for a solar energy company, while Ted Yanecek is an attorney. Jeff Hunter is a portrait and event photographer; see his images at jeffhunterphotography.com.

I'm a huge fan of Eichler homes, and we found a reproduction Eichler escutcheon kit that looked fantastic and worked well with the design of the home. We replaced funky, plastic window inserts on both sides of the front doors with glass, and painted the doors a bright aqua inspired by the colors at a local hamburger joint (see details on pages 3 and 62). On the other side of the birch pony wall is the kitchen, and the living room and formal dining are straight ahead. I reconfigured a vintage swag lamp into an entry light—wanting something interesting and period for that spot.



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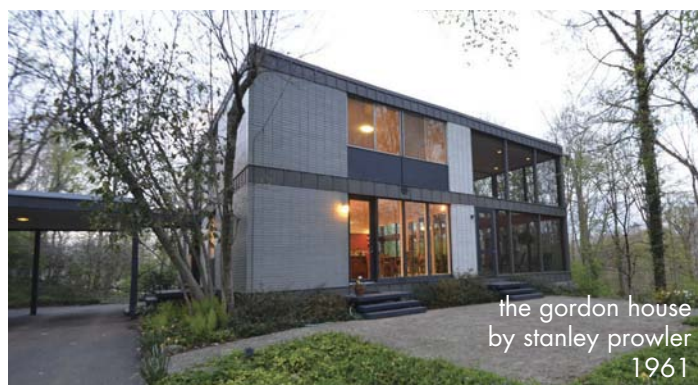
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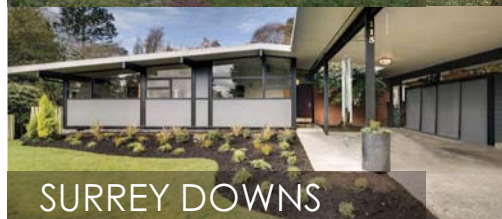
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ranchdressing

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

Q: My mother found this chair on the curb for trash day. She would love to restore it but doesn't know where to find the metal parts for the seat. The chair is very similar to the pair Eliza Stevens had in your Summer 2014 issue [pp. 67–68], but seat strapping



isn't what this chair had initially and we would prefer to go as original as possible.

Please let us know what you can find out.

Clair Rollins

A: Nice find for your mom! Here's a link that shows possibly the same armchairs and a matching couch identified as Otto Gerdau: goo.gl/3Av3Zr. Otto Gerdau Co., an importer/exporter, was established in 1872 and was located on Wall Street in NYC in 1959.

Regarding the support for the bottom cushion, we personally have a Grete Jalk sofa with the same plastic-



Jim Brown

covered coiled-spring system, this time on both the seat and back cushions. One name for it was *Experspring*, nicely illustrated here: goo.gl/pFvHM0, as well as in Kori Heuss' question on page 72. The only source I found for *Experspring* is Danish Homestore, a U.K. site: goo.gl/Kushlo.

Q: I recently acquired a midcentury BP John desk here in Florida. Online I found out it was made in Portland, but have found no other desks made by them. Have you seen this mark before? Did they make desks for government or school contracts? Do you know the value of such a piece? I paid \$50 'cause I liked the style and it was in good shape for 50 years old. Hope I got a good deal.

Edward Phillips

A: Online biographical information from his family indicates that Bruno Paul John was born in 1875 and started his own furniture plant in Portland, Ore., in



1929. He sold in 1953 and the company sold for a second time in the early '70s, moving to Southern California. In 1991 the company filed for bankruptcy.

Vintage dealer Julian Goldklang from Mid Century Mobler, who sold a pair of similar nightstands, had this to say about the value: "Other than the Oregon location, I don't know too much about BP John. All of their pieces we've had are well-built and reflect a nice, medium-range furniture line from the 1960s.

"Price, as you know, really depends on the piece (style, condition, etc.) as well as the location, but I'd say that if this desk is in great original condition with little wear, it'd probably retail between \$500 and \$800."



Q: I was at a garage sale in Miami when I found this amazing rolltop desk. The owner had it listed earlier on eBay for \$900; I purchased it for \$200. It has leather handles, cutouts with leather pouches for envelopes and paper, and a groove for pencils and pens. I could only find one reference online which was inconclusive as to the date and designer of the piece. Svend Madsen has a desk design with A-shaped sawhorse legs similar to those on my desk. I have a feeling it is something special and kind of rare; any idea of the age, designer and value?

Rich Weaver

A: We found the very same tambour desk at mod-prop.com, goo.gl/7zynRX, but the owner had no info on its provenance. Perhaps one of our collector or dealer friends can shed some light on it, as well as the following treasures waiting for Ranch IDs ... Email us at atomic-ranch.com and we'll share your expertise with fellow readers.



Q: I finally managed to find a daybed with an extended side portion. It is teak and it has a storage bag beneath the seating, accessed by lifting up the lower cushion. I'm guessing it's American- or Canadian-made, but perhaps one of your experts might recognize the origin.

Patrick Flynn

ranchdressing

Q: I have an item that I have been trying to track for five years. My hope is that one of the readers of your magazine can help me. I found this as a curb item, as-is with no markings or cushions. The couch back (which should be upholstered) swivels, and the bench seat turns into a lounge by pulling up on both ends.



I am getting ready to redo this item and want to make it as close to original as possible. Lots of online research and phone calls to furniture collectors have not solved my questions. Is there anything you can do to help? Thank you!

Kori Heuss

Q: I've been trying to remake a 1965 Del Webb home in Florida into a midcentury modern classic. I have just purchased four chairs of unknown origin—even the store selling them had no idea of their creator but the owner thought they resembled Pearsall. They are walnut and vinyl and each weighs over 20 pounds. There are no markings anywhere and the legs are bolted to the frame with metal L-brackets. Any ideas?

Carol Holm

A: We see both the similarities and differences between your chairs and Adrian Pearsall Craft Associates chairs as well as Saarinen Model 72 side chairs—particularly the shape of the void between the back and seat and the bow tie-shaped leg stretchers.



Readers: Does anyone have another suggestion?

Q: I bought a set of six side chairs at the Brimfield Antique Show some years ago; the person selling them didn't know anything about them. Manufactured by Sikes in Buffalo, N.Y., the back is in the style of the Heywood-Wakefield dogbone chair (or vice versa), and the chairs are extremely heavy and solid—18 pounds each.

Sikes manufactured furniture for banks, libraries and professional usage, so I wouldn't be surprised if these chairs were for a public library. A small Sikes brass insignia is on the seat back, and the label under the seat reads:

Pattern #2524-1/2

Wood: W

Finish: W

Since then, I have been searching online for their history, but an old company catalog came up empty, too. I paid \$120 for all six chairs; please help me in my quest to know more!

Gail Kramer





Q: I recently acquired these midcentury lamps at auction. There are no markings or stickers on the lamps. I am wondering if you or any Atomic Ranch readers would be able to identify the maker or retailer, and perhaps about what year they are from. Any information would be greatly appreciated!

Chris Rocen



Q: My wife and I recently found this table at an antique shop in Alameda, Calif. The seller called it a 'Starlight Table,' but unfortunately we were not able to find out any more about it. The top is stainless steel with a crisscross pattern of stars etched into the surface, and the corners are welded and ground smooth. The legs are cast aluminum with adjustable feet. It is a well-made table in very good vintage condition. I speculate that it may have been a limited run for a restaurant or cafe chain, or another type of business. It certainly appears to be a vintage MCM piece.



If your experts can shed some light on this table's origins and possible potential value, the info would be greatly appreciated.

Tom Hennessy

croutons

✕ Owners of midcentury cedar chests should look into replacement latches that guard against children being accidentally trapped inside. Go to goo.gl/8DNzDM for more info.

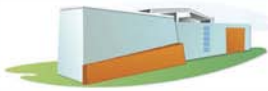
✕ In response to Bruce Ross' question in Summer 2014 'Ranch Dressing,' I believe the unmarked lamp in question is, indeed, a 1950s lamp. I think the globe has been broken and the lamp was sold as-is with a bulb and no globe. Here is a photo of the one we own.

Carl & Belinda Lewis



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.



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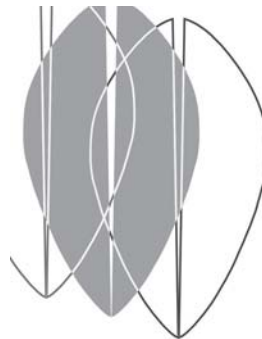
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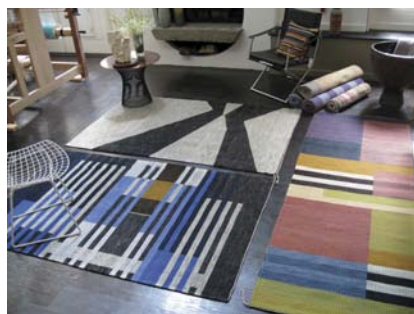
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Calder and Abstraction: From Avant-Garde to Iconic

This L.A. County Museum of Art exhibition brings 40 of Alexander Calder's mobiles and stables to the Peabody Essex Museum; pem.org.



Sunnylands

February 12–22 Palm Springs

Modernism Week

Tickets went on sale in early November, so check in soon to reserve space at your top events—many sell out. This 10th anniversary year includes architectural walking, biking and double-decker bus tours; a lecture and film series; tours of gardens and Sunnylands, the Annenberg estate; vintage travel trailers and classic cars; a gala at the Palm Springs Art Museum Architecture + Design Center; and nightly events at hotels, clubs and iconic homes. Then there's the vintage Modernism Show, the 13th through the 16th; check it all out at modernismweek.com.

February 14–May 24 Atlanta

Wifredo Lam: Imagining New Worlds



The High Museum of Art hosts an exhibition of paintings, prints and drawings by a little-known Cuban modernist painter; high.org.

Wifredo Lam,
Le Sombre Malembo,
Dieu du carrefour, 1943

February 21–22 Cincinnati

20th Century Cincinnati

Queen City Shows' 2015 midcentury modern sale at the Sharonville Convention Center will include 'The Genius of Knoll: 75 Years of Good Design,' plus 60 vintage furniture, lighting, art, accessories and clothing dealers; 20thcenturycincinnati.com.

Through February 22 Palm Springs

An Eloquent Modernist: E. Stewart Williams, Architect

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

April 10–19 Phoenix/Scottsdale

Modern Phoenix Week

A home tour in SoSco (South Scottsdale), the Modern Marketplace, lectures and parties—plus stay in a hotel with midcentury flair; get the details at modernphoenix.net.

April 24–26 Culver City

Los Angeles Modernism Show

This year's event is at 3Labs Studio with vintage dealers from far and wide; lamodernism.com.

April 25–26 Dallas

White Rock Home Tour

Midcentury and contemporary homes, including one built from 12 shipping containers, around White Rock Lake open their doors to tour goers; goo.gl/aJFtrN.

May 8–9 Portland, Ore.

Mid-Century Modern Home Tour

In 2015 the Oregon preservation group focuses on Van Evera Bailey, one of those responsible for developing the Northwest Regional style and the supervising architect on Richard Neutra's Jan de Graaff House. Driving tour on Saturday, with a lecture on Friday night; restoreoregon.org.

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Thinking Outside the (War) Box, pp. 12–21

Homeowners' shop: bitofbutter.com ✖ Kitchen cabinetry: canyoncreek.com ✖ Kitchen counters: pentalquartz.com ✖ Grey Arthur Kilim flat weave rug: jonathanadler.com ✖ Dining room chandelier: lindseyadelman.com/lighting ✖ Elephant crib: oeufnyc.com ✖ Landscape designer: Wojtek Frenchowicz, imardesign.com

My Favorite Space, pp. 28–31

Vintage furnishings: Craig Greabell, squaresville tampa.com ✖ David Call, amodernline.com ✖ Janet Howe, thepricefairy.com ✖ Jacqueline Williams, furnishmevintage.com ✖ Lynn Manos artwork: lynnmanos.com ✖ Quovis & LC6 dining tables: dwr.com ✖ Thayer Coggin sofa: yliving.com ✖ Natuzzi sofa: scandesign.com ✖ Custom coffee table: Noel Designs, Kansas City, Mo., 816.421.5252

Working For the Weekend, pp. 46–59

Scott Hunt: doylescott.com ✖ Landscape design: gordonjameskurtis.com ✖ Windows & sliding glass doors: fleetwoodusa.net ✖ Lighting: 310 Series Up/Down

Lights, remcraft.com ✖ Nelson lamps, modernica.net ✖ Possini Sputnik, eurostylelighting.com ✖ Arco floor lamp, ylighting.com ✖ Custom furnishings: silhouettefurniture.com ✖ Barcelona bench: knoll.com ✖ Verner Panton chairs, Saarinen tables & chairs: yliving.com ✖ Kitchen counters: caesarstone.com ✖ Appliances: kitchenaid.com ✖ Artwork: chaselangford.com

West is Best, pp. 62–67

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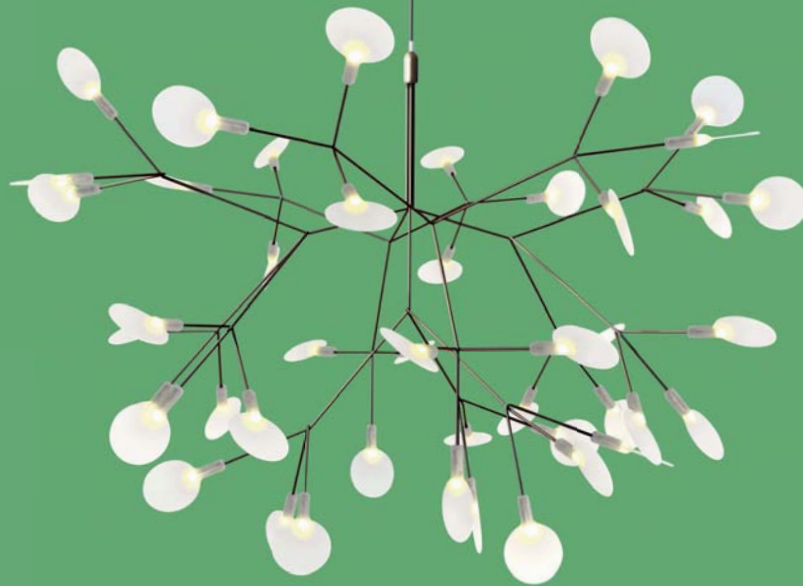
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