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One of two homes owned by an artist and his husband, this 1960s condo looks out over a golf course lake in Palm Springs. The development was designed by Richard Harrison, and this unit received an 11-week makeover to strip off the ’80s ick. “Our theory was, you should be able to put an icy glass on anything and not ruin it,” says co-owner Steve Ziel. “Palm Springs is all about fun, fun, fun…” Story page 12.
About the time you read this, the series finale of AMC’s Mad Men will have aired. Always a favorite of our readers for its provocative depiction of the ‘60s, its subtle characters, irony and humor, themes of inequality and office dynamics are set dressed with the furnishings, fashions, music, cars and vices that define, in part, the Atomic Age.

Recently, during a particularly bleak period of home entertainment, we decided to rewatch the premier season. Eight years can be a long time, but it felt fresh, funny and actually deeper, foreshadowing future character development in the very first episodes. The guileful Dick Whitman’s tragic childhood and assumption of the persona of Don Draper is laid out. Beyond his abilities as a salesman and writer, perhaps Don’s greatest talent is convincingly becoming something that he is not. Peggy Olson’s worldly awakening, coupled with her awkward navigation of a male-dominated business at great personal cost, is also compelling. Similarly, Joan Holloway develops from office hottie to smart partner, wrapped in a cover of icy control. And Betty Draper moves from clueless innocence to seething anger and resentment, collapsing her dream life. As for Roger Sterling and Pete Campbell, both come from privilege but Roger is secure, sardonic and in command, while Pete is immature, manipulative and a borderline sociopath.

The second-tier characters are almost as interesting: Harry Crane, Ken Cosgrove and Paul Kinsey huddle like a troop of immature males waiting for a silverback to fall. Sal Romano starts as a thinly veiled wag/Italian stallion but eventually is tragically discarded. A pleasant surprise was the switchboard crew, which included Flo the Progressive Insurance Lady and Kristen Schaal in episode one. While the male characters are outrageous with their unbridled plotting, drinking, smoking and carnality, the females are more nuanced and sympathetic. It may be Mad Men, but for me the women are the real heroes. 

I’m also fascinated by reading about subtle details, such as the symbolic breast-pocket squares: Bert Cooper’s five white corners announce his king status, ex-Navy man Roger’s three peaks are either the sign of a prince or harken to sails, and Don’s thin white line marks a man who is barely revealed.

While well-researched, Mad Men is the creation of Matthew Weiner, born in 1965, and his irony is consciously presented, not random. For me the funniest line of season one is from Roger: “Consider the product: he’s young, handsome, a Navy hero. Honestly, it shouldn’t be too difficult to convince America that Dick Nixon is a winner.”

If now is television’s second golden age, then Mad Men is the one series that uses midcentury to frame its discussion of life in middle class America. The dichotomy between the modern offices and the dark, conventional homes in season one plays to the era’s turbulent societal changes. I can’t imagine a reader who is unfamiliar with the show, but I’d urge everyone to rewatch and enjoy MM, perhaps with a splash of Canadian Club.

Jim Brown, Publisher
I am a big, big fan of your wonderful publication and wanted to thank you for the lovely weekends I spend reading your latest issues, snapped up quickly at my local magazine store and pored over with a hot cup of coffee. I really do adore your magazine, so please keep up the fantastic work!

I am a midcentury modern furniture and home wares collector, and I create original illustrations based on my love of this wonderful design movement. My inspirations include the surface patterns of Lucienne Day, Tammis Keefe and Vera Neumann; paintings by Lee Krasner; jazz album art of the ‘50s and ‘60s; and MCM abstract printed textiles. This is a recent illustration, created with adoration for the beautiful modernist tableware designs of Jessie Tait for Midwinter Pottery. I hope it brings a smile to your face.

Hayley Weston
Melbourne, Australia

I read Jim Brown’s comments on the T&C [Tarek and Christina El Moussa of Flip or Flop] makeover of a MCM in Long Beach [page 4, No. 44]. I, like many others, do not care for their makeovers as they are adept only at removing any original features of houses and replacing with boring, vanilla decor designed to appeal to the average, boring, vanilla consumer. However, I noted his comment about them removing time-capsule bathrooms and kitchens.

The houses you feature in your magazine never show time capsules, which is what MCM is all about. You show slick, upper-bracket contemporary redos of MCM homes, mostly in California. It is possible to redo a MCM and retain the original look; throwing in high-dollar designer furniture does not preserve the historical integrity of the building when everything else has been modified for current times.

I have a pink bathroom and an original kitchen, which still has appliances from the era (at least they look like it). Why not show some of this type of house instead of millionaire contemporary redos that say nothing for MCM except that the owners have more money than anybody else?

Marti Hall-Powers
Dissatisfied in Kansas City

I almost fell out of my chair [when I saw the Winter 2014 cover]. This picture is of my backyard pool area, which I designed in 2012. The pool has an oversized sun ledge and no deep end to keep it child-friendly. A ‘stuff hut’ holds pool toys, plus towels and chemicals and can be easily broken down and moved, as it is in the utility easement. A projector and DVD player are connected to outdoor speakers for wonderful summer outdoor movie nights.
We love our 1960s ranch home, and I’ve worked hard to make a comfortable and beautiful place to raise our family.

Cat Anderson
Houston

I felt compelled to comment on a letter to the editor accusing AR of catering to the ‘super-rich five percent of the U.S. population’ of modern home buyers [Winter 2014]. Unless this person has missed the last 9.9 years of AR magazines, I’m trying to comprehend what direction he wants you to go with your wonderful and informative mag. All of the subjects he would like to see, I feel like I read in AR past issues.

On the economic side: The lifeblood of magazines is advertisers. They would like to reach the most folks with the most money. It’s all about fixing up your home with the products shown in the mag, [whether you’re] wealthy or not.

Modernism magazine stopped because the folks that ran it (Rago Auctions) were using it as a promo tool to reach their customer base of auction buyers. I’m sure they found that it did not increase auction results, so no reason to keep it alive.

Keep up the great work providing info and sources for today’s best of yesteryear.

Gary Gand
Chicago Bauhaus and Beyond

We were thrilled to receive the Fall 2014 issue of Atomic Ranch, which prominently displayed a vintage Z chair on the cover. As our own is the pride of our mid-century furniture collection, we were interested to know whether the one in your magazine was the original Poul Jensen design with the Selig medallion under the cushion and authentic Fagas straps. Alas, there was no detailed information. In any event, No. 43 is a beautiful issue!

We are big fans and loyal customers of your advertiser Evans Family Company (fagasstraps.com), for replacement Fagas straps or the typical lawn-chair straps that we often find on vintage chairs. They have educated us on many MCM Danish imports, Selig and Kofod-Larsen items and numerous other bits of information; their service is excellent and the straps always fit perfectly.

Midcentury lives again in our house, even though the outside would give you no clue. What we have collected is not what our parents had—it is the furniture that a doctor or lawyer might own and we just aspired to. As both of us are midcentury humans, it only seems appropriate that our home reflects it.
Receive this in good health, put on a Nat King Cole album, grab a cocktail and watch the sunset!  

**Nikki Westra & Jim Doherty**  
Tucson

I went to a garage sale and found several architectural magazines and *Better Homes and Gardens* from the late 1940s and early 1950s. They are oversize and originally cost 25 cents; I paid $1 each for them. The *BH&Gs* drew me in because of the colorful ads, but they all were of white people and women in aprons in front of refrigerators.

In September 1953, *This is the House That You Asked For* [below] interviewed eight families from the Chicago area; with additional readers’ input, [their feedback helped] to design a house called the Five Star No. 2309 by architects Brooks Buderus and Gerald Siegwart. The interiors in the article were done by John M. Smyth Co.—a Chicagoland furniture store that advertised on TV.

Examples of this H-shape modern house with a slight butterfly roof were built in cities all over the country so that readers could visit. I thought this would make an interesting article if you could locate one of the model homes. There were two in Indiana and one in Arlington Heights, Ill.

**Dennis Dell**  
West Lafayette, Ind.

My partner and I bought a 1948 Herbert Burns home in Palm Springs. We have done a lot of work to bring it back to its original design with a little modern twist. And being in Palm Springs, we have stayed true to the desert landscaping.

Hope you enjoy the photo!  

**Mario Cabrera & Barry Becker**

I just picked up my second issue at a Kroger in Columbus, Ohio. I was so amazed that this publication existed and I had never run across it.

We live in a midcentury modern ranch, but not like anything I am seeing in your publication. It is pretty standard stuff, but with a very unusual round dining room on the front of the house. We bought it four years ago to serve as our retirement home. All of the original woodwork and hardwood floors were mint and we love it to death. Soon we’ll be attempting to restore the original kitchen back to its glory days from a very poorly planned and executed 1970s facelift. I will fix that!

Anyway, glad to have subscribed and looking forward to collecting the back issues and receiving the new ones.

**Thomas Warfel**

I am a subscriber and huge fan of Atomic Ranch magazine. We live in Saskatchewan, but have just recently purchased an original 1955 condo in the Las Olas area of Fort Lauderdale and are hoping to find some lovely vintage furniture to furnish it with. Could you point us in the right direction to find pieces that would

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pay homage to our fantastic new winter home?
Also, we are planning a small renovation (it has two kitchens!) because it was two units made into one, and will have original wall ovens and cooktops coming out. Is there anywhere you can recommend where we could donate these items? They are in great condition.

Colleen & Jayson Clunie

The ‘My Favorite Space’ feature on the Tampa condo in our Winter 2014 issue (available at atomic-ranch.com) addresses this very question. You can look for pieces that date from the built-year of your condo; focus on Canadian designers and manufacturers, such as Spanner, Imperial, Deilcraft or Snyder Bros.; or simply browse local antique shops to see what speaks to you stylistically: Danish modern, Heywood-Wakefield, Hollywood Regency, etc.

As for the kitchen, Habitat for Humanity ReStores (there’s one in Fort Lauderdale), salvage yards and our own Facebook groups are good ways to reach like-minded enthusiasts who could appreciate your vintage appliances.

——ar editor

Two years ago you inspired me to renovate and restore a 1,350-square-foot bungalow in Fonthill, Ontario. I was fortunate that this 1961 home had many of the original features left intact. With plenty of my own elbow grease, all trim, hardwood floors and kitchen cabinets were restored. The exterior was also kept the original colors. Your magazine helped me understand the importance of keeping true to the style of this little gem!

Lisa’s appealing all-white kitchen will be featured in an upcoming issue; stay tuned!

——ar editor

How thrilled I was to see you feature the Fiat 500 in the Spring 2015 issue! I didn’t know that the original 500 was a deliberate effort to build an affordable post-war car for the middle class at a time when few families could buy the average vehicle available. [Elsewhere], I also learned that it deliberately appealed to a new generation of first-time women drivers in Italy, who gained a certain degree of freedom and liberation from the constraints of society by owning one. I find that very interesting; despite my feminine first name, I’m a guy.

Here’s my own Fiat in front of the Arvada, Colo., skate park I helped secure funding for; enjoy!

Kim Grant
Denver

Lisa Cote
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A fascination with geography and cartography has been with artist Chase Langford since he was a boy poring over the road maps in the glove compartment of his parents’ Ford station wagon. Today he lives in a modernist home off Mulholland Drive in L.A. and also owns a postwar condo in the desert with his partner, Steve Ziel. The idea of place being specific yet fluid has colored Langford’s fine arts career as well as these two 1960s homes, which are more first cousins than twin brothers.
Seven Lakes

Five years ago the couple purchased the smallest model in a 340-unit condo development overlooking Seven Lakes Country Club in Palm Springs. Designed by Richard Harrison—who partnered with Donald Wexler from 1953 to 1961 on a variety of projects, including Royal Hawaiian Estates, the Alexander Steel Houses and El Rancho Vista Estates—the condo has two bedrooms and two baths. The units range up to three bedrooms/three baths in 2,800 square feet. “In the ’70s and ’80s some of the homeowners enclosed their courtyards and didn’t necessarily follow the architecture as Harrison designed it,” says Ziel, 58, who recently retired from a healthcare career and is now doing background acting.

“There is a new wave of people moving in who are unbotching them, if you will, bringing them back to a much more sensitive midcentury intent,” adds Langford. “There was a period where they didn’t really monitor changes and people didn’t have today’s appreciation for MCM architecture. Everyone tried to make these clean, modern spaces more fancy and ornate.”

Their unit was original-ish but uninspired, they report: Pepto-Bismol-colored walls, popcorn ceilings, ho-hum carpeting and 1980s tile. What recommended it was the location and potential.

“In our L.A. home, we have an amazing view and you become accustom to a view when you have one,” says Ziel. “Coming to Palm Springs, I didn’t want to be closed in with a walled back yard or hedges. We kept looking and looking for a vista without wires or a tree or another home blocking the view. The view out our 9.5’-high windows is grass, a small lake, then an entire mountainside and the Bob Hope house on Southridge.”

Speed Demons

To get from what they had to what they envisioned involved redoing all of the systems, along with new double-pane windows and sliding glass doors, fresh flooring and gutting the kitchen and baths. “These condos were built very solidly,” Langford, 54, says. “The floors are plumb, roofs are thicker than in an Alexander and there’s a soffit where the AC runs, so we were able to abandon the [defunct] plumbing in the concrete slab and run new pipes and electrical through [that].

“In our L.A. house, the original kitchen cabinetry from the ’60s is good quality and we respect the design of it. But here, the cabinetry was poor, so it wasn’t anything that you wanted to keep. The architecture of these condos is superb, but I think the kitchens and baths were put in by the developer and they could have been better.”

“There was the architect and then there was the builder,” Ziel adds. “Some of the original homeowners had an extra
Chase Langford’s ‘Eastlake Totems’ hangs over the Floor Plan LA sofa in the living room of the condo, dressed with silk pillows from Uzbekistan and flanked by Bertha Shaefer walnut and travertine side tables. The tall leather Bovenkamp vintage chairs are Dutch, while the Lulu swivel chairs are new. A custom rosewood and glass coffee table, based on a vintage Norwegian original, sits on a wool rug from India, while the blue vintage table lamp is from Hedge.

Opposite and above: A period rosewood credenza is set against a wall of favorite artwork by family, friends and artists like Hans Burkhardt and George Condo. Gabriel of Pasadena dinnerware is displayed on the Room Service tulip-style marble table; the Possini Euro Design lamp is from Lamps Plus.

The interior glows like a jewel box on an oasis come dusk.
The bed with built-in tables was custom made by Midcentury LA, while the vintage desk was found at JP Denmark, both in the couple’s preferred rosewood. A pair of $25 chrome and distressed-leather chairs came from a shop in Palm Springs, as did the vintage lamp. The contemporary bench is a BLVD, and the Ivory Coast and Mali masks were bought in New York. The midcentury dresser, left, was refinished in a darker stain to blend with its roommates, while the Modern Fan Co. Ball model keeps things stirred up.
window put in their kitchen or dining room, which breaks up the shadow-block walls. From the very beginning you can see the rub that existed back in the ‘60s and [the units] have more variation because of that.”

Langford’s flexible work schedule allowed him to come out four days a week to oversee the three-month project and help guard against change orders and redos. “If there was a material that was not available immediately, we moved on,” says Ziel. “And it was pretty much the bottom of the recession, so every subcontractor was available.”

Light Touch

When it came to finishes, fixtures and furnishings, the couple kept things light and unified, including ceramic tile flooring that runs from the courtyard, through the interior and out to the golf course-adjacent patio. “We chose to be pretty conservative because I wanted my art to be the most colorful thing in the room,” Langford says. “In our Mulholland house we have glass mosaic tile but didn’t want to feel like we were in the exact same house out in Palm Springs. While that would have been very appropriate for this place, and it’s very popular here, there is no material at the condo that repeats what we have in L.A.—cabinet pulls, doorknobs, you name it.

“I like light furniture, not too much mass, things that are floating,” he continues. “Our mantra is, if we buy a piece of furniture or even a shirt, we have to get rid of one. It keeps us down to a level of stuff that’s sustainable.”

“And our theory when we got this place was, you should be able to put an icy glass on anything and not ruin it,” Ziel adds. “Palm Springs is all about fun, fun, fun—put your feet up, have a martini. We come out here and don’t work, Chase doesn’t paint and we have friends over and it’s all about enjoyment.”
Valley View

The Mulholland full-time residence, which they bought in 1997, began life as a 900-square-foot, 1948 clapboard house that was remodeled in the ’60s to 2,100 square feet. The size of the living room doubled, and a dining room and master suite were added, along with a pool, patios and decks that overlook the Santa Monica mountains setting. This resulted in some quirky spaces, like a bedroom that was partially swallowed by a hallway.

“You walk in the front door and to the left are the public rooms, with the private spaces to the right; the bedroom proportions are a little odd,” admits Langford. “That suits us fine because we don’t have kids but do entertain a lot. Many of the midcentury architects did that, of course, labeling their bedrooms ‘chambers’ on their floor plans. They’d devote more space to the public rooms with the idea being the family had gathering spaces for social interaction.”

“And the indoor-outdoor vistas really connect with the public rooms,” Ziel adds. (The couple then debates if describing ‘sweeping panoramas as far as the San Jacintos in Palm Springs on clear days’ doesn’t sound far better than the more mundane ‘valley views of Encino and reflector panels at Universal Studios.’) “We often have dinner parties for eight or 10, but because of the wall of glass, you never feel [constrained] for space—it goes on and on.”

Since buying in 1997, the couple removed the irrigation system and replanted a xeriscape that primarily gets by on its own. There is no trace of the original flat-roof clapboard house from the exterior of the modernist facade.

Two vintage Selig Z chairs and a curved, reupholstered sofa pair up with walnut Dillon armchairs and a period coffee table from Lawson Fenning; the white bench was from Simplaform, since closed. The homeowners believe the hardwood floors date from the ’80s.
Langford painted ‘Atomic Klimt’ for the dining room expressly for the Atomic Ranch shoot. The rosewood table, Antica chairs and lobster ware bowls reflect the couple’s eclectic style and humor, while the Bisazza tile on the floor stands in for the original terrazzo once in this room. Previous owner Herschel Daugherty used the desk nook to make morning phone calls to the East Coast while he watched deer feed in the yard. The three-legged Andrea chair was designed by Josep Lluscà in 1990.

Between the house and the spider-legged art studio are the pool and multiple seating areas.
Celeb Central

The modernist remodel was done by Frank Burton Wilson for owner Herschel Daugherty, who directed episodes of *Gunsmoke*, *Alfred Hitchcock Presents*, *Wagon Train* and other series. When Wilson visited the house in 2002, he shared stories of Bette Davis socializing there with Daugherty, occasions that included both alcohol consumption and sometime drama.

The next owner was producer Harry Gittes—a name familiar to fans of *Chinatown*—who sold to the couple. The house has since been used for photo shoots and commercials, and they have a picture of Jack Nicholson attending a wedding there. Victor Mature, Warren Beatty, John Tesh and Connie Sellecca have visited as well, and if they haven’t already moved on, Paris Hilton and Lindsay Lohan live nearby.

Langford has a studio on the property, and the house functions as his defacto gallery, with artwork regularly rotating out the door to a buyer or show. He enjoys periodically rearranging their mix of vintage and new furniture, and suggests the same to his collectors. “After a while, take [a painting] to a spot where the light is different, or stash it away for a year. Art shouldn’t become like a dresser in a bedroom; when you revisit it after it’s been hidden or moved, you look at it with fresh eyes.”

While the condo is a bit more laid back and fun, the
Opposite and top: Views of the San Fernando Valley, the street elevation and a private patio off the master suite; outdoor furnishings include Richard Schultz by Knoll.

Above and right: A travertine-top vintage table with a woven cane lower shelf cozies up to a Lucite chair by Aaron Thomas. A replica ’50s bi-level table from Studio W Interior’s Trend House has faux stingray leather surfaces that pivot.
with the public rooms offering great indoor-outdoor vistas.
Custom cabinetry, 24” terrazzo Bisazza floor tile and Caesarstone counters and surrounds are in the updated master bath. The tub is sunken, so the curb on the shower and the bathtub surround are on the same plane.

Sliding barn doors were added during a 2002 master suite remodel; ‘Nuevo Floreana 1’ hangs on the wall and Walker Zanger mosaic tile wraps to the exterior surface.

The master bedroom platform bed and nightstands are from a since-shuttered furniture store, while the ‘Atomic Essex’ painting has sold to a collector.
houses share a refined aesthetic and an edict against clutter. When a rosewood credenza at the Palm Springs pad got the couple interested in other pieces made of the wood, that material also jumped to L.A. in the form of a custom dining table.

“The only real similarity in my mind is both homes are post and beam, and both have amazing vistas,” Langford muses. “From a finish perspective, they feel different.

“In Mulholland, you’re constantly aware of where you are: You see the views, you hear the owls and coyotes at night, hike the trails and see the deer walk by the house every day. We climb down the hillsides and work on the garden—we’re very much aware that we’re in the Santa Monica mountains. In Palm Springs, there’s egrets and herons and ducks and golfers going by—very PS—and palm trees and cactus everywhere. The local geography and ambience and spirit of the landscape need to permeate our homes.”

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See additional Chase Langford paintings at chaselangford.com. For more Palm Springs-area features, back issue no. 41 has a preservation update on El Rancho Vista Estates, no. 43 features a renovated Albert Frey-designed home, no. 44 showcases a remodel of a Palmer & Krisel residence and no. 45 has a b&w photo essay on Tamarisk Ranchos; order at atomic-ranch.com.
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Northern Exposure

text Karen Burshtein
photography Colin Faulkner
His multitasking pool house sits in a garden behind a residence in an affluent North Toronto neighborhood. The home belongs to a man who recently retired from a successful career in advertising.

Its original midcentury charms had been lost over the years under layers of renovations, and the owner—his wife was less involved in the project, which he liked to call his ‘folly’—long obsessed about restoring the pool house to its former splendor. But he also wanted to mix in some of the playfulness of today’s start-up-office designs. For him, the meeting point was the can-do confidence of both eras.

Indeed, the pool house and its owner both have stories about new beginnings built on old foundations. After retiring from his first career, he wanted to flex his creative muscles by starting a social media company and decided the pool house headquarters would be a conversation piece. He also wanted to use the space privately. It would be a guesthouse, entertainment area, dinner party venue, work studio, event space and a place for swimmers to shower and change—as well as a crash pad after the aforementioned parties.

Enter John Tong of Toronto firm +tongtong, the project’s architect, who loved the multitasking brief as well as the chance to honor the building’s heritage. Tong’s experience designing playful hotels, notably Toronto’s hipster boutique-crash pad, The Drake, came in handy.

Tong immediately saw the midcentury modern bones in the pool house, what he calls its Miesian elements. In its original incarnation the pool house had one volume. To emphasize the MCM language, he extended the roofline forward from the edge of the building, creating a brow that seems to float over the patio. Windows were pushed flush to the ceiling to articulate the plane of the roof, framing the view.

Tong also layered a cedar deck and boardwalk over the edge of the pool to change its original oval shape and proportion, exaggerating the lines of the yard and the outbuilding with it. He used the original stone fireplace and exterior stone wall as a starting point for the renovation. Here as throughout, the homage to the structure’s MCM roots integrate the more contemporary elements. A black steel bench and fireplace surround were introduced to the original form, while on the other side of the

Quick change artists: The base of the live-edge coffee table flips to bring it up to buffet height, while doors slide out from the black room divider to close off the sleeping alcove and bathroom facilities on the other side.
Opposite: A Spine lounge chair near the blue artwork and a wood version of the Stingray rocking chair, along with the Spin poufs on the deck, all came from Mjölk, which means ‘milk’ in Swedish.

Leather butterfly chairs are equally at home near the fireplace or outside by the pool.
glass wall, an exterior COR-TEN steel firebox projects from the chimney. Cedar slats now clad the facade and the concrete floor has radiant heat.

To counter the need for privacy with the idea of interior openness, Tong created a black millwork block as a dividing device. On the public side, the monolith holds IT and audiovisual equipment. In the private space is a shower and a toilet encased in vivid blue colored glass walls with a remote control privacy blind that rolls down when in use. There’s a Murphy bed with integrated side tables for storage and luggage, and trackless, cantilevered sliding doors come out of each side of the block. There’s a microwave, coffee machine and an elegant, live-edge coffee table designed by Tong and made of wood salvaged from the Panama Canal can be raised to counter height by rotating the legs, taking it to buffet level for a party. And a tangerine wall provides a bold background for the owner’s artwork.

Tong says he’s a modernist but a warm modernist—an idea that comes across as quite Canadian, and also explains a lot of the materials he used. “I’m always inspired by natural materials and their natural expression. I like wood to be wood,” he says. “And I think steel is as natural a material as can be.”

Butterfly chairs and a George Nelson bench (off camera) fulfill the midcentury criteria, but head-to-toe MCM would have rung false. Other chairs and the circle-stitched poufs are from Mjölk, a Toronto interiors store specializing in contemporary Scandinavian and Japanese design. An elegant, live-edge coffee table designed by Tong and made of wood salvaged from the Panama Canal can be raised to counter height by rotating the legs, taking it to buffet level for a party. And a tangerine wall provides a bold background for the owner’s artwork.

The finished result is a place that bridges two American eras, which are alike in many ways. It’s a place you definitely wouldn’t mind taking a meeting—or working on a tan.

Karen Burshtein is a Winnipeg-based writer who has contributed to Condé Nast Traveller, Travel+Leisure, Dwell and Azure magazines, as well as various Canadian newspapers. Colin Faulkner’s work is at faulknerphoto.com.

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Greensboro, N.C.

My beautiful brick and redwood ranch was built in 1959. From the sunroom you have a panoramic view of a koi pond lined with lilies, a slate patio and a covered porch. Interior features include a cool retro kitchen with a vintage Litton Micromatic glass-top range set against a sunburst-patterned ceramic tile backsplash. Light streams through the wall of windows in the living room, which is furnished with classic midcentury modern furniture and accessories from my 20-year collection. Viko Baumritter to Heywood Wakefield, Wegner to Eames, they have all found a place and help to make my home a marvelous midcentury modern haven.

Eric Woodard

Moon Township, Pa.

The renovation of our 1958 ranch took just over two years. In this room I wanted to create a dining-lounge atmosphere where we could comfortably entertain and still have room in the adjacent kitchen to prepare dinner. A leather sectional with new taller legs creates a booth feel, and tiger bamboo floors and the sputnik lamp set everything off. The new stone wall is one of my favorite things from the midcentury era, while the ashtrays are all from the ’60s, mostly purchased on eBay or at local retro shops. I learned a lot about the manufacturers while I was collecting them. Heck, we don’t even smoke, but they are just so iconic and colorful!

Mike & Lori Boruch

Shelburne, Vt.

We were thrilled when we found this 1960 ‘California ranch’ three years ago, since there do not seem to be very many in our part of Vermont. Reportedly it was designed by Gene Alexander for a Bell Telephone executive and his family (which might explain the fact that every room had at least four phone jacks). The sprawling house sits sideways on the one-acre lot, which doesn’t lend much in the way of street presence but is wonderful for views and privacy. It has a great open character, including a sunken living room, interior planters and two screened porches.

Jeff Hodgson & Paul Deslandes

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.
Greensboro, N.C.

Moon Township, Pa.

Shelburne, Vt.
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Atomic Ranch 46  3/25/15  8:10 PM  Page 36
‘Innovation’ and ‘style’ are just two words that describe American home goods during the postwar years. When WWII ended in the summer of 1945, not only did the country have cause to celebrate the end of a major world crisis, but we also cheered the conclusion of rationing and lack of consumer products during the Great Depression and war years. In terms of design and technology, the era’s coming domestic products would change the way Americans thought about modern living forever.

NEW DAYS

The postwar period began with soft, rounded forms on appliances, carried over from the 1940s when manufacturers put the production of just about everything on hold to support the war effort. Afterward, many appliance companies simply picked up where they left off, since it took factories several years to convert back to domestic production and consumer demand was high. This can be seen in the 1948 Kelvinator refrigerator, a great example of art deco styling. Over at GE, they borrowed heavily from the burgeoning airline industry with their Stratoliner, Stewardess and Airliner ranges that used the popular streamlined designs of the past. Manufacturers did begin to address requests for more color in their products, though. Philco introduced a range designed by industrial designer Harold Van
Doren with a choice of four accent colors—yellow, green, red and neutral taupe.

One innovative company would set a trend that was so new and different it would take other manufacturers years to compete. Los Angeles–based Thermador brilliantly separated the oven from the burners of a standard range to create the first built-in oven and cooktop in 1946. Beautifully designed in stainless steel, the units appeared solid and heavy duty, yet sophisticated. The
dials and controls, inspired by aircraft cockpit panels, were simple to read and operate. Builders and architects embraced the concept, as it gave them greater freedom to place the components anywhere in the kitchen. And the housewife loved it, since the oven could be placed at whatever level best suited her.

In the mid-'50s, Thermador introduced the Masterpiece Series with side-by-side ovens and a built-in refrigerator. The line was endorsed by famous architects such as Richard Neutra and used in some Case Study Houses. The units were also installed in Eichler homes as a sign of style and quality, and are cherished today, with many still in use.
The year 1955 can be singled out as one with incredible new design concepts. Seizing on the built-in trend, Revco Refrigeration Company of Deerfield, Mich., developed the first counter-depth refrigerator. Units were offered in any number of combinations, including freezer units. In booklets like *How to Plan a Trendsetting Kitchen*, Thermador ovens were shown alongside Revco refrigerators. The Revco units were offered in custom colors to match kitchen color schemes, along with stainless steel and copper. Their 1958 Gourmet series squared off the corners of the doors and was available with ice-makers and in undercounter applications.

**TRENDING**

The year 1955 can be singled out as one with incredible new design concepts. Seizing on the built-in trend, Revco Refrigeration Company of Deerfield, Mich., developed the first counter-depth refrigerator. Units were offered in any number of combinations, including freezer units. In booklets like *How to Plan a Trendsetting Kitchen*, Thermador ovens were shown alongside Revco refrigerators. The Revco units were offered in custom colors to match kitchen color schemes, along with stainless steel and copper. Their 1958 Gourmet series squared off the corners of the doors and was available with ice-makers and in undercounter applications.
The February 1955 issue of *Industrial Design* announced that “GE has startled the market this year with three innovations: the first kitchen package which puts everything but the refrigerator under a single counter top [sic]; a production model of its wall-hung refrigerator; and a full line of five colors for all its appliances.” To cut production costs, GE simply took their line of appliances—a new washer-dryer combination, dishwasher, garbage disposal and 24” range body—and put them together under a seamless stainless steel top with integral sink and burners. Offered in two sizes and five colors, the Kitchen Center was perfect for the booming home building industry. Developer William Levitt used them in his homes, while architect Pierre Koenig specified one for Case Study House #21 in canary yellow. The unit was priced to sell at $1,500 in 1955. After updating to new design standards, in 1957 the Kitchen Center won an award from the Industrial Designers Institute in Chicago.

The wall-hung refrigerator-freezer was, perhaps, the most stunning and marvelous new product of the mid-’50s. The rectilinear design had doors that were sealed by magnets and opened by grasping a groove along the bottom. Weighing in at 385 pounds, it was advertised to hang on the wall “like a picture” via a sturdy metal bracket. GE factory-approved installation instructions were very specific and required—at the least—two men. The refrigeration...
tor could be placed at any height, built into an alcove or installed as a room divider using a special K-shaped frame for support. Once the unit was in place, it was serviced by removing the upper panel above the three compartment doors.

The refrigerator was offered in mix-or-match colors of Canary Yellow, Turquoise Green, Petal Pink, Cadet Blue, Woodtone Brown and white. George Nelson Associates was asked to design a model kitchen for The Merchandise Mart in Chicago to show off the Kitchen Center and Wall Refrigerator-Freezer. The refrigerator won several awards and was chosen for the 1955 Museum of Modern Art Good Design exhibit at the Merchandise Mart. Those two GE units were often sold together, offering a complete, space-saving kitchen package.

OTHER INNOVATORS

Parent company American Motors Corporation introduced “a brand new concept in luxurious living,” the fabulous Foodarama by Kelvinator in 1955. This product essentially ushered in the now ubiquitous side-by-side refrigerator. It came in a variety of colors and boasted...
Domestic Goddesses:

You’ll like cooking on these wonderful Fold-Back units...

- Your one-midcentury styled Frigidaire Fold-Back Surface Units are housed in durable enamelled arms and with plastic handles. Each unit utilizes an electric and 44-Hatch  4/9/15  11:28 AM  Page 44
such features as a Breakfast Bar in the door for bacon, eggs and juice, a frost-free refrigerator, a shelf just for ice cream and a compartment to store bananas.

The same year, Frigidaire offered brilliant alternatives to the range. The Fold-Back Radiantube cooking units presented the option of pulling cooking surfaces down for meal preparation and then folding them back against the wall for additional counter space. The first series was 30” in width and only 6” deep when closed. They also put a new spin on the built-in oven with the French Door unit, which had 10”-wide doors that opened wide, allowing the cook better access. By 1957, the Fold-Back burners came in 24” and 48” models, and they and the oven became part of a new series from Frigidaire.

**GOING STRAIGHT**

In one of the most glamorous ad campaigns of 1957, the sophisticated Sheer Look by Frigidaire touted its straight lines and square corners—better to fit into a line of cabinets and achieve a built-in look. Standouts were the washer and dryer with their flat tops and “control tower,” along with the backsplash of the range, which resembled an automobile dashboard. All were offered in Frigidaire’s color line along with a new, stunning charcoal gray interior.

At the same time, GE introduced its own Straight-
Domestic Goddesses:

Line Design for refrigerators, freestanding ranges and washers and dryers. The refrigerator had revolving bins and shelves, a freezer drawer at the bottom and “not a hinge or handle … to mar its beautiful, trim new look.” By 1959 the GE built-in oven became a part of the Straight-Line Design series with stacking double ovens available as one unit.

Other companies offered their own noteworthy designs. Tappan’s Fabulous 400 range of 1958 had a control panel straight out of the jet age. The unit could be hung on the wall or set into the counter. It offered two ovens at eye level, a cutting board that would fold down out of the way and four burners in a continuous line with built-in lighting above. When not in use, the burners pushed back to allow the cutting board to become extra counter space. Two years later, Frigidaire would bring to market its similar Flair range, with glass doors that hinged upward. Its design offered flexibility— as a freestanding range with an optional metal base, or simply setting the unit
on a prebuilt cabinet. Featured in Bewitched, it is a much beloved appliance today.

The 1950s were an astonishing era for good design from just about every American company. Luckily for us, major appliance manufacturers were bold enough to step away from the earlier aesthetics, thus changing the way our kitchens looked forever. Trends changed rapidly, and shelter magazines such as Better Homes and Gardens and House Beautiful frequently featured articles on these “new, smart innovations.” And the public happily embraced each and every change.

Today, original, intact kitchens can still be found, proving their timeless appeal. There are those who will go to great lengths to preserve and protect these precious gems from becoming extinct. I enthusiastically encourage anyone who has a midcentury kitchen with any of the above mentioned design innovations to do what you can to preserve and protect the legacy handed down to us from our industrial design forefathers.

Don Emmite, ASID, is an interior designer and longtime collector of midcentury industrial design. His Houston home appeared in No. 13, and he wrote ‘Designs for Domesticity’ for No. 38, available at atomic-ranch.com. Our thanks to House Beautiful, Frigidaire, and Bosh and Siemens for permission to reproduce their vintage ephemera.
Why does this home’s interior look so good? We answer that in our 2012 book focusing on the interior details of eight ranches all across the U.S. From a split-level rambler and a typical tract home to an Eichler and a kit house, homeowners share their processes and challenges. Tips and resources for materials, furnishings, colors, window coverings and making your home reflect your personality—whether that’s DIY weekend warrior or leave it to the pros. *Atomic Ranch: Midcentury Interiors*, hardcover, 192 pp., autographed, $40

**Enjoy colorful characters and iconic desert architecture?** James Schneep’s amusing photography of Palm Springs residents in their midcentury environments offers new takes on the House of Tomorrow, Sunnylands, the Edris House, Bougain Villa, the Wexler Steel Houses and many others. From interior and exterior shots to portraits, collections and landscapes, *Palm Springs Modern Living* is a great addition to your MCM bookshelf. Hardcover, 224 pp., $40

From the team that brings you AR magazine

**Why does this home’s interior look so good?** We answer that in our 2012 book focusing on the interior details of eight ranches all across the U.S. From a split-level rambler and a typical tract home to an Eichler and a kit house, homeowners share their processes and challenges. Tips and resources for materials, furnishings, colors, window coverings and making your home reflect your personality—whether that’s DIY weekend warrior or leave it to the pros. *Atomic Ranch: Midcentury Interiors*, hardcover, 192 pp., autographed, $40

**Aren’t ranch houses boring?** From modest makeovers to higher-end transformations, our 2006 book is a great introduction to the various styles of postwar ranches and the ways their homeowners have imbued them with livable flair. Whether your taste runs to thrift store kitsch, time capsules or iconic furniture and modern kitchens, the 35 homes in this book have plenty of inspiration for your own ranch. Landscaping, decorating with collectibles, hallmarks of the style, neighborhood preservation—it’s got it all. *Atomic Ranch: Design Ideas for Stylish Ranch Homes*, hardcover, 192 pp., autographed, $40
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Grand Haven

Heaven in
With a young child and small dog, my husband and I were looking to settle in a place with good schools and plenty of outdoor living space, one that was close to Greg’s job in Zeeland, Mich. We also wanted a “Goldilocks home” we could potentially stay in forever—not too big, not too small and all on one level.

“Contemporary, open floor plan, with a large outdoor patio”—all those things were on our wish list and mentioned in a Grand Haven MLS listing. But the photos? Nothing really grabbed us.

Our Realtor had scheduled a showing at a different, much larger midcentury modern home in the area, so we added this one to the list because we were already driving out that way. As we pulled into the driveway I exclaimed, “This is the one I want; I don’t even care what the inside looks like!” I’d fallen in love with the yard, the prominent stacked-stone chimney, the recessed front door with built-in planter; it didn’t matter if we made it to the next house appointment—I was mentally already moving in.

While the interior was certainly full of projects—starting with the tiny powder room and closed-off hallway just inside the front door—we thought it had potential. There were discussions about making the kitchen larger and splitting up an odd combined bathroom/laundry room, but our biggest concern was budget: Could we afford to take this project on? And if we did, how long would it take? Well below our overall budget and much less than other MCM homes in the area, we knew we could put some money into renovations, but how much would be too much?
I’d fallen in love with the recessed front door with built-in planter.
And so it begins

In November 2012 we launched a nearly yearlong home renovation. The weekend after closing, we removed the outdated 1990s kitchen; appliances went to Habitat for Humanity and the cabinets to a family who needed them. Since Greg is willing to try any task once, and I have experience managing large design projects, we acted as our own general contractors.

Because of budget constraints and time being less of an issue, we took on many of the demo projects. We removed all of the drywall (and the one billion fasteners holding it on!), demoed the full bath and the laundry/half bath, then scraped all of the previous patchwork flooring off. The kitchen alone had three layers.

While we would have loved to do all the work ourselves, we did need assistance, especially where permits were involved. We hired a contractor, plumber, electrician, HVAC company, mason, drywall company and painter. Contractor Bruce Vugteveen’s help in converting the bathroom/laundry room back to separate spaces, replacing the windows and opening up the staircase to the basement proved invaluable.

Taking down the drywall was the most time-consuming project, but completely worth it in the end because the walls were then open for all new electrical work and appropriate insulation for our Michigan winters. In doing so, we discovered the studs in the hallway were not attached to any sort of subfloor—they had literally rotted away due to water damage.

Then we got into the mechanicals: questionable electrical work, no cooling system in place for muggy summers and DIY plumbing throughout. We worked with a great electrician who brought everything up to code and gave us new outlets where they made sense; we saved some money by installing all of the fixtures ourselves.

Previous spread: The brick, stone and concrete materials carry through from the facade and built-in planters to the interior of the 1959, 1,600-square-foot ranch. Under the eye-catching angled supports are a covered dining area and a screened porch; the vintage Malm fireplace had been painted black and was found for $150 on Craigslist.

Near the Crestview door, decorative details include a Herman Miller Eames Hang-It-All, giclee prints by Thedor, a bench designed by John Vogel and a light fixture put together on the cheap. “The Jonathan Adler sconce was purchased secondhand from Practical Props for $5 because the interior glass was broken,” Aletha VanderMaas reports. “I called up Jonathan Adler and bought a piece of glass for $35; the fixture normally retails for $225!”
Because of the moisture in Michigan, wood windows were not a long-term option for us. It was difficult for me to finally decide vinyl windows would be OK, and we then ordered the Andersen 100 Series, taupe on the outside with white inside. All original windows were replaced with the same style—fixed stayed fixed, sliding remained sliding and the crank-outs still crank out.

We also ordered all of the plumbing and lighting fixtures, and the doorknobs and hinges, searching high and low for what we thought would be close to original looking. Tile orders for the baths and kitchen were placed, and everything began to arrive at the house.

Kitchen appliances were something Greg and I debated for quite a while. Based on old photos, we knew the original homeowners had an above-the-counter fridge and freezer, and we wanted our new kitchen to be just as modern as it was in 1959. But this was no
At this point I never want to leave this house

Opposite: Craigslist Danish modern sofas and an armchair in the screened porch team with a vintage bench and fiberglass Herman Miller chairs. The acrylic globe lamp is new, as is the indoor/outdoor chevron rug from Grandin Road.

The view from the front entryway shows the new kitchen, dining area and living room with the screened porch beyond. The vintage dining set has a Meteor pendant overhead and new Herman Miller fabric on the seats, while the barstools are from Modernica. “Our Sub-Zero glass-front fridge was a Craigslist score, and our Whirlpool for IKEA wall oven and matching microwave were secondhand finds as well,” says Aletha.
time capsule, so we decided to approach the renovation and finishes as if the original owners were doing the same home today. We wanted the woodwork to look like it has always been here, but we also wanted to live in the 21st century.

Of course, Greg and I didn’t always have the same design ideas, but we were usually on close to the same page. The biggest thing I had to convince him of was the reproduction 60’s sputnik light fixture in our living room from Practical Props. After a trip to Palm Springs Modernism Week in 2013, we placed our order after I wouldn’t stop talking about how much I loved that model.

The only other thing we weren’t seeing eye-to-eye on was using a bit of graphic wallpaper in the house. I really wanted to incorporate some ’60s-inspired color and pattern into the small dining area near the front door. I showed Greg sample after sample of ones I loved, and we just didn’t agree on any of them. When he said he did not hate an Orla Kiely print, I ordered it the next day from John Lewis in the U.K. A welder by trade, Greg ended up liking it more than he anticipated; in the end it served as inspiration for the steel stair railing he fabricated, which took more than 50 tedious hours to complete.
Top: A unique zigzag brick wall in the living room sets off the Thrive sectional and ottoman, flanked by a low Lane end table and round Kroehler occasional table. A 5’ sputnik lamp from Practical Props hangs from the ceiling. Since the beams were already painted, and white conduit to new electrical boxes runs on top of the tongue-and-groove, the couple opted to paint the entire ceiling. The gray floors are maple from Lauzon, a Canadian company, and the screened porch is just through the sliding glass door.

Opposite: In the reverse living room view, vintage armchairs and a tray table form a seating group near Yorkie Olive’s perch on the ottoman. The VanderMaases painted the white concrete fireplace surround gray to match the walls, and the planter and raised hearth are the same stone as on the patio. “I heard from the first owner’s family that the stone was from Tennessee and the original owner drove a dump truck there and handpicked it himself,” Aletha relates.

Orla Kiely Multi Stem wallpaper enlivens the dining area and drove the design of the custom stair railing (page 53) fabricated by homeowner Greg VanderMaas.
End of the tunnel

Hardwood flooring went in, doors and baseboards were hung and stained, and we started moving in our furniture—mostly estate pieces we had been collecting for more than a year. The first night in our house was in August, just shy of 10 months after closing. We didn’t have bathroom sinks, a shower door, dishwasher or a mattress for our new bed, but we were so excited to be sleeping there!

Today we are still plugging away at small projects, and there have been a few roof problems leading to some rot in the tongue-and-groove wood of our eaves; those issues will need to be resolved as soon as finances allow. We spent twice as much on renovations as we initially planned, in part because we had no idea how much things cost, but also because we got into the mindset of ‘If we are truly staying here until we retire, we need solid wood doors, a tile surround in the bath, etc.’

We’ve grown to love Grand Haven, and at this point I never want to leave this house. I’ve been interviewing other owners of midcentury modern homes in the area and am putting together a home tour for this summer. I’ve cataloged at least 40 houses locally, which is a lot for our small west-Michigan town. Most are quite original and, as they pop up for sale, they seem to be snatched up quite quickly. As we all know, MCM is getting pretty popular.

We are so thankful we found this house when we did. It’s been a labor of love for our family and provided a fun project to work on together. And yes, we would do it again in a heartbeat if we found the right house!

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“We went with a very basic GE gas stovetop and simple Broan hood,” says Aletha. “Our Bosch dishwasher and Sub-Zero freezer drawers have wood panels on them so they blend right in with the cabinets and make our kitchen warmer than all stainless steel would. Bruce Vugteveen’s woodworking talent was a key component in the overall look of the kitchen and baths, as he custom made all the birch cabinets in the house.”

Chrome globe pendants hang over the white quartz kitchen counters, with their Vigo faucets and under-mount sinks.

After a career as a successful event designer, Aletha VanderMaas has launched TrueHomeRestorations.com, focusing on home renovations with appropriately curated interiors. For myriad details on her house project, visit midmodmich.com. Kristen Carlson is a lifestyle photographer in the Bay Area. You can find her on Instagram @k_holly and at kholly.com.
We wanted our new kitchen to be just as modern as it was in 1959

A vintage bookcase, IKEA wheel toy and a shag rug in son Eames’ vibrant blue bedroom.

Over the eucalyptus wood Acorn bed in the master are Jantzen sconces; the door with reeded glass inserts is from Crestview.
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SUMMER 2015 atomic ranch 61
All in One

GE’s 1950s Kitchen Centers (see page 42) are back, or at least on the horizon. Their Monoblock MicroKitchen concept offers customizable appliances in an integrated, stand-alone package designed for smaller residences. The 24”-wide drawer modules allow you to pick and choose your components—a fancy microwave, conduction oven, fridge/freezer or dishwasher—along with countertop radiant cooktops, downdraft exhaust fans and sinks with swing-away faucets. Still in R&D, price is projected at $7,000 to $15,000. See the deets at goo.gl/brjrzO.
Palm Springs Modern Living

Iconic desert architecture has gotten plenty of coverage, but this new book from Gibbs Smith has a cheeky vibe. James Schnepf’s wonderful photography captures the quirky personalities of residents in their chosen midcentury environment—Donald Wexler peering into one of his homes, Hugh Kaptur on a rock in front of a signature facade, Josh Agle by the pool en familia. William Krisel pens the foreword, and famous (and less so) characters wax philosophic about Palm Springs. $40 at gibbs-smith.com and atomic-ranch.com.
Cheryl Bowman comes by her atomic age bona fides naturally: She grew up in Richland, Wash., a stone’s throw from the Hanford nuclear site that produced plutonium for the Manhattan Project. She recalls elementary school duck-and-cover air raid drills, cheering on the Bombers basketball team and the sturdy houses neighbors would help each other build in the close-knit community.

“I remember in our home we had an alarm we had to keep in case there was a nuclear radiation leak or an accident at Hanford, a couple miles away,” she recounts. “That seems strange, now.” Today the 58-year-old mental health professional lives in Houston in another tight community, Glenbrook Valley.

Down but not out

“This house is actually the one that got me started on saving Glenbrook Valley,” says Realtor Robert Searcy about Cheryl’s modernist ranch. “I just happened to stumble across the neighborhood by accident back in 2004. I really didn’t know much about MCM back then, but when I walked into the Bowmans’ future house, I was stunned. It was listed for sale for $124,900. I wasn’t sure what I was looking at, but I knew I was looking at something good.”

The house was part of Houston’s 1954 Parade of Homes, with an original price of $35,000. Its carport included a patio, wet bar and half bath. But although the area was once prosperous, by the time Searcy discovered the tract, rundown properties and blighted thoroughfares made Glenbrook Valley a hard sell for the architects, designers and professors who would appreciate such a gem. He was unable to find a buyer for the transitional neighborhood and 1,900-square-foot ranch, which was in dusty but good, original condition.

During this same period, other midcentury homes nearby fell prey to second stories and heavy-handed remodels that destroyed their original intentions, Searcy says. The next owners of the Bowmans’ house did it no favors.
The Bowmans found a truly epic-size Valentine Seaver sectional by Kroehler and had it reupholstered for the sunken living room. Other elements include a red Adrian Pearsall chair and a photo of Natalie Wood printed on canvas. The wall looking out to the back yard is a mix of fixed panes and vintage Arcadia sliding glass doors. “Three of the five doors have the original Arcadia handles; I would like to have new ones that match the originals for the other doors, but they are copper and I would have to have someone make a mold and form the new ones,” says purist-leaning David Bowman. “I think it would be extremely expensive.”

Opposite: The modest front facade doesn’t reveal the home’s boomerang shape and wall of glass until you’re in the back yard. Off camera at the rear of the driveway is the carport, which previous owners enclosed into an apartment. The Bowmans have turned it back into a carport and are renovating its wet bar and half bath.
Frightful site

Facing foreclosure and back on the market in early 2011, the home was now in poor condition. “The carpet was soaked with dog urine, staining the original hardwood floors underneath, the cabinets were filthy and damaged, while the bathrooms were non-functional,” Cheryl recalls. “The subfloor was rotting, the sliding glass doors were jammed or broken, and the entry door had been kicked in. Water leaks caused rotting on the external wood paneling, the windows leaked or were broken and the gutters were partially gone—to name only a few of the issues. However, thanks to the solid design, quality construction and architectural integrity, the core strength and beauty of the home was still intact and able to be restored.”

David Bowman, 56, brought his own pedigree to the project. His father was an architect in Oklahoma City, and David ran a construction company prior to becoming an IT manager. Those skill sets and interests made the Bowmans a good fit for rescuing the ranch.

“Since my father is an architect and he did pass on those attributes to me, I have the ability to see what things will look like in my head. I am able to look past all the stuff that really doesn’t matter and see what the future holds,” he says.

Built to last

The house has two bedrooms and two baths, a kitchen/dining/living room, a laundry room and hallway. Other sprawling ranches in the neighborhood are closer to 4,000 square feet, Cheryl notes. The couple decided to keep as many of the original features as possible, from the custom cabinetry in the kitchen and the flip-up parquet buffet tables built into the dining room to the metal windows and ‘60s lighting.

“One of the things that we had to remove were vintage 12”x12” ceiling tiles because we wanted to add insulation,” David says. “I hope to replace those tiles at some point to make it as close to original as possible. I also need to have the...
intercom system refurbished, and then I’ll reinstall it, along with speakers, throughout the house and the carport.

The casement windows, sliding glass doors spanning the back of the home and flagstone patio were repaired and the original custom gutter system re-created. Inside, bathroom tile and fixtures, cabinets, light fixtures, hardwood floors and built-in wardrobes were also renovated. Layers of ’70s paneling, paint and wallpaper were meticulously stripped away—uncovering a vintage wallpaper mural that now hangs in the master bedroom.

“We learned an appreciation for the quality of how things were built back in the day,” Cheryl says. “Our windows had to be restored, and the company that came to do this told us that the aluminum they are made out of is so strong it is the same used for airplanes.”

“The person working on the windows said, ‘Don’t get rid of these!’ “ David adds.

“I also learned that new isn’t always the way to go,” Cheryl continues. “Initially I wanted to gut the whole kitchen and put in newer cabinets. I am so glad that my husband had the vision to want to keep the gorgeous old cabinets.”

“I really hoped to keep the kitchen more original than what we ended up with,” he says. “I wanted to either keep the original Formica or replace with new, but compromised with Cheryl on black granite countertops. My thinking behind everything we are doing to the house is to keep or bring it back to its original glory. The original cabinets are made from walnut and, for the most part, they were in good shape, so having them refinished brought them back.”

Home at last

The majority of the work was completed by September 2011, and the Bowmans were able to start enjoying their house and neighborhood—the latter, thanks in no small part to Robert Searcy’s booster efforts. “Recognizing the potential offered by the Bowmans’ house and others in Glenbrook Valley, 10 years ago I decided to take on marketing the neighborhood to midcentury enthusiasts and those wanting to be close in but who were priced out of more gentrified areas,” explains Searcy.
Since then, we have become the city’s largest postwar historic district, *This Old House* named it a top old-house neighborhood, and several local publications have dubbed it “where to live now” or a “hot market.” A management district has formed for the commercial areas [nearby], bringing tax money in to fix up the area, and Scenic Houston has a large donation for landscaping Broadway Boulevard, which bisects the neighborhood.”

“We were welcomed with a gathering at a local restaurant,” recounts Cheryl. “We love the feel of the neighborhood—the large lots, the great classic homes, the history—and the eclectic diversity found here. We’ve never been in a more social and fun neighborhood. It is a great group and a great community!”

The excavated wallpaper mural hangs in the master bedroom along with a vintage clock. “Dave enjoyed finding out about the low voltage lighting system and the panel in the bedroom that controls all the fixtures in the entire home,” says Cheryl Bowman of her husband. “It was amazing that it was so state of the art back in 1954!”

“It’s Historic

Developed between 1953 and 1962, Glenbrook Valley has approximately 1,250 homes, many of them architect-designed and custom built for Houston’s community leaders. Kansas City landscape architects Hare and Hare worked with developer Fred McManus on the design of the tract, which includes expansive lots, some of which front on a bayou.

Traditional and Colonial Revival ranches, along with midcentury modern homes, make up the neighborhood, which was designated as historic by the city of Houston in 2011. Robert Searcy maintains several sites with info on Glenbrook Valley, including glenbrookvalley.com.
Q: Our family purchased this chair in about 1956; as I recall, it was fairly expensive. My parents were very discerning in their midcentury modern furniture purchases, and apparently it won some sort of design award. I removed the worn leather cushions for the photo. Do you know who designed it?

Lawrence Burde

A: Bill Kurth (see contact info opposite) recognized your chair right away: “It’s an early Dux lounge by Folke Ohlsson, which would make its origin Sweden. I know some early Dux was made of beech. I’ve had a few pairs in the past, and typically they had a tinted lacquer finish if they were constructed of walnut or beech.”

Ohlsson’s wares were very popular and he is credited with creating the knockdown furniture concept, winning more than 30 awards, including at the Triennale Exhibit in Milan, a Good Design Show at MoMA and Sweden’s Royal Order of Vasa—or so says the Internet.

Furnishmevintage.com sold a rehabbed one with this description: “Vintage 1950s Folke Ohlsson lounge chair for Dux of Sweden. Precision styling with contoured joinery and blade-like arms. Flat bar slats form the backrest, rather than the typical spindles of Danish chairs. Well crafted, with bolts holding the seat together rather than dowels.” (Hence, the knockdown IKEA approach.)

Danishmodernla.com had two for sale in walnut that they attributed to the ’60s; another listing pegged the wood as teak. VintageSupplyLA on Etsy has a reupholstered walnut example priced at $895, while one on chairish.com is going for $1,455. All in all, a nice inheritance from your folks.

Q: I refinished this Lane dining table for a friend. It is 42” across and has room for several leaves, which have been misplaced over time. The numbers on the bottom, 222-56, were probably written at the factory—maybe a model number or a code date of manufacture. Any information on this piece of furniture would be helpful.

Charles Cox

A: A scanned Lane hangtag shared by Peter Kelley from MassModern Gallery in Boston shows this to be a 44” Perception Round Extension Table with the same model number you found under your friend’s table. It was available in oak or walnut, and the hutches, buffets and dressers from the line had a basket weave accent on the fronts.

While we couldn’t find other examples of the table currently on offer, MassModern (goo.gl/6pYtp5) pro-
Century design lexicon. Originally created for a mass-market consumer, the Lane collections of the period, including Perception, are now seeing a similar mass popularity with the resurgence of interest in good, collectible modern design.

"It looks as though your reader did a nice job on the table. I'd expect a retail price in the neighborhood of $800, with another $800 for matching chairs if all in very nice shape."

provided details from a 1959 example Kelley sold: "A classic dining table made of beautifully figured American black walnut. Expands to 56" with one removable 12" leaf and legs are removable. Walnut veneer over hardwood solids with hardwood legs; likely solids and legs are pecan."

Kelley says that very little Lane modern-era archival materials exist today. "The collections Lane developed in their modern heyday of the 1950s and 1960s are some of the most important offerings in the American 20th

Bill & Kara Kurth, facebook.com/goldenagedesign

Like Clair Rollins’ mother [No. 44, page 70], I needed to replace the coiled-spring cables on the seats of our chairs. Fortunately, I never stumbled across Experspring [goo.gl/NnQd8n]; if I had, I wouldn’t have discovered net curtain wire.” [Lightweight net or voile café curtains are threaded on this stretchy cord in the U.K., and are “great for letting light into your home whilst giving you a decent amount of privacy,” best spo-

Mike Johnson

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June 3–7   Minneapolis  
Modernism on the Prairie: Rural to Metro Regional Interpretations of the Modern Movement  
A symposium that includes tours featuring modern furniture makers and restorers, Ralph Rapson’s residential designs and Eero Saarinen’s ‘Big Blue’ IBM facility in Rochester; docomomo-us-symposium.com.

June 10–14   Fort Lauderdale  
The Hukilau  
This gathering for Polynesian Pop enthusiasts held at the Hyatt Regency Pier 66 hotel and The Mai-Kai restaurant includes live music, vendors and tiki history. From gone-but-not-forgotten midcentury attractions like POP and Disneyworld’s Polynesian Village Resort, to mixologist Jeff ‘Beachbum’ Berry’s cocktail event in a revolving ballroom, there’s a lot to enjoy; thehukilau.com.

June 25–28   Lake George, N.Y.  
Ohana Luau at the Lake  
This annual three-day event at the time-warp Tiki Resort features live music, cocktails, vendors, a traditional luau and a Polynesian show with hula and fire dancers; luauatthelake.com.

August 28–30   Denver  
Denver Modernism Show  
The 10th anniversary of this midcentury furniture, collectibles and vintage clothing bazaar has a ‘class reunion’ theme, complete with a prom night and ‘70s fashion show. Music, dancing, cocktails, cars, Charles Phoenix slideshow & lots of stuff to buy; denvermodernism.com.

The New England Shake-Up  
Bands, record hops, vintage car show, an indoor pool—sounds good, right? Rockabilly, honky-tonk and roots musicians from Sweden, Australia, the U.K. and all across the U.S. perform, while vendors fill your yen for retro apparel and all manner of midcentury kitsch. Learn to dance in the ballroom of the Sturbridge Host Hotel; newenglandshakeup.com.

September 26   Wheat Ridge, Colo.  
Mid-Century and Modern Tour  
This every-other-year tour takes you inside both midcentury and contemporary modern residences in the Denver suburb. Ticket sales likely begin in July; wheatridge2020.org.

Through September 27   NYC  
Pathmakers: Women in Art, Craft and Design, Midcentury and Today  
Women made an important contribution to postwar modernism, and a Museum of Arts and Design exhibition focuses on clay, fiber and metalwork by the likes of Edith Heath, Eva Zeisel, Karen Kames, Toshiko Takaezu, Anni Albers and others; madmuseum.org.

October 1–3   Fort Lauderdale  
Ohana Luau by the Sea  
A new sister event to the June Ohana features kitschy roadside attractions, thrifting, a Polynesian dance review, tiki artists and vendors, cocktails and likeminded friends; luaubythesea.com.
November 6–8  Sarasota, Fla. Sarasota MOD

The Sarasota Architectural Foundation’s fall event will focus on Paul Rudolph’s work, with lectures, tours and dinners at MCM homes, including the Umbrella House. A special day and night at The Ringling Museum will feature SAF’s replica of Rudolph’s Walker Guest House; sarasotamod.com.

Ongoing  New York City
Frank Stella

The Whitney Museum of American Art, in its new Renzo Piano building in the Meatpacking District as of May, celebrates the career of Frank Stella with 120 works, both well-known and rarely seen. The museum also houses the largest collection of Alexander Calder’s work in the world, some of which will be on display during the inaugural exhibition season; whitney.org.

resources

Twin Peeks, pp. 12-25

both: amsterdammodern.com  modernspaces.net  hedgepalm springs.com  jpan tik.com  studiowinteriors.com

Northern Exposure, pp. 28–33
Architect: John Tong, tongtong.co  Furnishings:
mjolk.ca  fredericia.com

Heaven in Grand Haven, pp. 50-59
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