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MIDCENTURY MARVELS

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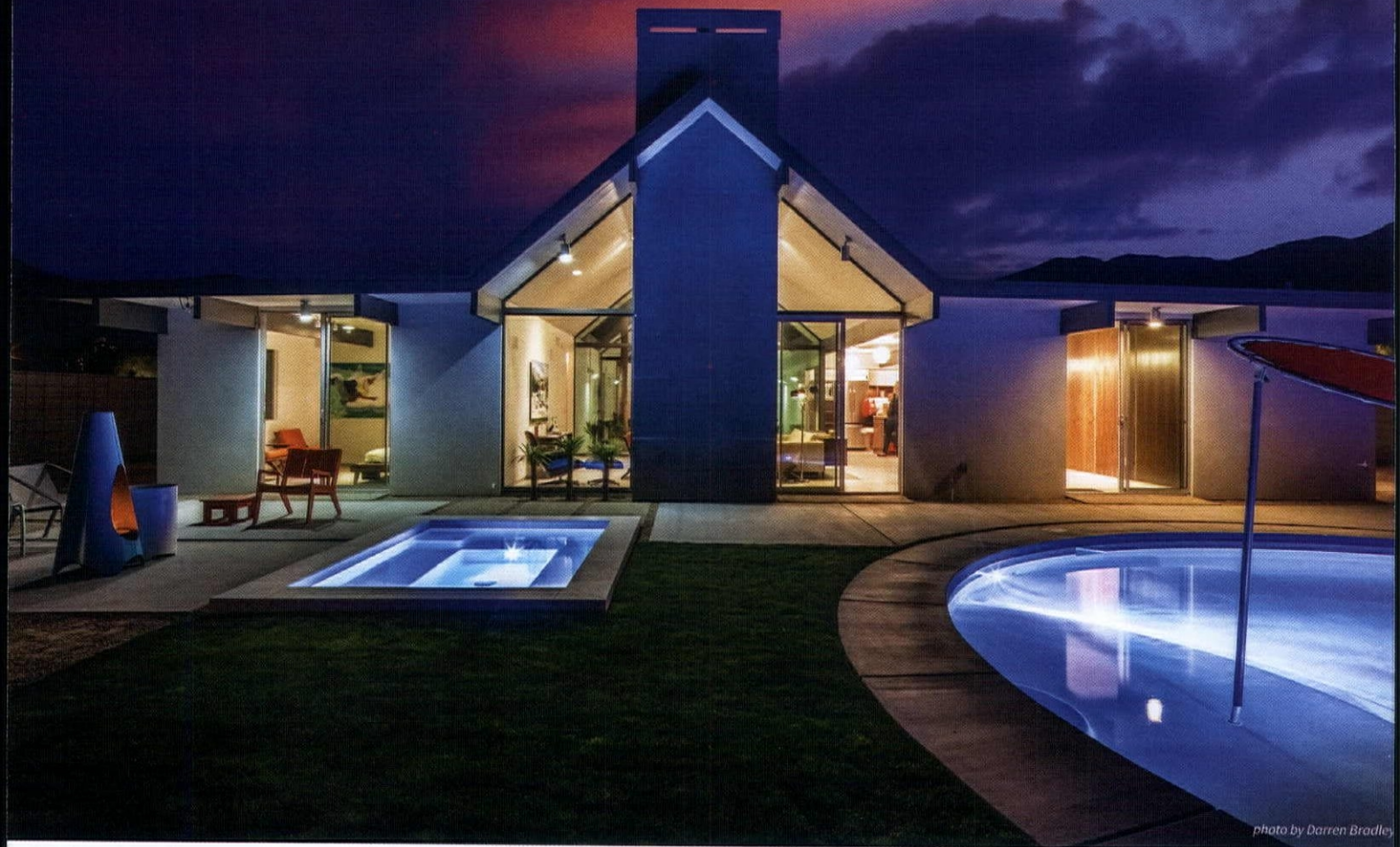


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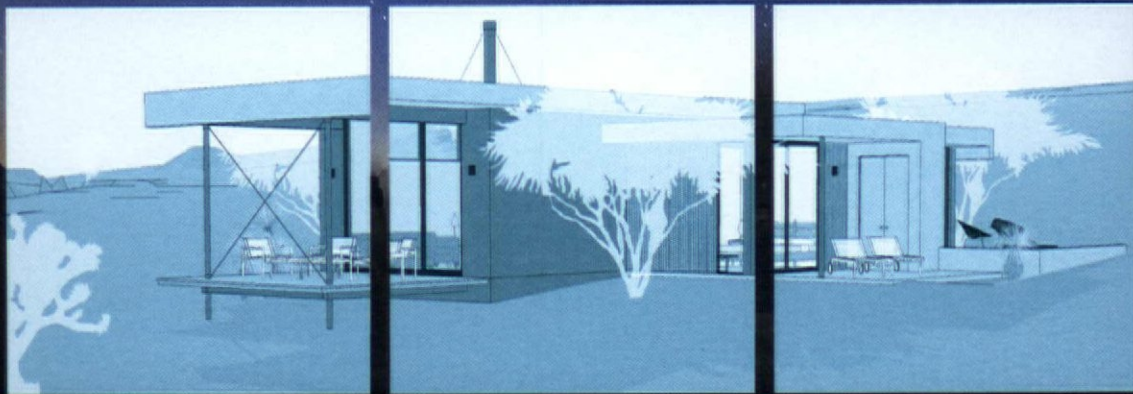
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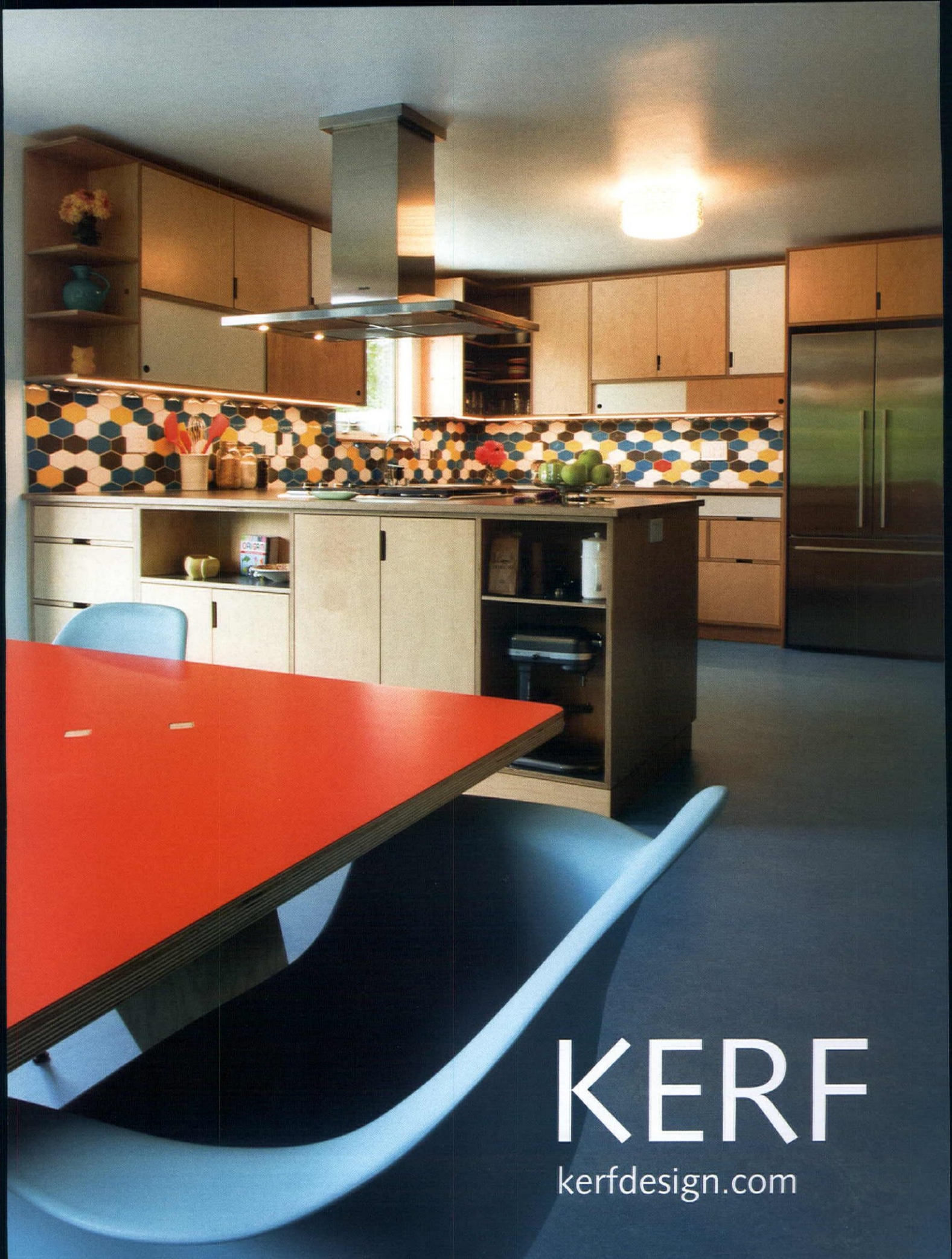
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### cover

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# editor's letter



## Why Palm Springs?

**B**eneath the shadow of the San Jacinto Mountains sprawls the California desert—home to captivating sunsets and a vibrant landscape, the desert plays host to a little city known as Palm Springs. Contrasting the rugged scenery, the town has gained increasing notoriety as a haven of Midcentury Modern architecture. With retro hues, a history with Hollywood's elite and entire neighborhoods of anything-but-ordinary-rooflines, the town has certainly earned its place as an icon.

Boasting numerous preservation groups and multiple events celebrating all things mid mod (including Modernism Week), it is safe to say that Palm Springs won't be losing its incredibly strong connection to and deep respect for midcentury architecture. With all this in mind, we chose to celebrate the vibrant design history this town has to offer.

No matter if you are an aspiring desert-dweller or simply a lover of breezeblock, this issue is for you. I've had the pleasure of visiting each of our featured homes (pages 32, 42 and 52), where I met homeowners whose passion for their midcentury homes is entirely contagious. This issue features incredible retro and retro-inspired products (pages 20 and 23) as well as an in-depth look at Blenko glass (page 62).

Let's all start the new year off with a good dose of fresh, bright inspiration—and maybe bring just a little of the desert's unique affair with midcentury style to your home.

Sarah Jane Stone

### Get connected!

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# homepage

By Jolene Nolte

When our readers send us photos of their atomic ranches, we can't help but put them on our refrigerator.

## The Aguilar home in Canton, Ohio

For Rhonda and Ken Aguilar, it was love at first Google between them and their 1959 brick ranch. Rhonda explains, "We fell in love with the interior photos of the spacious floor plan and the great windows when house hunting online." Those windows include original ones, clerestory windows that open and picture windows along the front façade. Other highlights include "a large L-shaped living/dining room and a family room with a charcoal grill and fume hood"—plus the discovery "that the architects for the home were Cox & Forsythe, who were best known as the architects for the Pro Football Hall of Fame in Canton, Ohio."

## The Valade home in Kailua, Hawaii

It was a journey for both the Valade family and the previous owners. Ruby explains, "Our family of 5 moved to Hawaii 4 years ago with basically just a suitcase each." After renting, this 1953 Hawaiian Plantation style home became available. "We bought the home last year from the family who had built it

and lived here for three generations. A bittersweet transaction. They only considered selling to our family after we submitted an essay per their request, on why we wanted to make this home ours."

Ruby enjoys "the thrill of the hunt" in the process of making it their home. Some of her favorite finds include the Kai Kristiansen wall unit and Viking glassware.

## The Lin-Tam home in Sunnyvale, California

For Pamela, finding a 1958 Eichler

was a game-changer. "I fell in love with it as soon as I walked in the front door," Pamela says. Since not many of the original features remained, Pamela says, "We kept the original layout, and I ended up designing everything myself. Our home was featured on Houzz and other publications, and I soon realized that I had found my passion. I eventually resigned from my senior project manager position at Google to pursue my dream and founded my own interior design firm, Urbanism Designs."



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THE VALADE HOME | KAILUA, HAWAII



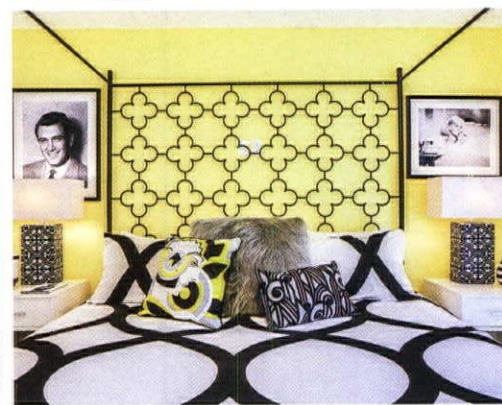
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Want your home to be featured? Send sharp photos and a couple of sentences about your ranch to [editor@atomic-ranch.com](mailto:editor@atomic-ranch.com), or share with us on Instagram using #ARhomepage.



THE LIN-TAM HOME | SUNNYVALE, CALIFORNIA



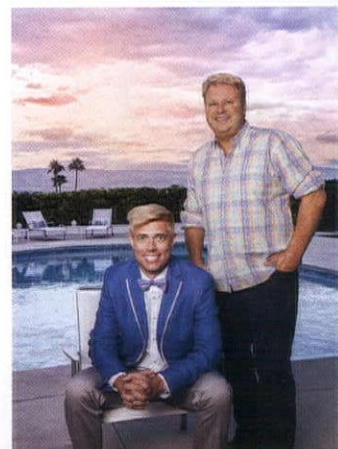


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# coolstuff

## Palm Springs Souvenirs

The desert town is known for its love of all things mid mod, so why not bring a little of its sun-soaked retro style home?

Add some Polynesian flair to your kitchen with these tiki-inspired glasses. Tiki cooler glass, \$3.99 per 20 oz. glass. (888) 794-8469 or [retail.libbey.com](http://retail.libbey.com).



Complete with four Homer Laughlin mugs, this brass and walnut coffee cup stacker is a mod host's dream. Hex coffee cup stacker, \$185. Visit [lonewa.com](http://lonewa.com).



Shake up your next drink in a retro-cool piece of barware. Pineapple cocktail shaker in gold, \$80. Visit [wandpdesign.com](http://wandpdesign.com).

This tiny owl brings a big dose of charm. Brass Baby Animal Collection Owl, \$125. (407) 401-9770 or [gildedhome.com](http://gildedhome.com).



Jazz up your outdoor entertaining with this colorful seating option. Metra motel chair by Damian Velasquez, \$595. Visit [formandconcept.center](http://formandconcept.center).



With a hexagon pillar and brass wall mounts, this handcrafted coat rack is perfect for a mod entryway. Bond coat rack, \$475. Visit [lonewa.com](http://lonewa.com).



Multi dimensional and vibrant, this hanging pendant is a showstopper. Lights Up! Deco pendant lamp, large, \$337. (877) 224-6663 or inmod.com.



Even leftovers look retro-chic in these ceramic storage containers, complete with date markers on the lids. Side Dish the Details Bowl Set in Prismatic, \$19.99. (888) 495-9699 or modcloth.com.



Designed with entertaining in mind, this Sean Dix creation is both simple and beautiful. Sean Dix cocktail cart, \$499. (877) 224-6663 or inmod.com.



## Bold Retro Hues

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2. "The Garnish Thief," 12-color silkscreen print, signed and numbered, limited edition of 200, \$399. Visit [shagthestore.com](http://shagthestore.com).
3. "Sun on White," 16" x 20" screen-print, \$35. (773) 840-2456 or [neighborlyshop.com](http://neighborlyshop.com).
4. "Palm Springs Pool," 20" x 17" giclée print, \$26. Visit [society6.com/stevnrhodes](http://society6.com/stevnrhodes).



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# periodpicks



1



2



3

## Nightcap

Finish off your bedroom with fun, funky nightstands that, old or new, offer exquisite midcentury style.

1. Pair of Lane perception end tables, \$584. Visit [etsy.com/shop/thewhitepepper](https://etsy.com/shop/thewhitepepper).
2. Lotus floating nightstand in russet brown, \$299. (888) 850-3348 or [woodwaves.com](http://woodwaves.com).
3. Handcrafted Metropole end table in maple and white, \$600 to \$750. Visit [grahamcoulsonfurniture.com](http://grahamcoulsonfurniture.com).
4. MiMo one drawer nightstand, for pricing and availability visit [copelandfurniture.com](http://copelandfurniture.com).
5. Modern Side Table Solid Wood Handmade Mid Century Modern Organic Danish Scandinavian, \$799. Visit [tyfinefurniture.com](http://tyfinefurniture.com).
  - a. Cherry
  - b. Black walnut



4



5a



5b



# periodpicks



- 6. Catalina nightstand in black walnut, for pricing and availability visit [copelandfurniture.com](http://copelandfurniture.com).
- 7. Sylvester end table, \$999. Visit [joybird.com](http://joybird.com).
- 8. Moduluxe one drawer nightstand in natural walnut, for pricing and availability visit [copelandfurniture.com](http://copelandfurniture.com).
- 9. Mersman round drum table, \$240. Visit [chairish.com](http://chairish.com).
- 10. Mid-Century Heywood Wakefield side table, \$150. Visit [chairish.com](http://chairish.com).
- 11. Pair of Brutalist-style nightstands, \$275. Visit [loveseat.com](http://loveseat.com).



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# diggingmodern

## Switch in Focus

The search began with a light switch, but it led to a warehouse full of new old stock 1960s and '70s lighting.

Written and photographed by **Chad Baker**

Upon purchasing our Midcentury Modern home, my wife Tina and I maintained a goal to keep the character as original as possible.

As we made minor cosmetic changes, we determined that we needed a light switch at the bottom of our staircase. We didn't want to lose the feel from the rest of the home's unique porcelain-based light switches—which were made in Switzerland—so the hunt began.



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Not finding a good source online, our hunt extended to a local search. Fortunately, our home's breaker box had the original electric contractor's name on the door and included their address from 1963. I looked up the address, and to my surprise, the company was still in business—or so I thought. The next day I stopped by the office. Upon entering it was apparent that the place hadn't been updated since it was built in the early '60s. There was only one guy, and he appeared to be cleaning out his office. With excitement in my voice, I introduced myself and provided

the recession. Due to lack of interest and declining profits, he made the difficult decision to sell to it to a larger electrical contractor. After sharing about the company, he provided me with the contact information of the new owners.

Several days later, I called the new owners to inquire about the unique light switches and any old inventory they might have. The new owner, Robert, was a bit interested in why I wanted old switches to put in a house. He didn't understand why we wouldn't just go to the local big box hardware store for light switches. After

another dead end; however, I tried to stay positive. Once we met at an abandoned warehouse out in the country, Robert proceeded to tell me that the warehouse was used as a storage facility to house the inventory from business he had acquired over the last few years. Robert led me to the back corner where there were, in fact, pallets of NOS lighting from Moe Lighting, Prescolite and Lightolier. Jackpot!

The corner was dimly lit, so I used my cellphone flashlight and opened each box, pulling out lights and asking prices. Robert suggested that I

"I have never heard of anyone who likes lighting from that time period, you need to come to my warehouse. **I have pallets of new old stock lighting from the '60s and '70s.**"

him with the background story. I proceeded to show him the light switch and ask if he had any hidden away in the back. He examined the switch and said, "Yes, I remember the switch, but we don't have any."

He then told me that he sold the business and needed to be out within a few weeks. I felt a bit discouraged but continued to prompt him for more information about the history of his business as well as the new owners. Turns out it had been a family owned business that, like many small businesses, was hit hard by

telling Robert all about our home in my overly excited voice he said, "I have never heard of anyone who likes lighting from that time period, you need to come to my warehouse. I have pallets of new old stock lighting from the '60s and '70s."

Obviously, upon hearing that he had pallets of new old stock (NOS), I could hardly contain my excitement. Maintaining my composure as best as possible, we scheduled an appointment for the following week. Driving to the warehouse, the thought crossed my mind that it would be

make a pile and then discuss a price. After many hours of digging in my own personal light heaven, I had a vanload of treasures. We agreed on a reasonable price, and I headed back to my own warehouse.

I couldn't wait to call Tina to tell her about the lighting. Although I didn't find any of our light switches, she was still incredibly excited to see the fresh inventory for her so-called "shopping trips" at my warehouse. As usual, she confiscated several of the finds for use in our home and the remaining inventory went up for sale. 🍀

---

Chad Baker is a knowledgeable midcentury enthusiast who has been digging for mid mod treasure for more than 10 years. As a result, he has a plethora of stories about rescuing, restoring and scoring great finds. Along with his wife Tina, Chad lives in a stunning North Carolina home that the couple has lovingly preserved. For more on Chad, visit [facebook.com/simplychad](https://facebook.com/simplychad).



# atomickitchens

## Out of the Blue

Finding inspiration in a home's Streamline Moderne design and the bold hue of the homeowners' retro-styled appliances, two architectural firms partnered to create a sleek, open kitchen with a distinctly modern edge.

By Devlin Smith

Photography courtesy of Elmira Stove Works





## DESIGN MUST-HAVES:

- Robin's egg blue retro-styled appliances that influenced the styling of the space, including the creation of the bold feature wall
- Round built-in end table that creates a breakfast/homework/hangout nook for the family and mimics the home's original curves
- Floor plan that opens the renovated kitchen onto the original sitting room space and dining room addition

# W

HEN THE OWNERS OF THIS HOME PURCHASED IT, the 1930s Streamline Moderne space was in serious need of a loving update. Wanting to maintain the character of the designated heritage house while creating an open space that met their needs, the family worked with the architectural firms of dpai architecture inc. and Toms + McNally Design to use the home's rounded form as the springboard for a full renovation that's Streamline Moderne meets Midcentury Modern.

"The renovation respects the original character and detailing of the designated heritage house while celebrating its contemporary spirit with a bold addition," says Petra Matar, an intern architect with dpai who worked on this project.

The project, which more than doubled the size of the home (adding 1,250 square feet to the home's original 1,200 square feet), included the addition of a glass-box second story that mimics the curves of the original structure and gives the updated home a retro-futuristic feature. The glass extends out to the back and down to the first floor, and provided space for a new dining room with retractable glass panels that erase the boundaries between indoors and out.

## REAL HOME 101

**TYPE OF HOME:** Designated heritage 1930s Streamline Moderne home renovated with an open floor plan and addition of glass box second story

**ARCHITECT:** Edward Glass

**BACKGROUND:** The firms dpai architecture inc. and Toms + McNally Design collaborated on the renovation, giving the home's traditional interior a modern update.

**DECORATING COLOR SCHEME:** Vibrant white contrasts the home's warm wood flooring and accents throughout. The kitchen is given a striking pop of robin's egg blue from the retro-styled appliances.

**INNOVATIVE IDEA:** The classic backsplash was expanded into an eye-catching robin's egg blue feature wall that complements the appliances and unifies the open kitchen space.

A COLLECTION OF RETRO-STYLED ELMIRA STOVE WORKS NORTHSTAR APPLIANCES THAT CAME FROM THE HOMEOWNERS' PREVIOUS HOME WAS THE STARTING POINT FOR THE DESIGN OF THIS KITCHEN. INSPIRED BY THE STRIKING ROBIN'S EGG BLUE FACADES, THE ARCHITECTS CREATED AN ACCENT WALL THAT UNIFIES THE KITCHEN SPACE AND CREATES A FOCAL POINT FROM MULTIPLE VANTAGE POINTS IN THE HOME.



"THE BANQUETTE AND ORIGINAL KITCHEN CABINETS WERE POORLY DESIGNED, POORLY CONSTRUCTED, IN POOR CONDITION, AND NOT VERY FUNCTIONAL. AFTER CONSULTATION WITH THE OWNER, IT WAS DECIDED THAT THEY WOULD BE REMOVED FROM THE PROJECT IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE THE MODERN OPEN KITCHEN THAT THEY WANTED," PETRA SAYS.




## WHAT MAKES IT MCM?

The renovation uses the home's original Streamline Moderne style as a foundation for clean midcentury details including:

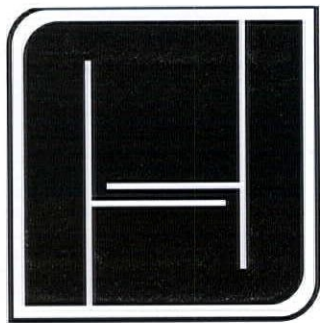
- Open floor plan connecting the once-closed-off kitchen to the sitting room and dining room
- Minimalist custom millwork in warm wood tones that contributes to the space's natural, airy feeling
- Floor-to-ceiling windows in the addition that connect the interior and exterior spaces
- Retro-styled appliances with rounded corners and clean lines that mimic the home's original 1930s architecture

The dining room flows into the reconfigured kitchen, which was once an enclosed space with traditional cabinets that were in poor condition and not functional, according to the homeowners and design team. Those cabinets, and a breakfast nook, were removed and the kitchen redesigned. "The kitchen was opened up to the living area to become a focal gathering point in the house," Petra says.

The kitchen's striking design was sparked by retro-styled Elmira Stove Works appliances the homeowners brought from their former home. White cabinetry and countertops were selected to both balance the bold robin's egg blue of the appliances and play well with the home's warm wood detailing. The appliances also informed the creation of an expanded backsplash functioning as a feature wall to help define the space within the open floor plan.

Built-ins also serve to define the kitchen space and provide the family with needed multifunctional spaces. The rounded high-top table, which mimics the curves of the home's architecture, extends from the countertops and creates a breakfast/homework/hangout nook for the family. The island, sporting curved corners that offer one more reference to the home's architecture, is a favorite gathering spot for the family and its guests. 





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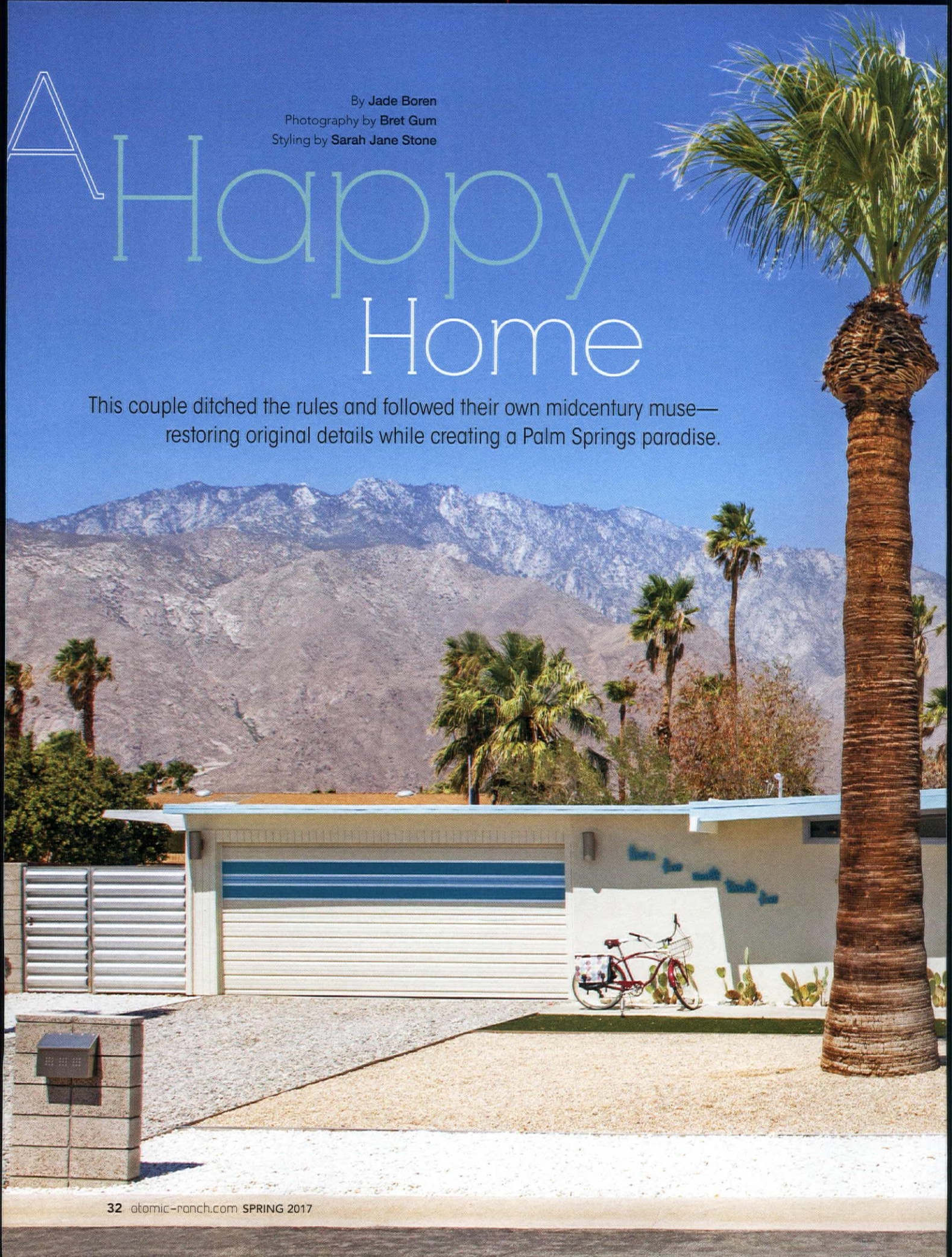




By Jade Boren  
Photography by Bret Gum  
Styling by Sarah Jane Stone

# A Happy Home

This couple ditched the rules and followed their own midcentury muse—restoring original details while creating a Palm Springs paradise.





## Having previously owned a Jersey City row house

filled with antiques and marked by a rich, deep color palette, homeowners Michael DeJong and Richard Haymes might not seem likely candidates for a cross-country move to a mid mod home. Nevertheless, in 2012, the couple did just that—settling into a classic Palm Springs abode.

“When we conceived [of] the house, we wanted things to be mostly white and light because back East our house was from 1833,” says Richard, a retired art director and former executive director of the New York City Gay and Lesbian Anti-Violence Project. Their former home was “very dark, so we were ready for a 180-degree change.”

“IT LOOKED LIKE A BRUISE,” MICHAEL SAYS WHEN DESCRIBING THE PREVIOUS EXTERIOR OF THE COUPLE’S HOME.

HE COVERED THE “SAD LOOKING” BROWNISH-PURPLE PAINT JOB WITH BUTTERCREAM AND TURQUOISE, AND SWAPPED THE BLACK GRAVEL FOR A HAPPIER “DESERT WHITE ICE” CRUSHED MARBLE. THE MOTOR INN HOWARD JOHNSON’S INSPIRED MICHAEL’S CHOICE IN THE BRIGHTER COLOR SCHEME.

### BRIGHTER FUTURE

Michael and Richard soon found themselves with a West Coast home that needed brightening—and not just for aesthetic reasons. With a dismal brown paint job and what Michael, an artist, author and photo stylist, called “horrible drapes” and “really bad wallpaper,” Michael and Richard wanted to bring the house back to its glory days. Their home is the work of Hugh Kaptur, a beloved local desert modernist architect who designed the 1959 house set amid the historic Ranch Club Estates neighborhood.





Michael and Richard wanted Kaptur's design to truly sing throughout the home. The couple went so far as to have Kaptur—who, at 85 years old, is still working—sign their closet during the filming for the documentary *Quiet Elegance: The Architecture of Hugh M. Kaptur* in 2012. The bright orange signature only marked the beginning of a process to restore the home to its original purity.

## RESTORATION REBEL

To return to the midcentury essence that Kaptur intended, Michael, the handyman of the house, set out to restore—not to remodel. “The house was in remarkably original condition,” he says. Pomona pink and yellow tile in the bathrooms as well as mint tiles and sliding pegboard cabinets in the kitchen made the house a midcentury dream.

Michael removed any midcentury-defiant features that had been implemented by previous owners like non-period wallpaper, drapes and moldings. He then skim coated, plastered, sanded and primed the house. All of these restoration moves, in addition to bringing the flooring down to raw concrete and installing wall-to-wall “kindergarten” vinyl tiles throughout, aimed to create a clean slate.

Painting a majority of the home's interior white also helped to this end—but it also fulfilled the couple's non-midcentury interests. “We like houses that look like art galleries, and art galleries are white, so we painted ours white,” Michael says.

MICHAEL AND RICHARD'S WALLETS ARE JUST AS HAPPY AS THEIR HOME. MANY OF THE PIECES ARE CRAIGSLIST STEALS: THE WHITE VINYL SECTIONAL, ARNE JACOBSEN EGG CHAIR, “SPIDER” ARC LAMP, VINTAGE SAARINEN TULIP TABLE AND AUTHENTIC NOGUCHI GLASS TABLE.







LEFT MIDDLE: A DOCUMENTARY ABOUT THE HOME'S DESIGNER, HUGH KAPTUR, WAS BEING FILMED WHEN MICHAEL AND RICHARD FIRST MOVED INTO THEIR HOME. THE DOCUMENTARIAN, BERT SIMONIS, WARNED KAPTUR THAT THE COUPLE HAD AN UNUSUAL REQUEST. KAPTUR HAD NEVER BEEN ASKED TO SIGN A HOUSE HE HAD DESIGNED, AND WAS A GREAT SPORT ABOUT DOING IT.



BELOW: MICHAEL'S ART STUDIO IS AN ENCLOSED AREA AT THE REAR OF THE GARAGE THAT OPENS UP TO THE BACKYARD. A SIMPLE CLIP-AND-CABLE SYSTEM ALLOWS HIM TO DISPLAY HIS LATEST WORKS, INCLUDING A PORTRAIT OF RICHARD HOLDING THEIR FORMER DOG (ON THE EASEL) AND A SELF-PORTRAIT OF MICHAEL HOLDING SUNFLOWERS. MICHAEL REUPHOLSTERED THE DISTRESSED HERMAN MILLER CHAIR WITH VINYL, PROVIDING A COMFORTABLE PLACE FOR HIM TO SIT AND PAINT. THE VINTAGE LUXO LAMP AND PENCIL SHARPENER WERE RICHARD'S FROM HIS NYC UNION SQUARE GRAPHIC DESIGN STUDIO.

**Kaptur**—who at 85 years old, is still working—**signed their closet** during the filming for the documentary *Quiet Elegance: The Architecture of Hugh M. Kaptur* in 2012.









**“We decided we’d collect things that just make us HAPPY, not necessarily because of their midcentury pedigree,”**  
Richard says.

OPPOSITE: MICHAEL RE-GROUTED THE ENTIRE KITCHEN AND PAINTED WHITE OVER THE DEEP, DARK GRAY WALLS AND CABINETS, BUT THE CABINETRY AND TILE COUNTERTOP ARE ORIGINAL TO THE HOUSE. POMONA TILE WORKS MANUFACTURED THE TILE, A COMMON FEATURE IN PALM SPRINGS’ HOMES FROM THE 1950S AND 1960S. THE OVEN IS ALSO AN EFFORT OF PRESERVATION—MICHAEL PICKED UP A GUTTED STAINLESS STEEL OVEN FROM A NEIGHBOR’S YARD AND COMBINED PARTS OF IT WITH THEIR 1952 WEDGEWOOD HOLLY OVEN TO CREATE WHAT THEY CALL THEIR “FRANKEN-STOVE.”



The only wall with any “color” is in the dining area and is a cream-on-white interpretation of Andy Warhol’s very colorful 1964 Flowers series that Michael hand-painted.

Michael and Richard’s attitude toward the walls also translates to the items they enclose. Retro pieces from the ‘50s and ‘60s occupy a majority of the home, but Michael and Richard do not adhere to a Midcentury Modern rulebook. Just like the couple, their home is happy-go-lucky. If they like something, they go with it. “We decided we’d collect things that just make us happy, not necessarily because of their midcentury pedigree,” Richard says.

### BENDING THE RULES

Their carefree approach in selecting the home’s furnishings also carries into how they preserve them. Michael often freshens up their décor with a can of spray paint, a move many





midcentury purists avoid. Michael acknowledges the mid mod community's disapproval over his choice to paint—but his itch to craft and fix up is too strong not to satisfy. His passion for personalizing is reflected in the paint jobs on some of the home's numerous pieces, from the perfectly white Noguchi coffee table to the palette-perfect pepper mill on the kitchen counter. "Michael thinks he can cure leprosy with spray paint," Richard jokes.

Michael and Richard don't limit color to the home's interior. Outside, buttercream walls and cheery turquoise accents exude the same peppy mood. The couple's genuine approach turned their home into the "girl next door" version of living spaces: A home whose vibrant Palm Springs orange door you would not be afraid to knock on.

"IF I SEE SOMETHING THAT'S INTERESTING AND A DIME, I BUY IT," MICHAEL SAYS, WHICH IS EXACTLY WHAT HAPPENED WHEN HE SAW VIBRANT ALBUM COVERS DURING ONE OF HIS WEEKLY THRIFTING TRIPS. YOU DON'T HAVE TO SPLURGE TO BE MIDCENTURY MODERN—THE KEY IS JUST HAVING "EXPENSIVE" STYLE, ACCORDING TO MICHAEL.





OPPOSITE: MICHAEL MADE THE CURTAINS IN THE MASTER BEDROOM AND THROUGHOUT THE HOUSE FROM HUNDREDS OF YARDS OF SWIMSUIT LINING. HE HIGHLY RECOMMENDS THE RUBBERY MATERIAL, SAYING IT NEVER WRINKLES, AND ONCE A YEAR, BECAUSE OF GRAVITY, IT REQUIRES A QUICK TRIM WITH NO HEMMING NECESSARY.



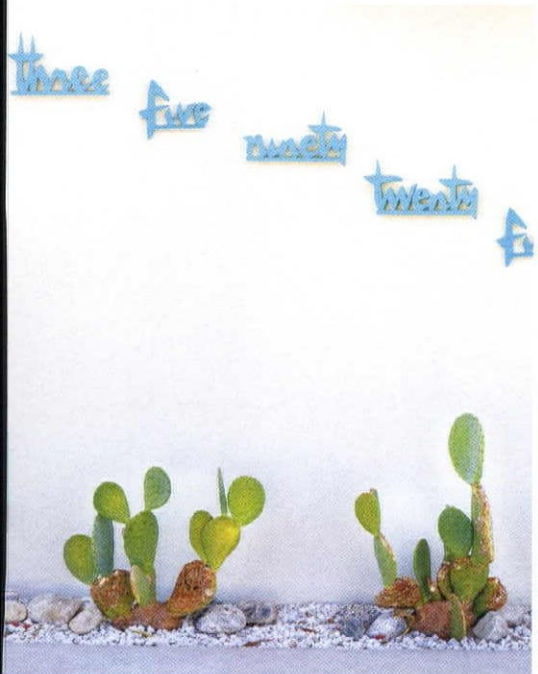
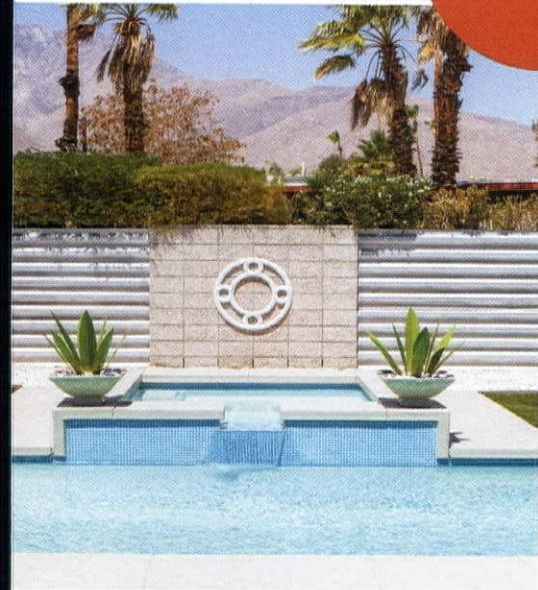
ABOVE: THE VINTAGE SHOWER STAND DOUBLES AS A MAGAZINE RACK. THE CHARMING WOVEN FRAME COMPLEMENTS THE ORIGINAL SOFT PINK TILE—AS DOES THE STARBURST TOILET PAPER HOLDER.

RIGHT: MICHAEL MADE ALL OF THE PRINTED THROW PILLOWS ON THE BED (INCLUDING THE NUMEROUS OTHERS SCATTERED THROUGHOUT THE HOUSE). HE DESIGNED MANY OF THE VIBRANT PRINTS ON SPOONFLOWER, A WEBSITE THAT IN TURN SENT MICHAEL THE FABRICS TO WORK WITH.





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"We didn't want the house to look valuable," Michael says. "We wanted it to look approachable, and we wanted it to look fun."

## PERMANENT VACATION

Michael and Richard's home now boasts an easygoing vibe, which is an intentional tribute to its history. In 1959, the basic house cost \$12,500: A price tag just affordable enough for a buyer to snag so they could happily retreat to a second home in the getaway town. Low maintenance features like wood paneling, Formica, plastic and vinyl amplified the home's vacation mood.

Having lovingly dubbed their home the "Holiday Inn," the couple sought to consider their guests when designing the more practical elements of the home. Case in point: When you're on vacation, you don't worry about ruining furniture—Michael and Richard's choice of easy to clean furnishings, including plastic furniture, eases this concern. Michael even handmade the floor-to-ceiling curtains out of swimsuit lining material so as to withstand the desert sun.

"So you have a wet bathing suit, sit on the couch," Michael says.

Taking a lighthearted, joyful approach to their home's design has worked well for Michael and Richard. Family and friends now travel the almost 3,000 miles from New York to vacation in the Palm Spring residence's guest rooms. ☯

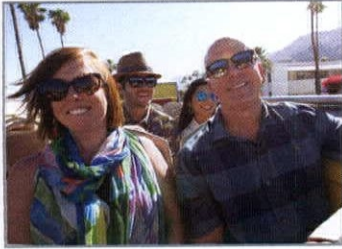
TOP LEFT: CONSCIOUS OF THE DROUGHT IN CALIFORNIA, MICHAEL AND RICHARD STRAYED FROM REAL PLANTS. WELDED IRON SCULPTURES SIT IN THE TWO PLANTERS ON THE EDGES OF THE JACUZZI, AND THE GRASS BY THE POOL IS ASTROTURF. EVEN THE BLUE FIRE PIT IS ECO-CONSCIOUS, USING TEMPERED GLASS CHIPS INSTEAD OF WOOD OR COAL TO HEAT UP.

LEFT: THE VINTAGE ADDRESS NUMBERS PARTICULARLY WOWED MICHAEL WHEN HE FIRST SAW IMAGES OF THE PALM SPRINGS HOUSE ONLINE BEFORE THEY HAD PURCHASED THE HOME. MICHAEL LOVED THE NUMBERS SO MUCH THAT HE MADE THE IMAGE HIS COMPUTER'S SCREENSAVER—UNBEKNOWNST TO HIM, RICHARD HAD DONE THE SAME.



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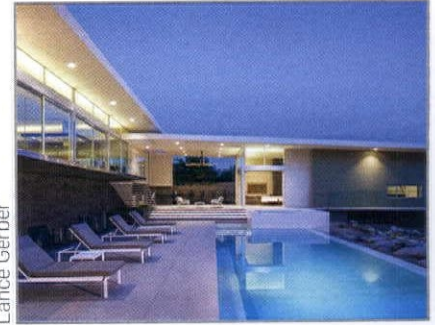
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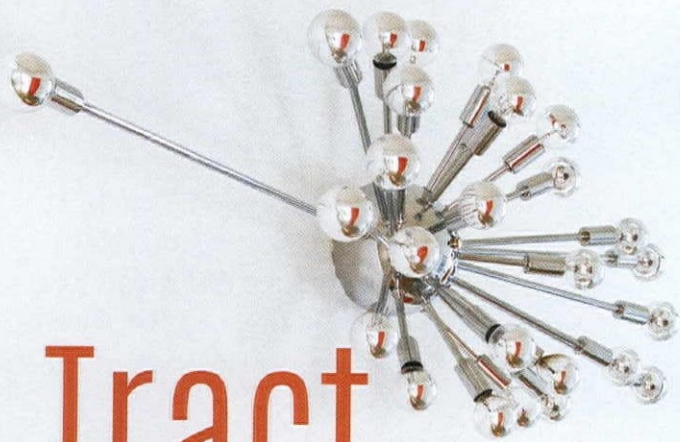
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# Tract Masterpiece

After years of working in the entertainment industry, this couple is enjoying a relaxed Palm Springs lifestyle in their midcentury gem filled with a striking mix of vintage and contemporary treasures.

By Leslie J. Thompson  
Photography by Bret Gum  
Styling by Sarah Jane Stone



LIKE MUCH OF AMERICA, PALM SPRINGS EXPERIENCED RAPID GROWTH DURING THE POST-WWII ERA, with suburban subdivisions popping up like wildflowers across the desert landscape. The once-sleepy town became a regular stomping ground for Las Vegas high rollers and Hollywood moguls looking to get away from the big city lights and enjoy a more serene lifestyle. Such was also the modern-day case with Chris Bond, who, after building a thriving career as a visual effects supervisor in the film industry, longed for a home in Palm Springs as a place to decompress.







THE BUILT-IN WET BAR IN THE LIVING ROOM WAS ORIGINAL TO THE HOME AND PROVIDES AN INVITING BACKDROP TO A REPRODUCTION BERTOIA CHAIR WITH MATCHING OTTOMAN WITH VIBRANT STRIPED UPHOLSTERY.



His search eventually led to a 1958 house with a butterfly roofline, nestled in the city's historic Twin Palms neighborhood. Although awkwardly remodeled and more than a little run down, the Modernist house fit his vision, and he purchased the property in 2008. When his new bride Merah moved in the following year, Chris had already completed the structural renovations, much to her delight.

"His intention was to take the house back to what it originally should be, but update it to make it more comfortable for modern times," says Merah. Designed by William Krisel A.I.A., the house was built by the Alexander Construction Company as the second phase of a tract housing subdivision once known as the El Camino Estates. The previous owners added two rooms off the kitchen, which Chris promptly tore down to restore the home's original 40'x40' footprint. He also removed an interior wall separating the kitchen and dining room to create an open living space.

## MODERN MATERIALS

Other renovations included stripping the linoleum tile to reveal the concrete slab underneath, and updating the bathrooms and kitchen with modern fixtures that retain a 1950s flair. "He kept the



“His intention was to take the house back to what it originally should be, but update it to make it more comfortable for modern times.”

A CUSTOM WALNUT VENEER SOFA AND CHAIR FROM FUTURAMA FLANK THE STATELY GAS FIREPLACE IN THE LIVING AREA. THE OWNERS PICKED UP THE VINTAGE FILING CABINET (NOW USED AS THEIR ENTERTAINMENT CENTER) BY GEORGE NELSON FOR HERMAN MILLER AT THE PALM SPRINGS SHOP RETROSPECTIVE, WHILE A GLASS PLATNER COFFEE TABLE FROM DESIGN WITHIN REACH PROVIDES AMPLE SPACE FOR COCKTAILS.







**BELOW LEFT:** OWNER CHRIS BOND REPLACED BUILT-IN CABINETS IN THE HALLWAY OUTSIDE THE MASTER WITH A 5X5 LAXSERIES BOOKCASE TO HOUSE HIS COLLECTION OF COMICS, DESIGN BOOKS, DVDS AND VINYL RECORDS.

[kitchen] cabinets, but he replaced all the countertops with Caesarstone," Merah says of her husband's handiwork, adding that the cabinets are from Ikea.

With a meticulous attention to detail, Chris designed the waterfall counter to match the thickness of the ceiling beams and chose a period blue Porcelanosa ceramic tile for the kitchen and master bath. He also used Caesarstone on the living room wet bar, which is original to the house, and for the custom-built outdoor bar on the back patio.

The floor-to-ceiling windows and high tongue-and-groove ceilings were left untouched, both preserving the home's light and airy feeling and maximizing the views of the San Jacinto Mountains.

#### DIFFERENT POINTS OF VIEW

Each of the homes in the subdivision is angled to highlight the landscape and create a seamless transition between the interior and the natural surroundings, Merah



THREE VAPOR ACRYLIC BARSTOOLS FROM CB2 DRAW ATTENTION TO THE WHITE CAESARSTONE WATERFALL COUNTER, DESIGNED BY CHRIS BOND, WHICH MIRRORS THE LINES OF THE ORIGINAL CEILING BEAMS. THE BLUE PORCELANOSA CERAMIC TILE FROM MODERN HOME DESIGN SHOWROOM WAS ALSO USED IN THE MASTER BATH.







A LAXSERIES BY MASH STUDIOS PLATFORM BED AND SIDE TABLES ARE ACCENTUATED BY VINTAGE LAMPS IN THE MASTER BEDROOM. THE BRIGHT YELLOW TRINA TURK IKAT DUVET ADDS A WHIMSICAL POP OF COLOR.

notes. The different rooflines also give the impression that each residence was a custom home, even though they all share the same floor plan, part of Krisel's ingenious design scheme. In addition, the architect avoided the use of soffits, but instead ran all electrical and plumbing under the concrete pad. "That allows for the walls to go straight up to the ceiling with the

butterfly roof. You don't have to have anything in the way—you can have just walls of glass," she says.

Merah helped Chris choose interior furnishings that mirror the home's midcentury roots and played an integral role in upgrades to the home's exterior. "The landscaping when he bought the house was pretty much a pile of gray rocks," she says. The couple removed the





IKEA NO LONGER MAKES THE MAGNIFICENT ROUND BED IN THE SECOND GUEST BEDROOM, WHICH ALSO FEATURES A LAXSERIES WALL MOUNTED DESK BY MASH STUDIOS AND TWO REPRODUCTION BERTOIA WIRE CHAIRS. WITH PRINTS OF SEAN CONNERY AND ARTWORK BY SHAG ADORNING THE WALLS, THE SPACE HAS BEEN DUBBED "THE BOND ROOM."



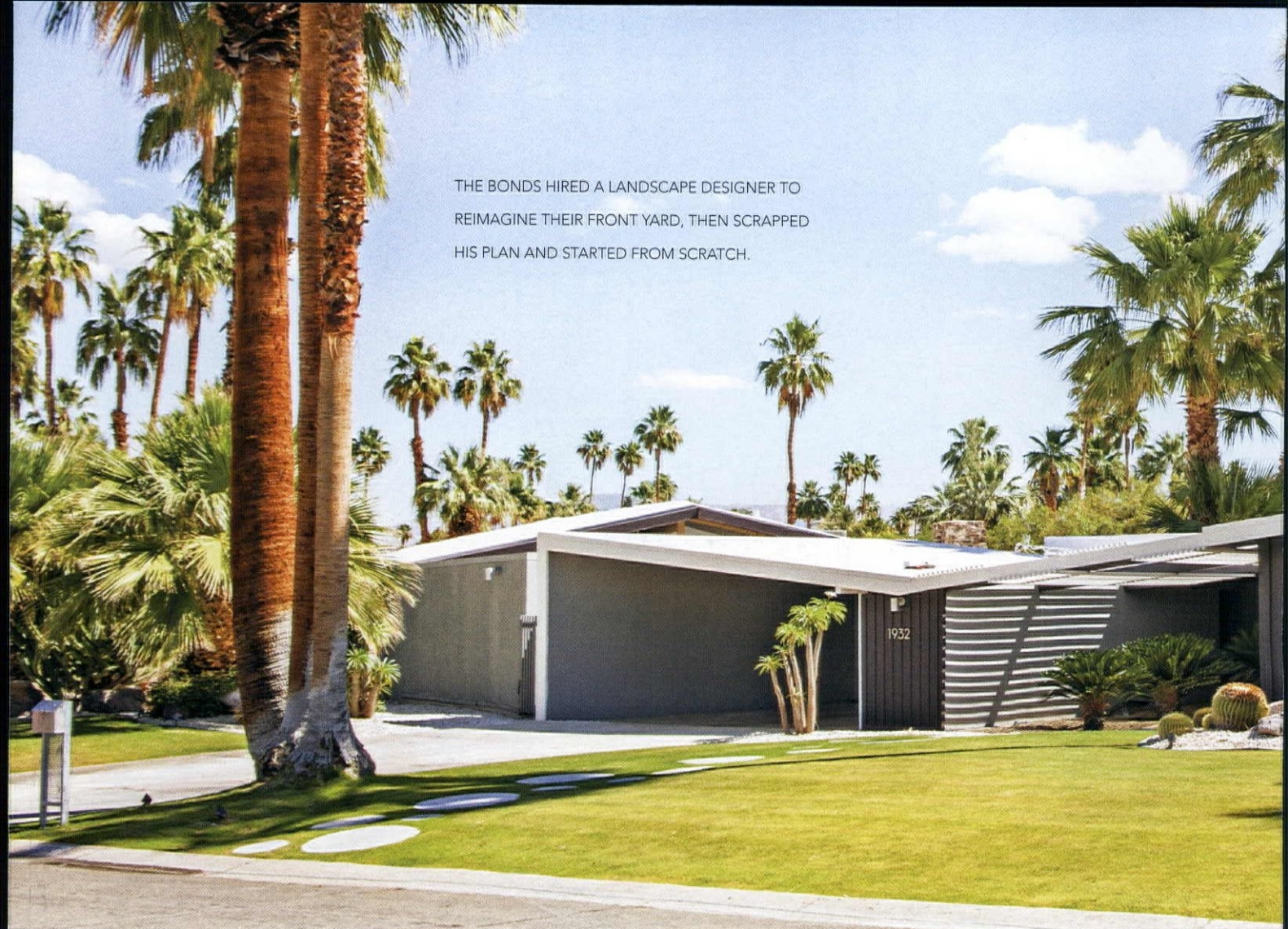
A PAIR OF MISS K TABLE LAMPS DESIGNED BY PHILIPPE STARCK ARE PERCHED ATOP EACH LEVEL OF AN IKEA BUNK BED IN THE KID-FRIENDLY GUEST ROOM. COMMEMORATIVE DISNEYLAND PRINTS BY SHAG (JOSH AGLE) REINFORCE THE MARRIAGE OF VINTAGE AND MODERN IN THE DÉCOR.



THE MASTER BATH FEATURES SOOTHING BLUE PORCELANOSA CERAMIC TILE AND A CONTEMPORARY WOOD VENEER VANITY, ALL FROM MODERN HOME DESIGN SHOWROOM. THE SHOWER BOASTS IPE WOOD FLOORING AND A SLIDING DOOR BY 3FORM MADE OF WILLOW BRANCHES AND PRESSED GLASS.



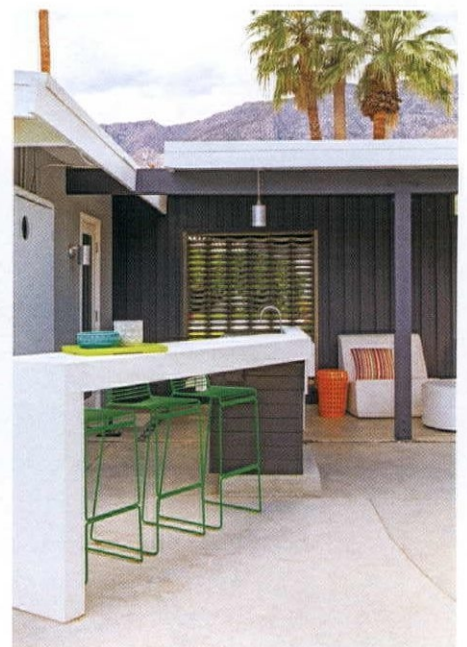
THE BONDS HIRED A LANDSCAPE DESIGNER TO REIMAGINE THEIR FRONT YARD, THEN SCRAPPED HIS PLAN AND STARTED FROM SCRATCH.



The home is **one of the few unaltered examples of Krisel's extended butterfly roof** in the Twin Palms subdivision.

**RIGHT:** CHRIS BOND DESIGNED THE CAESARSTONE CUSTOM OUTDOOR KITCHEN AND BAR ON THE BACK PATIO, SETTING THE COUNTER AT THE SAME QUIRKY ANGLE AS THE PROPERTY LINE. OVERSIZED LA-FÊTE CHAIRS COVERED IN WHITE MARINE VINYL ARE BOTH PRACTICAL AND COMFORTABLE FOR LOUNGING BY THE POOL.

**FAR RIGHT:** BARREL CACTI LINE THE ENTRYWAY TO THE FIERY ORANGE FRONT DOOR. THE OWNERS ADDED WHITE WOODEN SLATS TO THE EXISTING BEAMS CONNECTING THE HOUSE AND CARPORT, ACCENTUATING THE SLOPING ROOF.







rubble and several palm trees, placing large circular pavers across the lawn and barrel cacti leading to the entryway. They also added slats to accentuate the white beams running between the house and the carport and installed a sunshade that offers a sneak peek of the swimming pool and deluxe outdoor kitchen in the backyard.

With the remodel complete, the couple is now enjoying their dream home—and the relaxed lifestyle they envisioned. Merah says, “It’s only a 1,600-square-foot house but it feels so much bigger, because of all the glass. It has such a nice flow.” 🏠



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Written and styled by Sarah Jane Stone

Photography by Bret Gum

# Polynesian Renovation

Meet the couple who not only restored a mid mod dream home, but blended tiki touches with modern lines for a whole new look.

## Renovating with the intention to sell may not be a new concept,

but doing so with a desire to truly showcase Midcentury Modern style as well as find a new take on tiki might be.

The husband and wife team of Mandy Lacher and Joseph "Joe" Vadnay, a California real estate agent, take on midcentury houses and carefully revive them—blending old with new, preserving and renovating. Once the long process is complete, the couple lives in the home for a while before returning it to the market ready for another mid mod enthusiast.

WHILE CARPETING OFTEN GETS A BAD WRAP, ITS USE IN THE STARR HOUSE BEDROOMS ADDS WARMTH, COMFORT AND RETRO CHARM. THE EARTHY BROWN HUE AND SQUARE PATTERN COORDINATE PERFECTLY WITH THE SUBTLE TIKI VIBES—ESPECIALLY IN THE BEDROOM BENEATH A VINTAGE LANE CREDENZA.








MANDY'S GRANDFATHER, WHO WAS A SUCCESSFUL DESIGNER IN NEW YORK AND PORTLAND, OREGON DURING THE MIDCENTURY MODERNISM MOVEMENT, SERVES AS A CONSTANT SOURCE ON INSPIRATION FOR THE COUPLE. "ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT THINGS HE TAUGHT ME WAS SIMPLICITY. IT'S OFTEN A FINE LINE SO YOU DON'T END UP WITH SOMETHING AUSTERE, BUT I THINK MY HUSBAND AND I ARE GOOD AT BALANCING THIS BECAUSE WE LOVE THE CLEANLINESS OF MODERN—BUT WE ARE BIG ON COZY," SHE SAYS.





THE CHOICE TO INSTALL A DISHMASTER FAUCET WAS A THOUGHTFUL ONE. AS A NOD TO THE ORIGINALS FOUND IN MANY MIDCENTURY HOMES, MANDY TURNED TO THE FAMILIAR BRAND BUT OPTED FOR A MORE MODERN, GOOSENECK-STYLE FAUCET.





"MY HUSBAND AND I HAVE BOTH LIVED IN, AND HAVE AN APPRECIATION FOR MANY TYPES OF ARCHITECTURE, BUT THERE'S SOMETHING UNIQUE ABOUT THE MIDCENTURY," MANDY SAYS.

"The Modernism movement was all about simple and minimalistic living. When you remove the ornate elements of a pre-modern era home, you have to focus on the basics: door, roof, windows, yard, garage/carport—and even just space," Mandy says. "I think architects had fun with the basics, such as designing dramatic roof lines or angled windows. Many modern homes, such as the Alexander home we renovated, are really works of art."

### RACQUET CLUB GEM

Originally built in 1959 through the partnership of William Krisel A.I.A. and the Alexander Construction Company, this Palm Springs home is located in the iconic Racquet Club Estates neighborhood.



The couple found the home while driving through the neighborhood. A “coming soon” real estate sign caught their eye. Not long after a tour, they made their offer, and it was accepted. Mandy and Joe then got to work dreaming up how to revive the 1959 gem—which they refer to as the “Starr house” due to its street name.

“One of the most appealing aspects of the Starr house is that it came with an original fourth room; most homes in the neighborhood are three bedroom, two bathroom,” she says. While the couple doesn’t know why this particular home received the extra bedroom, they are confident of its originality as they found the 1959 permit stamp on one of its walls.

According to Mandy, homes in the neighborhood are generally about 1,225 square feet and most sit on about 10,000 square feet of land. Thanks to the Starr house’s fourth bedroom, it comes in a bit larger at 1,491 square feet. The pairing of large lots with angled ceilings make the homes, especially the Starr’s, feel even bigger.

## GETTING TO WORK

Balancing renovation and preservation is a delicate matter every mid mod homeowner faces, and certainly one with which Mandy and Joe are familiar. “I love it when I see midcentury homes that have been well cared for in their authentic state, but for me, I love the challenge of blending old with new,” Mandy says. While the sting of sometimes needing to remove an original element is real for Mandy, she makes her decisions on a case-by-case basis and always with the overall beauty of the home in mind.



ABOVE LEFT: “THE CREDENZA IN THE LIVING ROOM WAS A REAL FIND. WE HAD IT SHIPPED IN FROM A VINTAGE STORE IN CHICAGO AND IT’S STUNNING. THE SAME PIECE, NOT THE ACTUAL ONE WE HAVE, IS FEATURED IN DON DRAPER’S OFFICE IN THE SHOW MAD MEN,” MANDY SAYS.

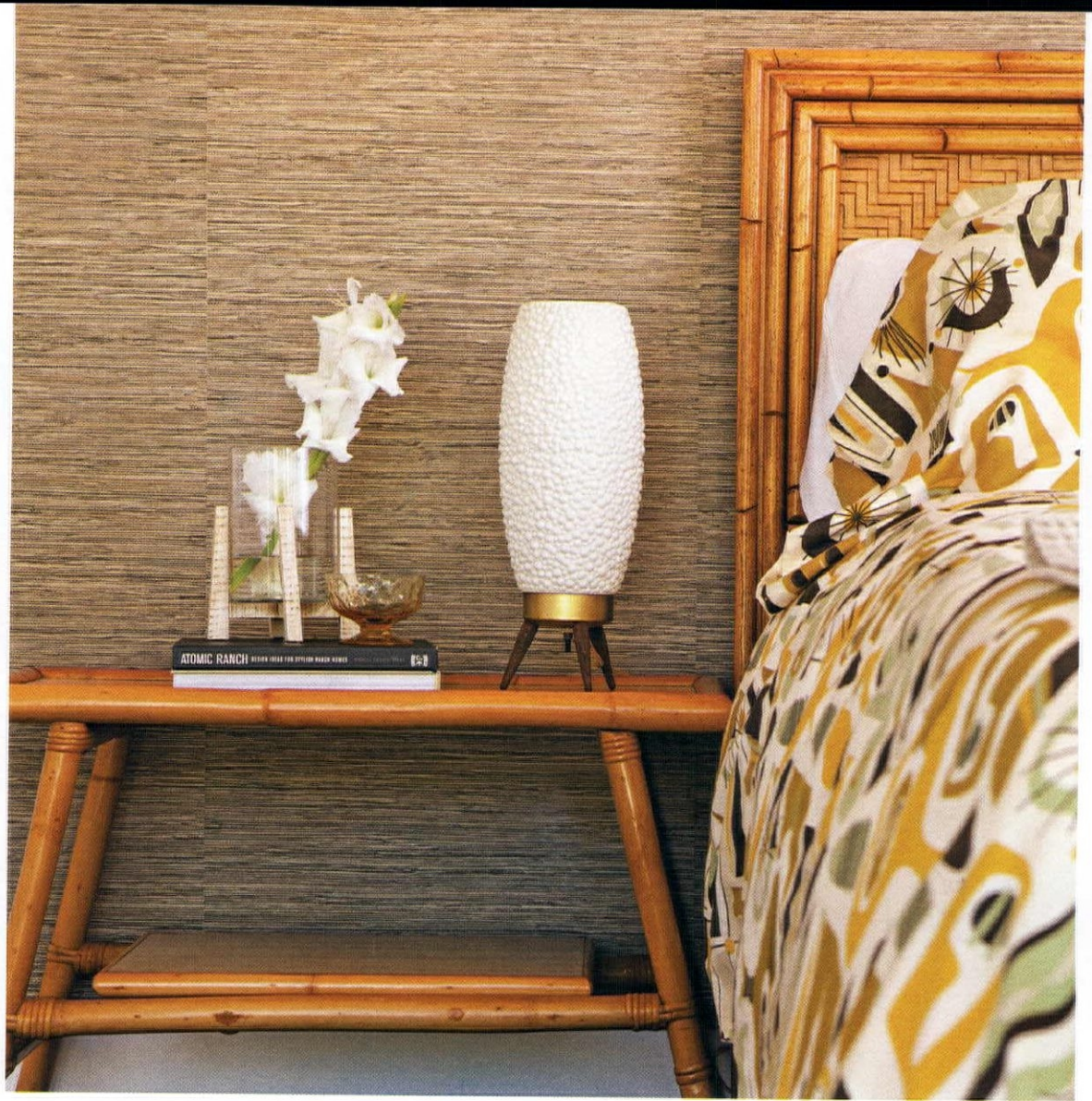




Textures, earth tones  
and touches of Brutalist  
furnishings bring tiki to the desert  
in a fresh, subtle manner.







"ONE OF THE REASONS I LOVE RENOVATING IN PALM SPRINGS IS BECAUSE THERE IS A GENUINE SPIRIT FOR KEEPING MIDCENTURY FUN ALIVE, AND THIS AFFORDS ME CERTAIN LIBERTIES WHEN COMING UP WITH A DESIGN CONCEPT."

"We had spent months working on a design, and some of it was bold, so there was a lot of angst wondering if what looked good on paper would look good in real life," Mandy says. With their design in place, the couple dove in head first with the renovation—initially having to tackle the cleanup and removal of unsalvageable or inauthentic elements.

Over the course of a year, Mandy and Joe diligently repaired, renovated and restored the Starr house. Fortunately, the house came with no major structural or safety concerns—despite the many small issues that popped up along the way. "We're not fix n' flip types," she says. "We really want to get it right, and sometimes that means taking a break to plan and prepare the next step," Mandy says.

Despite their authenticity, the bathrooms and kitchen were each in desperate need of restoration. To maintain warmth and period charm, they chose walnut cabinets for both spaces. In the kitchen, stainless steel appliances gleam against the wood tone while mod-inspired textured tiles add vintage appeal. To make the most of the available space without changing the kitchen's footprint, they had a downdraft range installed—eliminating the need for a bulky range hood.





"I LIKE THE ELEMENT OF FUN, ESPECIALLY HERE IN PALM SPRINGS WHERE THE HOMES WERE MOSTLY INTENDED FOR PEOPLE TO STAY WHILE ON VACATION," MANDY SAYS. "I SORT OF IMAGINE THEY WERE DESIGNED IN A WAY THAT SAID, 'LEAVE YOUR WORRIES BEHIND AND ENJOY YOUR LIBERATED ENVIRONMENT!' IN OTHER WORDS, THERE WAS LESS CONCERN WITH THE PRACTICAL ELEMENTS NORMALLY FOUND IN THE TYPICAL HOME."

Windows, often a source of concern in terms of balancing authenticity with energy efficiency, were replaced with dual panes. Given that many people now use these homes year-round, Mandy says the tradeoff is a must. "I think the most important thing is that we kept the original designs of the windows in the front of the house because that was the architect's vision curbside, and I wasn't about to ruin something perfect," she says. "I don't think replacing the actual window glass disrupts the integrity of the house." Mandy and Joe did add windows to the living room to maximize the view of the backyard as well as let more natural light into the otherwise dim space.

### FOCAL POINT ADDITION

Despite the fact that most Alexander homes had fireplaces, the Starr house lacked this element, making Mandy and Joe wonder if it had been removed at some point. Rather than leave the main living space feeling lackluster, they seized the opportunity to add a fireplace as well as an iconic accent—rock.

## TIKI CHIC

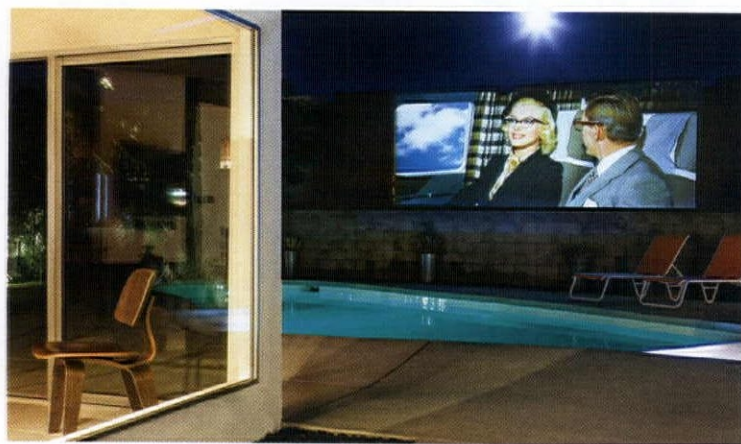
**Subtle tones of Polynesian bring the islands to the desert with a crisp twist.**

"When I shop midcentury I see so many tiki items and think, 'How great, but how can people practically use them in a home?' especially the large art or furniture pieces," Mandy says. Wanting to create a new take on the look, Mandy sketched out her vision of pairing some of these pieces with cleaner lines and got to work.

Despite having added new windows to the back of the house, the sun still casts a subdued glow inside—a perfect setting for the earthy tones of tiki décor. With this slightly darker interior in mind, Mandy knew she needed to be careful with her design choices to avoid further darkening the space.

To bring her vision to life, Mandy turned to Brutalist furniture. By introducing a few pieces to each room, the bold furnishings with their dramatic wood crafted designs act as large-scale artwork. Accents do their fair share in conveying the theme, too. An orange Vitco piece on the living room wall features a Polynesian ship, a tiki mask hangs on the kitchen wall, a Drexel Heritage surfboard coffee table anchors the living room, and faux grasscloth wallpaper covers nearly half the walls. Tiki-inspired duvet covers, rattan furniture, vintage lighting and warm wood tones help tie it all together.





With a watchful eye on the installation to ensure the end result conveyed the same retro vibe as the Brady Bunch house, the addition of a rock-clad fireplace now brings unique character and texture to the home. "The point is don't be afraid to bring in some of the authentic elements of midcentury design. There is a mainstream midcentury revival going on everywhere right now, but it's a little safe, in my opinion. I'm not suggesting we start carpeting our bathrooms again, but have fun with it," Mandy says. 🌀



**ABOVE LEFT:** LOCATED ON THE CORNER, THE HOME GREET'S NEIGHBORS AND VISITORS ALIKE AS THEY ENTER THE RACQUET CLUB ESTATES NEIGHBORHOOD. DESPITE ITS PROXIMITY TO THE MAIN ROAD AND THE FIRE STATION BEHIND, NOISE IS NOT A PROBLEM. IN FACT, MANDY AND JOE TURNED THE LOCATION INTO A BENEFIT BY USING THE WALL OF THE FIRE STATION AS A SCREEN FOR PROJECTING MOVIES IN THE BACK YARD.

**TOP:** MANDY AND JOE BROUGHT THE SAME ROCK FROM THEIR FIREPLACE INSTALLATION TO THE EXTERIOR OF THE HOUSE. PAIRED WITH A BRIGHT AQUA DOOR AND LAVA ROCK YARD, THE DESERT ABODE HINTS AT ITS TIKI INTERIOR FROM THE CURB.



**"I feel honored to be part of the midcentury revival movement that is going on right now.** People visit Palm Springs from all over the world just to see its architecture, and if we can make a difference by taking a home that has been a victim of disrepair and give it new life without losing its integrity—then it makes what we do matter."



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"THIS HOUSE HAS A GREAT POOL—WITH A SPACIOUS SHALLOW END THAT WE WERE ABLE TO CONVERT INTO A HOT TUB—PLUS THE VIEW IS SPECTACULAR, AND THANKFULLY VOID OF POWER LINES."



# Debunking Blenko

By Sarah Jane Stone  
Photography by Brett Fluharty

You know the glass, but do you know the full story?

With their eye-catching colors and unique forms, midcentury pieces from Blenko Glass Co. are a staple in the home of Midcentury Modern fans. Dean Six, glass author and Blenko Vice President of Marketing and Sales, shares about the company's vibrant history, the collectability of the iconic glassware and the trial of identifying pieces that have lost their handy silver sticker.



#6218 IN TURQUOISE,  
TANGERINE, DESERT  
AND TOPAZ



The midcentury era pieces still captivate collectors due to their **rainbow of hues, sensual silhouettes** and **inspired designs.**

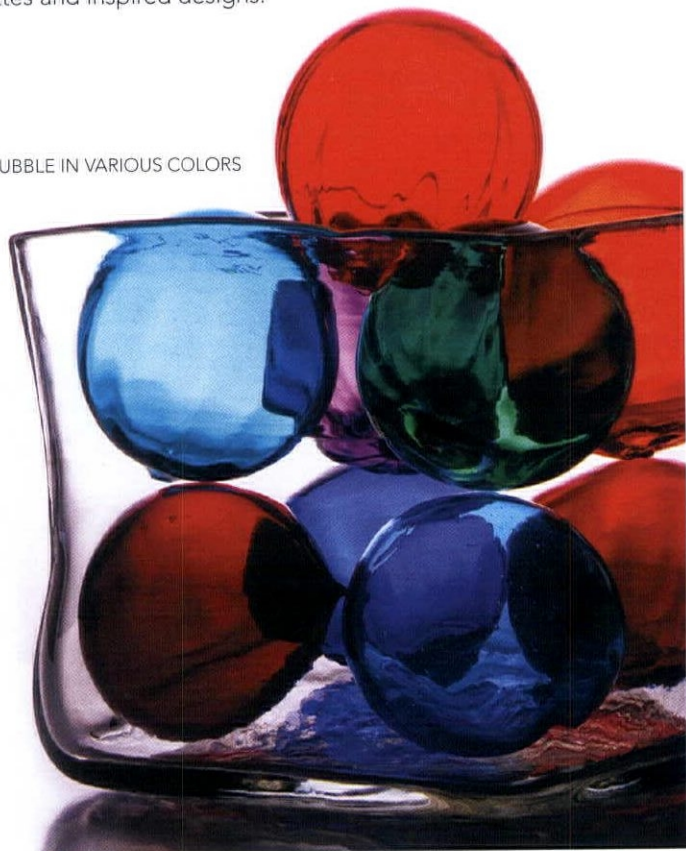
## BLENKO BIO

Blenko Glass Co., a handmade glass manufacturer, started in 1893. Seeking to make glass using natural gas, John Blenko brought his glassmaker talents from London to America and started the company. Initially, John named his company Eureka Art Glass as he had discovered a formula for a true red glass, but according to Dean the name changed in the 1920s to reflect the family ownership.

Despite its long history, the Blenko technique has not changed much over the years—although it is anything but predictable. “We have long used diverse techniques—mouth blown into wooden and metal molds, cast into a dump mold, and on it goes. Our processes are not one, but several,” Dean says.

The result of these varying techniques is over 120 years of stunning glassware creations—each with unique characteristics, bold colors and artful form. Thanks to the talent behind each Blenko creation, these items are far more than just a piece of glass. The midcentury era pieces still captivate collectors due to their rainbow of hues, sensual silhouettes and inspired designs.

#151 BUBBLE IN VARIOUS COLORS



#920 IN CHARCOAL  
CRACKLE WITH  
CRYSTAL STOPPER



## IS IT REAL?

Dean weighs in on popular tips used to identify Blenko pieces.

**TIP:** Check for transparency and avoid opaque or translucent—with the exceptions being yellow glass and the Rialto Specialty Line.

**VERDICT:** “Not completely true.”

“But for colors in the catalogued lines and during the 1945 to 1970 era this is largely true,” Dean says.

**TIP:** All glass will have the same rim thickness and be both rounded and smooth.

**VERDICT:** “Not always. Not even close.”

“Our glass varies based on the individual team that created it—some are thicker, some are thinner. It is the nature of handmade, mouth blown glass. Water bottles, the most common Blenko item, defy both of those identification tips.”

**TIP:** Reference against design number in the annual catalog.

**VERDICT:** “Good, but who has access to the catalogs?”

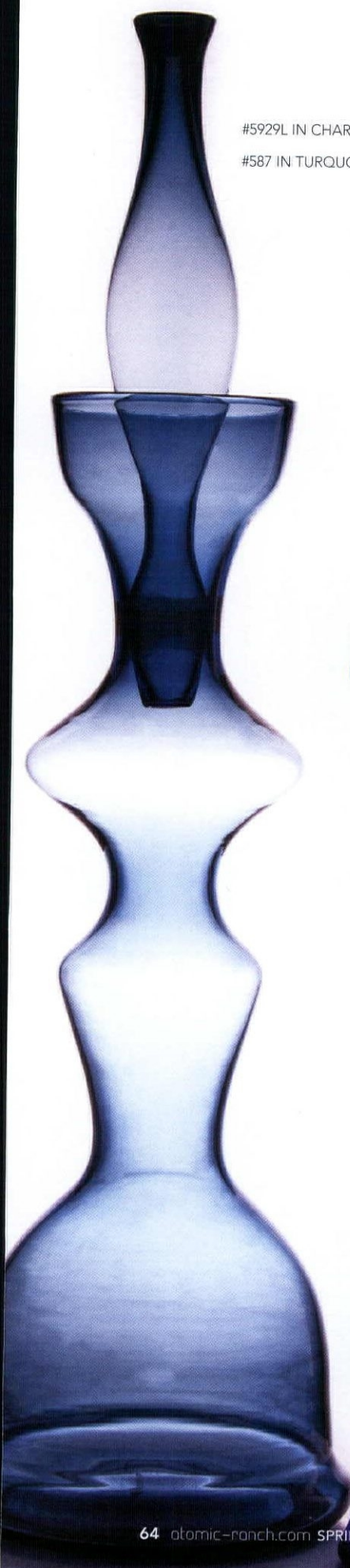
“Buy the books of catalog reprints or use online resources,” Dean says. His better tip is to confirm designs against line numbers, as that is what Blenko uses to refer to what others might call design numbers.

**TIP:** Look for an unfinished or otherwise rough pontil mark.

**VERDICT:** “None should be rough.”

“They are all fire polished pontils, and they are left visible by intent so as to indicate the process and the nature of hand formed glass,” Dean says. “Except for the Water Bottle and a few forms, most Blenko will have a fire polished pontil.”





#5929L IN CHARCOAL AND  
#587 IN TURQUOISE

## CARE & KEEPING

Lucky enough to have a piece of Blenko? Follow Dean's tips for ensuring your collectable has a long life.

- Do not put Blenko in the dishwasher. Exposure to the high temperatures and pressure will pit and cloud the surface over time.
- Never put hot or boiling water into any silica-based glass.
- Do not expose the glass to extreme variations in temperature—be it cold or hot. Glass is a tough material, but in the interest of long-term enjoyment it is best to gently wash and not stress vintage glass.

“The large pieces [have] **consistently held their value best** in recent years.”

### COLLECTOR CONFUSION

Despite their undeniable beauty, properly identifying a piece of Blenko glass can require some legwork. Lost stickers, mimicked designs and a misunderstanding of what exactly the company produced are often the culprits that lead well-intentioned collectors astray.

Dean notes that because Blenko did not mark its wares for decades and because the brand's style has been widely imitated, identification can indeed be difficult. Since Blenko did and does not follow a specific pattern, the general organic form of their glassware is at times similar to wares of other manufacturers.

“Most—by far the majority [of]—pieces will not have the sticker. It was intended as a point of sale identification, not long-term identification,” Dean says. Yet even without a sticker, identification is anything but hopeless. As Dean points out, “There are endless resources.” He suggests turning to books, many of which are essentially reprints of the annual Blenko catalogs, as well as collector-run websites that show the catalogs. Other than that, he says that identification comes down to studying the forms and shapes.

### STUNNING & SOUGHT-AFTER

While many collectables have an average price range, Dean says that for Blenko, it simply is “not possible.” The large variety of midcentury designs and their varying interest to collectors cause prices to vary widely. “Small but desired items—like the 1964 series of vases—sell well but are modestly priced. Large piece can be in the neighborhood of \$1,500 to \$2,000 on the market now,” he says.

Color has a massive impact on the value of a piece. According to Dean, period colors like smoky grays and vibrant oranges are considered strong examples of midcentury production and are therefore highly sought after. “Pieces in colors that were not introduced into the official line also have appeal. These were samples, experimental pieces and occasionally pieces made for a single account—such as a large department store. These may be recognizable forms but in colors that are less common,” Dean says.

“Call them floor decanters, architectural pieces or whatever, but it's






Period colors like smoky grays and vibrant oranges are considered strong examples of midcentury production and are therefore highly sought after.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: #5924 JONQUIL AND TURQUOISE CASED IN CRYSTAL; #418S, #284 AND #418L IN AMETHYST; #597 IN TANGERINE; #939P IN CHARCOAL CRACKLE, #967 IN PLUM AND #939P IN CHARTRUOSE

the near or over 30-inch tall pieces that seem most constant in demand." When those large-scale pieces have interesting stoppers or overall form, their demand only increases. Dean notes that some collectors follow specific Blenko designers, but he describes those trends as "erratic followings and not stable markets." Rather, most collectors follow the brand as a whole, seeking out specific colors, a favorite year or a similar line of items—such as the floor decanters.

"Many of the most desired pieces today are the same ones that were commercially less successful [in the midcentury]. Lack of period sales creates a scarcity today," Dean says. "A case in point is the immense number of large—think 10-inches or so—ash trays that were sold by the thousands in the 1950s through the 70's. While there is interest in them today, they are not hot market items." According to Dean, in the midcentury smoking items accounted for up to three pages of content in the annual Blenko catalogs.

Still in operation in Milton, West Virginia, Blenko now makes hand blown sheet glass for stained and leaded glass windows, cast items for architectural uses, specialty items for private customers as well as novelty items, giftware and tableware. 



#5433 IN NILE GREEN CRACKLE

FOR MORE, VISIT [BLENKO.COM](http://BLENKO.COM).



# Upgrade by Downsizing

By Jade Boren  
Photography by Atlantic Archives/  
Richard Leo Johnson  
Styling by Joel Snayd

When it comes to designing a midcentury-inspired space, the adage of “less is more” certainly holds true.

Wanting to transform their sitting room into an entertainment space, these homeowners were faced with a problem.

“It was basically a simple cube, a boring room,” says Joel Snayd, principal designer of Rethink Design Studio, which he co-owns with his wife and head of business operations Erika Snayd.





THE WOOD SCREEN COLUMN IN THE CORNER NEEDED A COSMETIC LIFT. JOEL REPLACED A TRADITIONAL COLUMN NOT TRUE TO THE MIDCENTURY PERIOD WITH VINTAGE TEAK SCREENS THAT DATE BACK TO THE LATE 1950S OR EARLY 1960S. BRIAN AND CANADA CHOSE TO USE TEAK WOOD, AS THEY ARE BOTH DRAWN TO THE MATERIAL.



Joel needed to liven the traditional room in the Whitmarsh Island, Georgia home of Brian and Canada Coleman, which was originally built in the 1970s. But instead of adding more, Joel subtracted. “Midcentury is less is more,” he says.

Joel undressed the room, ripping off the windows’ heavy plantation shutters and stripping the room’s color to paint a monochromatic white over the walls. This all played to Brian and Canada’s personal preferences, both of whom Joel needed to nudge until they caved into adding the red dresser off to the side.

The room’s deconstructing process was also Joel’s way of keeping the sitting room strictly midcentury. No other eras were allowed to seep in, as per Brian and Canada’s request. “Everything came from the midcentury period. They really wanted to keep the flow of the space,” he says.

The shedding process was symbolic of Brian and Canada’s phase in life. With a child moving into the home and Brian advancing in his career as a doctor, the clients desired a more adult space. “[They wanted] to create a true home for themselves and representative of who they are,” Joel says.

The muted walls highlight Brian and Canada’s personalities by allowing features like their paintings and wood screen pop even more. But it is not the artwork that draws the most eyes. Brian and Canada are connoisseurs of words, and they wanted to showcase their collection of books and magazines. Their strategy: Throw in a wildcard. Brian and Canada’s wildcard defies expectations, just like it does physics. The floating shelves, which were the couple’s main request, were not only designed for strong visual impact but to create the vibe of an actual library.

Adding the floating shelves for books and removing the window shutters to open the backyard view were just a few ways Joel tinkered with the room to enhance its personality without having to break out a jackhammer. “[It was] really just bringing in the cosmetics,” Joel says, as he described how the project was not a full remodel.

It was a simple process for a simple outcome—with a touch of dynamic décor to poke through the uniformity. 🌀

## Joel’s MCM Pointers

### • DO YOUR HOMEWORK.

Joel warns to beware of knockoffs—because there are a lot. The best way to identify a counterfeit is to train your eye and to understand the key designers of the period whose style you want to emulate in your home. To inspire his work in the Colemans’ space, Joel looked to Hans J. Wegner, a world-renown Danish furniture designer, and Paul McCobb, whom Joel labeled the “mad man of cocktail rooms.”

### • TRY TO FIND THE ORIGINAL.

Avoid filling your room with knockoff décor. Instead, when you can’t find a vintage piece or you want the fresh feeling of new, look for the companies that own the rights to the original designs. Buying pieces from these manufacturers will give you the peace of mind that your furniture was built true to the original designers’ intention.

### • CHECK OUT LOCAL SOURCES.

Etsy, eBay, 1stdibs: all excellent resources Joel suggests for furniture that will “bring in warmth and authenticity.” He managed to snag the dramatic arched lamp that overhangs the two-seater from eBay.

**OPPOSITE:** JOEL’S MANTRA IS TO KEEP EVERYTHING TRUE—AND “BIGGER BOX STORES” DO NOT CUT IT. BRIAN AND CANADA WANTED TO WORK WITH ORIGINAL DANISH PIECES, AND JOEL TURNED TO AN ONLINE SOURCE FOR ORIGINALITY: ETSY. JOEL PULLED THE TWO WOODEN CHAIR FRAMES FACING THE TWO-SEATER FROM A DANISH DESIGNER’S SHOP ON THE WEBSITE.



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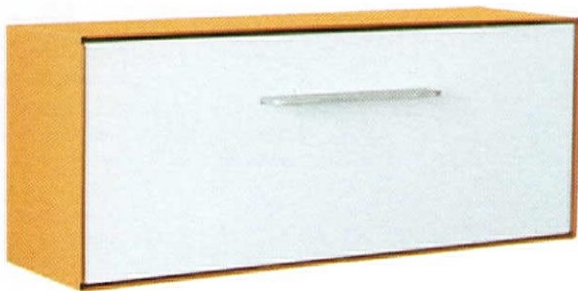
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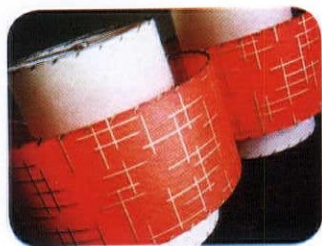
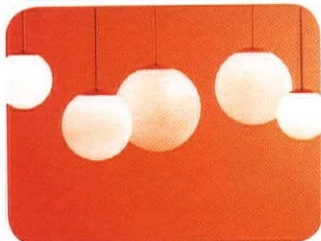


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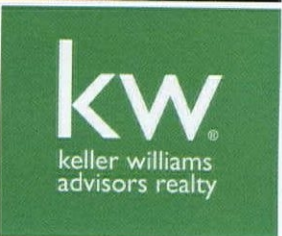
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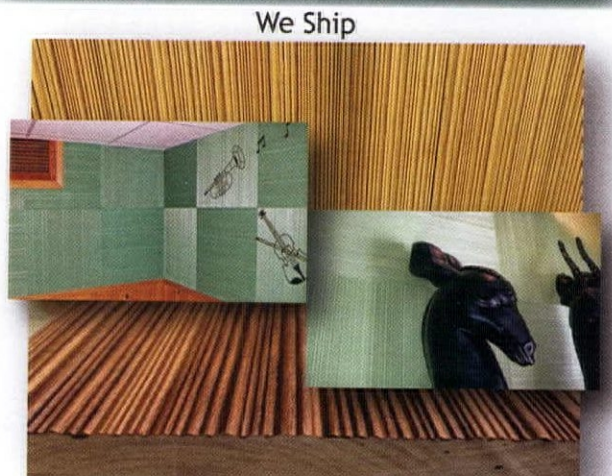
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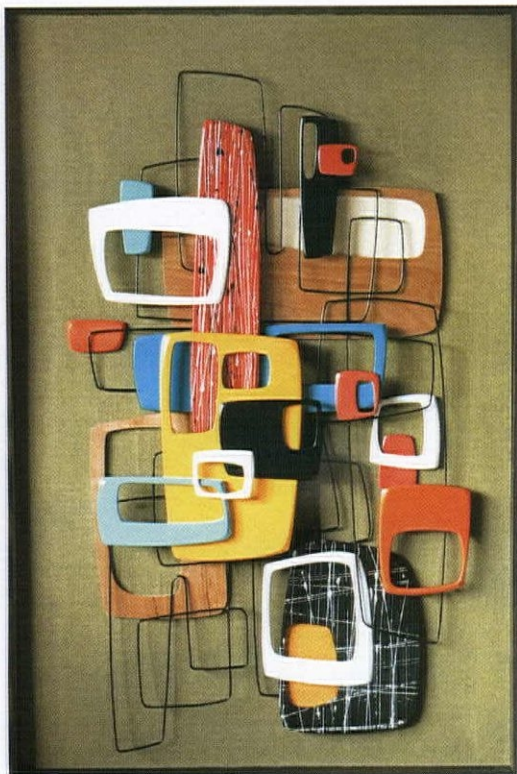
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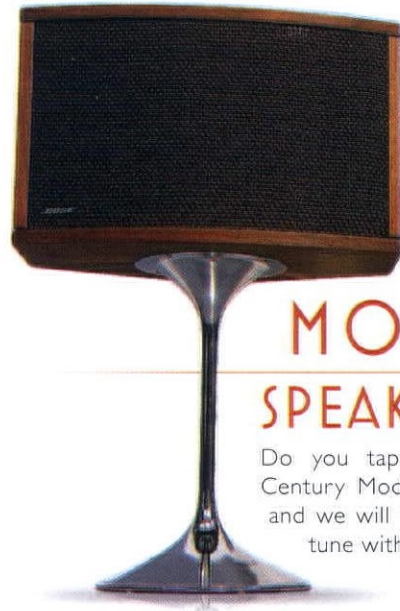
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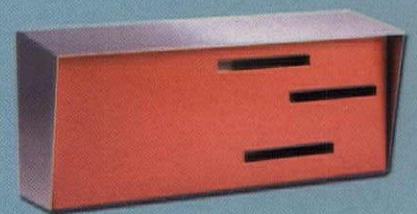
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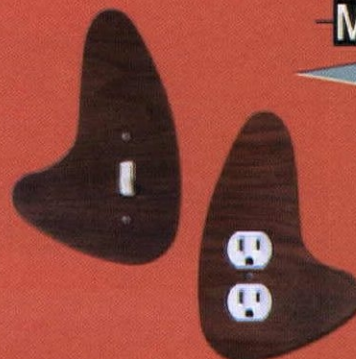


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# resources

## Out of the Blue, pp. 28 to 30

**Renovation Architects:** dpai architecture inc., (905) 522-0220 or dpai.ca.

**Renovation Architects:** Toms + McNally Design, (289) 768-2211 or toms-mcnally.ca.

**Appliances:** Elmira Stove Works, (800) 295-8498 or elmirastoveworks.com.

## A Happy Home, pp. 32 to 40

**Living Room: Glass coffee table:** Vintage, Noguchi. **Chair:** Craigslist in Palm Springs, Calif. **Fur throw:** Target, visit target.com.

**Arched lamps:** Craigslist in Queens, New York.

**Side board and floating shelves:** IKEA, visit ikea.com. **Round table:** Mersman round drum table, Craigslist. **Rug:** Off white shag rug from Overstock, visit overstock.com. **Paint:** Standard eggshell white paint from BEHR Paint, visit behr.com.

**Backyard: Blue fire pit:** Tempered glass chips, visit truevalue.com. **Jacuzzi and pool tile edging:** Iridescent tumbled glass tiles.

**Grass:** Astroturf, visit astroturf.com.

**Kitchen: Cabinetry paint:** Gloss kitchen variety from BEHR, visit behr.com.

**Clock:** Vintage. **Large bowls:** Zak Designs confetti bowls, visit zak.com. **Raffia Ware:** Vintage. **Hand Towel:** Custom design by Michael DeJong, visit spoonflower.com.

**Master Bedroom Bedding and bed frame:** Overstock, visit overstock.com. **Print pillows and Mongolian faux pillow:** Custom designs by Michael DeJong, visit spoonflower.com.

**Lampshades:** Vintage two-tiered fiberglass lamps from eBay, visit ebay.com. **Lamp:** Vintage Brutalist ceramic bases, from Richard Haymes' uncle. **Tension pole with lamp:** Vintage.

**Green clock:** Vintage. **Plank pot:** Nate Berkus Interiors from Target, visit nateberkus.com. **Ceiling Fan:** Home Depot, visit homedepot.com. **Curtains:** Made by Michael DeJong, swimsuit lining material from eBay, visit ebay.com. **Curtain track and hardware:** IKEA, visit ikea.com. **Patio chairs:** Vintage from Craigslist, reupholstered in white nautical vinyl from eBay, visit ebay.com.

**Guest Bedroom: Bedding:** Overstock, visit overstock.com. **Photograph:** Diane Arbus, "Untitled (4)," 1970-71. **Picture frame:** Faux bamboo frame from Gallerie Hudson, Jersey

City, NJ, visit galleriehudson.com. **Lamp:** IKEA, visit ikea.com. **Lamp shades:** Vintage, eBay, visit ebay.com. **Planter:** Vintage, California Pottery. **Bedside Table:** Plastic Laminate from Craigslist.

**Bathroom: Record covers:** Vintage.

**Picture frames:** Michaels Arts & Crafts, visit michaels.com. **Shower curtain:** Target (discontinued) from eBay, visit ebay.com.

**Lighting:** IKEA, visit ikea.com.

**Art Studio: Chair:** Vintage from Craigslist. **Lamp:** Vintage Luxo lamp, visit glamox.com.

**Floor mat:** Staples, visit staples.com. **Green radio, ash tray and green document box:** Vintage from eBay, visit ebay.com. **Table:** Vintage, Craigslist. **Brush holder:** California Pottery, eBay, visit ebay.com.

## Blenko Debunked, pp. 62 to 65

For more on Blenko Glass Co., (877) 425-3656 or blenko.com.

## Upgrade by Downsizing, pp. 66 to 67

**Design:** AWD Savannah, (912) 220-2335 or awdsavannah.com.

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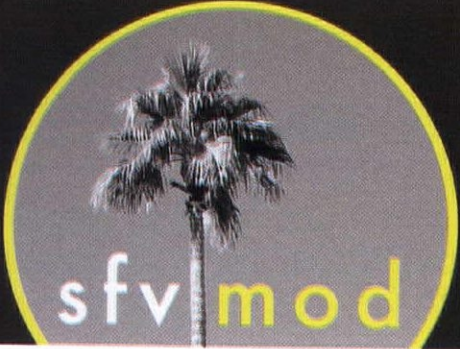
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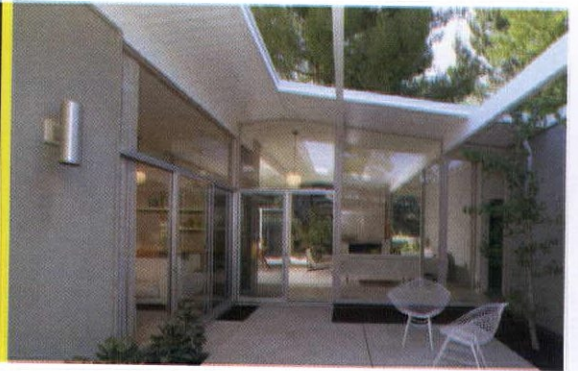




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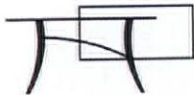
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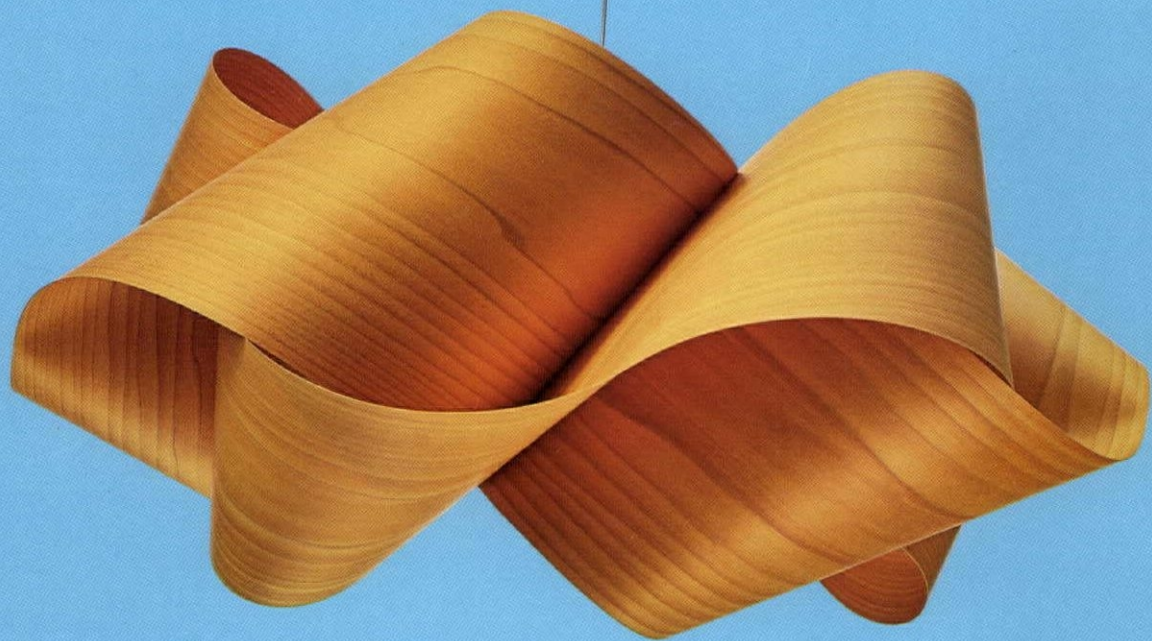
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