

atomic ranch

MIDCENTURY MARVELS

modernist philly 54
indy collector 36
a. quincy jones 10

FALL 2013



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cover

Tranquil gardens and judiciously edited furnishings distinguish this split-level modernist ranch in Philadelphia. The owners enjoy its original elements—casement windows, hardwood floors, baseboard heating—and eminently livable 1,700 square feet, while furnishing with a mix of modern reissues and vintage pieces. Eames dining chairs, a Saarinen table and *Cup #7*, by Felix Perdomo, catch your eye in the dining room. Story page 54.



meanwhile... back at the ranch

The other day I joined David Wolski (his home was featured in 'Working Class Heroes,' Winter 2008) and Val Ballestrem (a member of Portland's Architectural Heritage Center) for a tasting of David's newly acquired bottle of Van Winkle's 12-year-old bourbon. Along with snacking on some buffalo jerky and savoring the bourbon, we did what guys often do in that situation—spoke of our feelings, hopes and dreams... Got ya! No, we didn't do anything like that; we of course discussed great homes and architecture in the area—what else is there to talk about?

The conversation drifted to Val's observation that house flippers seem unable to appreciate an untouched midcentury home. Instead of leaving the original features that you or I would most desire, these entrepreneurs will rip out beautiful tile work and birch cabinetry and replace them with standard, big box-sourced granite countertops, Tuscan cabinets, laminate flooring, cheesy chandeliers and soulless fixtures. Oh, they may knock down a wall for the 'open concept' feel of midcentury, but these 'improvements' are applied to any home regardless of its vintage. We three aren't contractors, so the business rationale is unknown; Val reasoned that there must be a calculation of the cost of labor and materials that leads a remuddler to rip out the good/old and replace with the tacky/new that at the end of the process yields a profit. He further postulated that, for the same cost, a hypothetical renovator could retain/refurbish the original features and still sell for the profit they need. Made perfect sense to David and me.

But let's pick our whiskey-enhanced argument apart. The pool of potential buyers for the glitzy style—wait, let me get all politic and call it the currently popular style—is probably much bigger and makes for an easier, quicker sell. Conversely, the buyers interested in an interior that hews closer to original midcentury are a smaller, more difficult to reach market. Time, the great leveler, tips the scale to the quick turnaround. And if that's

what worked before, why change to another strategy that caters to a new, unfamiliar demographic?

If this is a dismal reality in your neighborhood and if you want to see change, you have to be an advocate for that change. It won't be too often that you are directing a remodeling project, but you can let your opinion be known on home tours, open houses and online discussions. Be willing to politely share your knowledge and views, to show that there is an alternative to the usual rip and flip. You might even want to hold up a copy of *Atomic Ranch* and say, "This is what I'm talking about." With an expansion of a mid-century army, there is hope for the homes we love.

Getting back to the Van Winkle, I'd like to say that I enjoyed its hints of cinnamon, vanilla, pepper, cotton candy and leather, but in fact it tasted like ... bourbon. I'll admit that my palate may still be unsophisticated, but I'm willing to do the hard work of trying various superlative whiskeys to become an advocate for the good stuff.



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modernwisdom

Our home is a 1962 'Likeler' we purchased about five years ago as a distressed foreclosure. Once the popcorn ceiling was scraped and the nasty carpet removed, you could tell this home was meant to be a swanky place. I immersed myself in MCM and never looked back, trying to keep as many original retro accents as possi-



ble. The previous owners bought it as a quick flip and had begun ripping stuff apart; luckily, they didn't get too far. I'm happy that we were able to save another midcentury gem from turning into a cheap Home Depot flip.

We did all the reno ourselves, except the new roof

and exterior concrete. We put in a new kitchen and floors, and planted an edible garden and built my chickens a matching chartreuse coop. We are super proud of our work and, most importantly, I found a great thing to be passionate about!

Liz & Nate Garcia
Anaheim, Calif.

* Coming late to the party, but am just discovering your magazine. I recently moved from Los Angeles back to the East Coast town I was born and raised in—Batavia, N.Y. Since moving back, I have been elected to the board of The Landmark Society of Genesee County. This town has always seemed bent on destroying the past (we were the first to tear down our beautiful Main Street in the name of urban renewal). My goal is to begin to make people aware of and appreciative of the architectural gems they have before they decide to make unaesthetic changes to their homes.

There is a great array of midcentury modern homes here. I will be writing an article for our local newspaper on a few of them in hopes of getting people interested in preserving and maintaining their modern homes. If you could direct me to any back articles you may have on midcentury homes (particularly split levels and ramblers/ranches) that I may find useful in the research for my article, I would greatly appreciate it.

Diana Kasten

Our email to Diana bounced back, but for others interested in preservation issues, we're sharing the reply: We've featured several split-level homes and ramblers over the years, including the Philadelphia house on this issue's cover and a Cincinnati residence in Atomic Ranch Midcentury Interiors. We also have an occasional series, 'Nick of Time,' that shares preservation success stories, and our Facebook groups touch on the topic, too. Michael Howard of Atlanta posts copiously about Collier Heights, a traditionally African American tract that is working on historic status.

morewisdom

Our first book, *Atomic Ranch: Design Ideas for Stylish Ranch Homes*, has a chapter called 'Hallmarks of the Style' that addresses common questions for those just delving into the topic. There are also several general articles about midcentury preservation linked on the 'advertise: press' and 'resources: enthusiasts' pages of *atomic-ranch.com*; the Alaska Airlines magazine article by Jane Hodges is a good overview. —ar editor

* My first instinct was to demolish the filthy planter that separated the den and the dining room in my recently purchased house (built in 1951 and added to



in 1961). But I realized that with some scrubbing and the addition of plants, it would become a great MCM focal point. I'm so glad I didn't go with my initial plan!

Joan Fisher

Emerson, N.J.

* I was so pleased to see Stephen Wilen's Surrey Downs piece in the Spring 2013 issue. Stephen and I have had fun exchanging pictures and stories for a couple of years now. We both live in the same *Better Homes & Gardens* 2809-A-design homes—he in Seattle, and my wife and I in Nashville.

I'm not sure if you recall, but our house appeared on Fall 2008's 'Home Page.' When we bought our place in 2005, we thought it was one of a kind. Now, it seems there are a multitude of them around the country. I'm



glad! That way the wonderful design will survive over time; even if something sad happens to one of them, there's always another still standing somewhere.

Thanks for the great article and wonderful images!

Robb & Spring Houston

* I just ordered a two-year subscription and am wondering if that might buy me one free answer. Do you know of a good source of '50s period mailboxes?



Something similar to the above...

We recently bought a 1956 atomic tri-level and are trying to spruce up the exterior; I thought a vintage mailbox would be a great addition. After scouring the Internet, we found nothing—no vintage mailboxes for sale and no reproductions to be found anywhere. We've even tried offering to buy and replace ones we've seen at other houses, but got no takers.

The closest I found in a new mailbox that looks kind of, sort of vintage and would complement the atomic aesthetic is the Vista, cheap and readily available on the web. It would look good souped-up with a two-tone paint job matching the house.

Scott Keyes

Golden, Colo.

The culprit behind Scott and other readers' mailbox lust was Scott Oglevie, a firefighter with a home in Palm Springs who restores vintage appliances and the occasional mailbox in his spare time. He replied, "The blue mailbox I bought for \$10 on eBay; it was listed as an



'old mailbox.' It was brand new, never used, but had a small blemish. The orange mailbox I repainted and restored all together. That one was beige and more ordinary; I just rattle canned and clear coated it, painting it to match the highlights of the house behind it.

"One thing about these mailboxes is that they don't look good mounted on a brick post or wrought iron pole. The slant post really sets it off, so I had to make that, too. These examples were done about four years ago, and the Palm Springs desert sun has taken its toll on them."

The Vista Curbside mailbox that Scott Keyes found is cast aluminum and comes in powder-coated, non-midcentury colors from signaturehardware.com and other sites. While there are some great modern models out there from our advertisers—boxdesignusa.com, modaindustria.com and yliving.com—or the adorable Cadrona from New Zealand, the retro market seems to be wide open. Any other leads, guys?

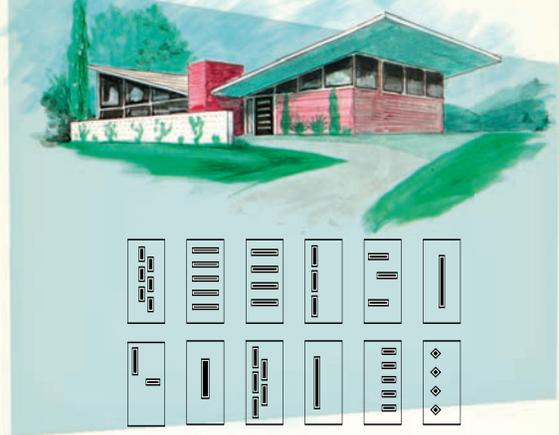
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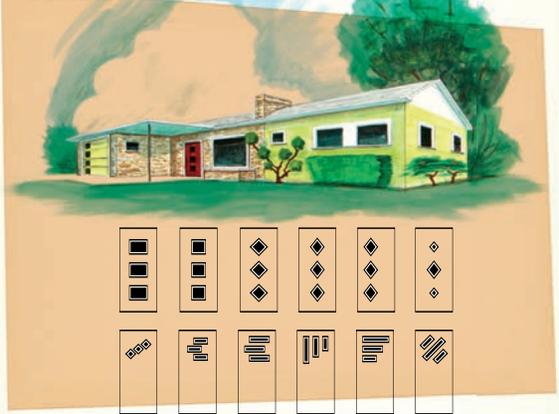
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The banquette benches and Eames DCMs are upholstered in Eames Circles Document fabric. Overhead, the Doug fir support beams have steel flitch plates for strength, and a Nelson bubble lamp provides illumination.



mutual admiration society

When you first meet Alex MacDowell, he'll likely entertain you with anecdotes about his two-year house renovation, or impart the boundless enthusiasm he has for his midcentury neighborhood in the Santa Monica Mountains. Maybe it will be the story about a trip to Mendocino for all-heart, vertical-grain lumber milled from old-growth redwood sinker logs—the kind they can no longer harvest. The one where he and his wife, Kristin Kozlowski, were driving home with the precious load, only to be rear-ended at 60 miles an hour by a guy in a bigger, badder pickup. The driver was trying to blow a wasp out of his vehicle, and the impact punched the redwood beams into the jumper seat portion of MacDowell's extended cab, scattering the 1'x6's all over Highway 101.

Or it might be the esoteric details of replicating the original stain on the marine-grade plywood paneling, or stripping paint from miles of concrete block, redwood siding and tongue-and-groove decking. When it comes to his 1951 house, he's definitely all-in.

The couple, originally from St. Louis, had a goal to move to California and find a modernist house that could qualify for historic landmark status. The target area was the Mutual Housing Association tract in Brentwood, now known as Crestwood Hills. MacDowell, 36, who bills himself as an entrepreneur, lost out on several homes during what turned out to be an eight-year house hunt. Finally, in part through his friendship with architect Cory Buckner, he beat out developers for a 2,000-square-foot model designed by A. Quincy Jones (see 'Historic Context,' page 19)

text Michelle Gringeri-Brown

photography Jim Brown

We respect the architecture and vintage features

and built for Madeleine and Louis Schneidman. Although the developers offered \$250,000 more, they only wanted it for the lot value, and the late owners' daughter didn't want to see her childhood home torn down—a too-common occurrence in the area.

"The original owner lived in the house until she passed away in her late 90s," says fellow Crestwood resident, Buckner. "Nothing had been done to the house for decades, and the work that it needed was daunting. As Alex and Kristin peeled away the layers of paint and painful additions, they not only became fascinated with the original intent of the community and architecture, but were awed and humbled by the sheer beauty of what they had purchased."

The year after it was built, a 350-square-foot bedroom and bath were added near the front door. Post-and-steel-beam construction, a multilevel hillside lot and original features like an accordion door between a bedroom and the living room made the residence highly unique. Another was the separate au pair quarters attached to the carport; this was one of the spaces where MacDowell

and Kozlowski lived during the top-to-bottom renovation.

"For the first half of fixing up the house, I was so excited to wake up at the crack of dawn and start sanding something," MacDowell says with a laugh. "We had the roof off for weeks while we solved electrical arcing problems, and one morning we woke up with rain pouring down on us [through the ceiling boards]. I dug an 80' trench to bury the electrical, but only the department of water and power can move the service lines. Then, when high winds took out the existing power, they pushed our job back two months."

"I lived through Alex's second renovation [in St. Louis] and slept on the floor for a year," says 32-year-old Kozlowski, a plant-based nutritionist. "We're both history buffs, so it was our passion to bring back a house like this. It was Alex, mostly, but it was also me behind him pushing to get things perfect."

The plan was to restore the original portion of the house and hire Buckner to rework the less divine later elements. "There had been a very sad addition at the front of the house, which I proposed remain intact but with the



of the home





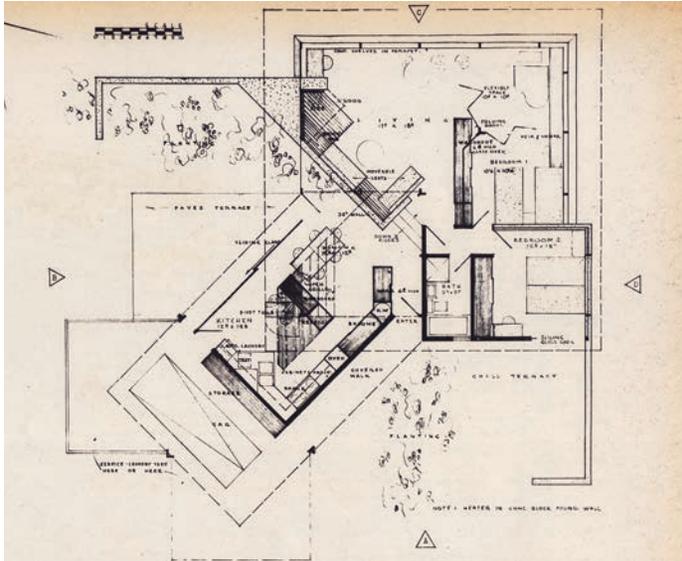
windows facing the parking area removed,” the architect says. “I suggested the opposite for the guest quarters at the front by the street, completely opening up the facade with ribbon windows; both [changes] present a clean look to the street.” The 1952 addition was reconfigured to include the master bedroom and bath and a walk-in closet.

Among the tasks the couple tackled, either on their own or alongside pros, were installing a four-layer roof, building a new deck and concrete retaining walls, repairing sliding window tracks and switching to safety glass as needed, and complete landscaping. They replicated or refinished the plywood interior walls, tiled the baths, installed flooring and labored through a year’s worth of paint stripping.

The exterior redwood siding had been painted to cut down on maintenance—the canyon is in a marine climate that is super tough on wood, MacDowell says—and much of the

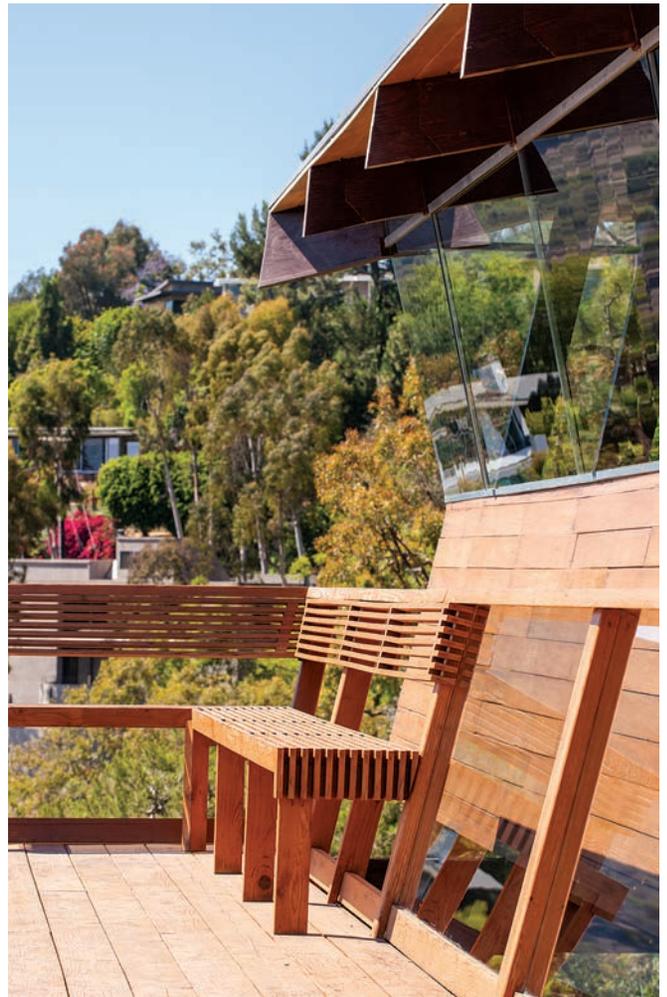
interior was painted white, so he used several approaches. “The Paintshaver Pro has triangular carbide blades that spin and you can set it to remove the top 1/16” of paint, barely touching the wood. If any of your paint is lead, you can hook it up to a HEPA vac,” he explains. “On a house like this, you have to presume all of the paint is lead-based. I rented a lead-paint X-ray gun for \$350, and spent a day gunning every surface and recording the readings on Post-it notes. If it’s 1.0 mg, you need to get a professional remediator; under that, you can use wet removal.

“We had four months of professional remediation,” he continues. “There was asbestos in the walls, on the ducting and in the floor covering and its mastic—in addition to the high-lead paint areas. For the cabinetry, masonry block and paneling, I used Peel Away. I covered it with plastic and let it sit for a week, then pulled off the softened paint and used a



The basic plan was designed as a two-bedroom, one-bath home, but the Schneidmans' 301-X extended version had an additional half bath, as well as the 'accessory living quarters' next to the carport (not shown on this drawing). The 1952 expansion sits where a grass terrace is indicated near the front entry.

Opposite: The terraced back yard incorporates Palm Springs design elements like the William Krisel-esque round pavers with a fire pit and a homemade sectional daybed. Below: Views of the new redwood deck with built-in seating and the exterior of the living room that reminds one of a fire lookout.





A washer and dryer were moved out of the kitchen, a dishwasher and more counter space added, and the cabinets repaired, stripped and stained. The diamond backsplash and Silestone counters are new, as are Julien sinks. Where a longer pullout table for family dining stood, the homeowners opted for a shorter, laminate-topped version that's a good catch-all for shopping bags and keys.



power washer—inside the house. For most of the two years, our house looked like a *Dexter* kill room.”

The kitchen had seen better days, but with original cabinetry by Walter Gropius’ General Panel Corporation, MacDowell lobbied to restore. “When we first moved in, I wanted to tear out the kitchen and get a brand-new, fancy kitchen,” Kozlowski admits. “We were ready to alter and change the house, but instead it turned into a restoration. I didn’t understand this house—I’d only lived in traditional houses—and didn’t really even understand modernism. But now I’m so happy we have our original kitchen.”

The cabinets were repaired, stripped and refinished, and Silestone counters and Armstrong vinyl flooring installed. Kozlowski found a source for replacement diamond-patterned stainless steel backsplash material, and requested a banquette for the adjoining dining area. New Smeg appliances replace the original Thermador cooktop and an ’80s oven and refrigerator.

“The refrigerator was quite an ordeal to get into the country—it’s not sold in the United States,” she says. “I’m obsessed with that green color, and was able to buy it on an English website, but figuring out the logistics of getting it over here was a real pain.”



The most original bath combines pink vintage fixtures reglazed in '40s green with Heath tiles and Hansgrohe faucets.

In the master bedroom the flooring is Marmoleum, the bed and nightstands are Modernica Alpine models and the table lamps are Half-Nelsons. Cory Buckner designed the new master bath, and MacDowell built the plywood vanity and had pulls made to match those in the kitchen. The counters are Silestone.

Opposite: The guest bedroom has new plywood walls, a VCT floor with FLOR carpet tiles, a Bentwood V-leg bed and Saarinen Tulip chair, along with a modern Eames storage unit against the masonry wall. Using an example of the original plywood stain, MacDowell developed this technique to match it: Apply a brown-tinted white stain, spray with denatured alcohol and rub off, then seal with flat polyurethane. “The alcohol makes all of the white stain go into the soft grain, but it totally cleans off the harder grain,” he explains.



details



Clockwise from above: A walnut Bow Tie Console table from Zurn Design next to the 'Checker Split' upholstered Eames Sofa Compact. Mexican pebbles on edge decorate the driveway apron. The original kitchen cabinetry and whale-tail pulls. Geo Shapes gas logs from Real Fyre in the window-piercing fireplace. Three looks at original details in the living/dining space.



Historic Context

Architect Cory Buckner moved into Crestwood Hills in 1994 and has championed its design heritage ever since. She published the first book on A. Quincy Jones in 2002 and has secured historic status for many of the tract's homes.

"Crestwood Hills was the only successful large-scale cooperative housing development in postwar California. In 1946, four studio musicians formed the Cooperative Housing Group as a viable way to obtain inexpensive houses by pooling their resources," she writes. "Due to the dire housing shortage after WWII, the group quickly attracted 400 members. Each put down \$25 to join and eventually paid \$2,000 for a lot. The group became the Mutual Housing Association and purchased 800 acres of undeveloped land in the Santa Monica Mountains.

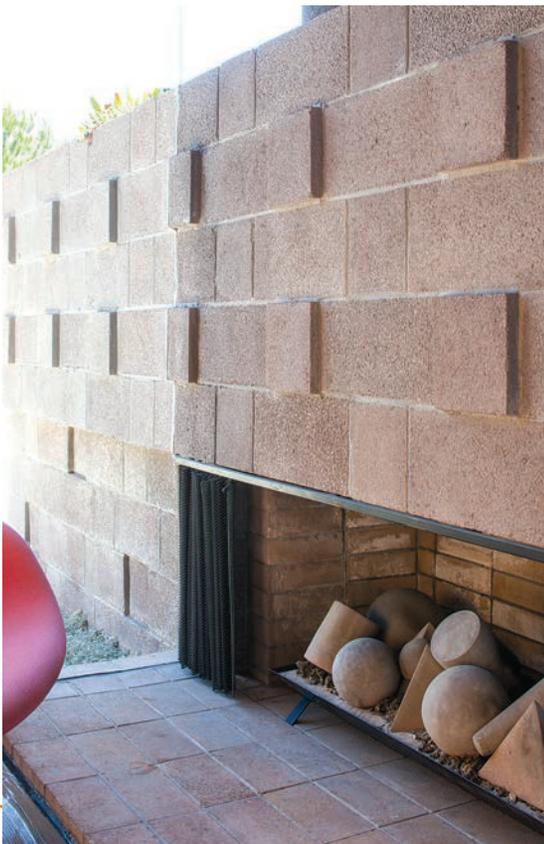
"The MHA design committee interviewed a number of architects, including Richard Neutra. The final team was a joint venture between architects A. Quincy Jones and Whitney R. Smith, structural engineer Edgardo Contini and draftsmen James Charlton and Wayne Williams. Houses were arranged on the hills at varying levels and angles to take advantage of the spectacular views, provide ample space for landscaping and afford a sense of privacy. Finished with unadorned materials that were readily available after the war—concrete block, exposed Douglas fir plywood, plate glass, redwood siding and tongue-and-groove ceiling planks—the houses ranged from just under 1,000 square feet to 1,500 square feet, geared to the moderate-income family.

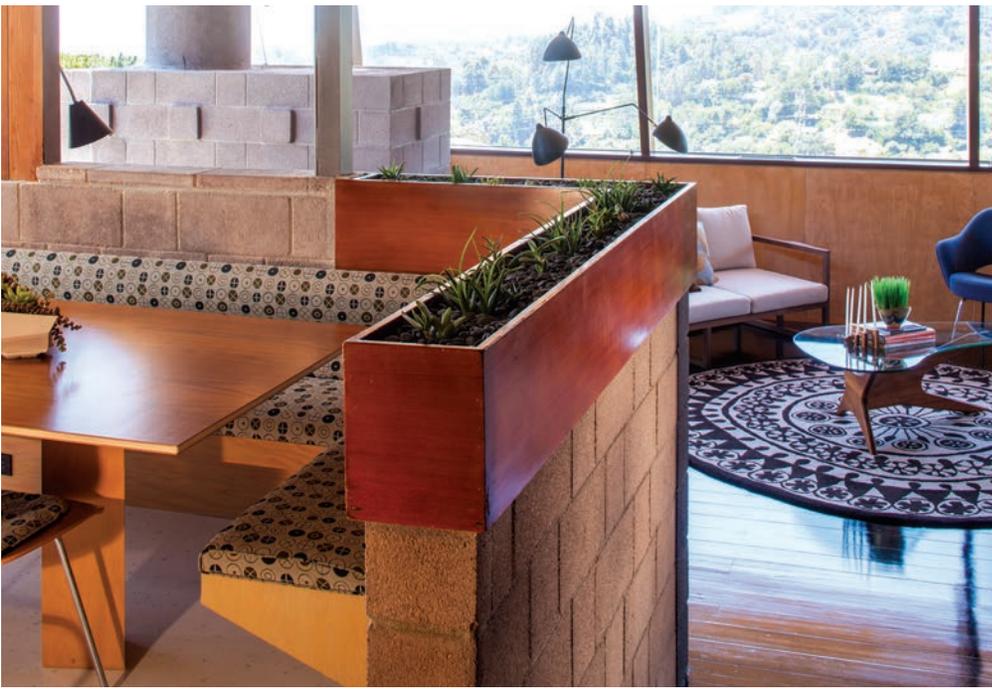
"By 1952, only 160 of the 350 residential lots were built out in accordance with the MHA designs. The remainder were infill houses, some designed by other iconic modernist architects including Craig Ellwood, Cliff May, J.R. Davidson and Ray Kappe.

"When we moved into the community, we became painfully aware that there was nothing in place to save the existing MHA homes," she says. "Only 34 original houses remained at that time, 45 having been lost in the 1961 Bel Air fire. Homes were selling for lot value, and an insensitive architecture committee was permitting two-story stucco boxes instead of one-story structures of natural materials. Julius Shulman's daughter owned an MHA house just down the street from Alex and Kristin's home. After she sold, it was demolished and replaced with a 6,000-square-foot stucco box. Developers saw our area as ripe for making a profit.

"In the 1980s and '90s, the community declined as the original residents aged and modern architecture fell out of favor. Since 2000, however, a new generation of young families with an appreciation for modern architecture has rekindled the original spirit of Crestwood Hills.

"What makes the Schneidman House unusual today is the care and joy Alex and Kristin have taken in restoring their home," Buckner says. "They became slaves to resurrecting it, using materials not readily available and procured at great expense and time, but their dedication has paid off: It is the most striking MHA house in the neighborhood."





Furnishing their home was fraught fun: “There would be a sale at Modernica and we’d fill up our truck with stuff with no plan where it would go,” MacDowell admits cheerfully. “We also bought at vintage stores in Indianapolis and online. It’s so efficient now to get a chair or a couch and just put it on a Greyhound bus and go pick it up the next week.

“The house is a weird plan and was designed before television. We could not figure out the living room floor plan to save our lives. We interviewed a half dozen designers and they’d come in and give us their cockamamie ideas, and we’d say No, no, no. Sarah came in and said like two words, and we said, ‘You’re hired!’ ”

Sarah Farris-Gilbert, who specializes in vintage residences, designed the guest house interior and helped bring cohesion to the challenging living room space. “The design concept involved creating two distinct conversation spaces, plus the piano nook. That is essential when working with an irregular space—otherwise you end up with one disconnected, awkward grouping,” she says. “I showed Kristin and Alex how this could be achieved by reconfiguring existing purchases and adding in a few pieces that pulled the floor plan together. The contemporary Organic Modernism sofa has a visually lightweight base in keeping with the other furniture, but the boxiness helped balance the curvaceous midcentury pieces. The loose pillows also helped balance out the more structured furniture it’s paired with.

“Thankfully they didn’t request a television in the room. If a decision between art and television has to be made, go with the art: You’ll be inspired more by it than by a big, black screen. With technology becoming increasingly mobile, I think we’ll see a back-to-the-future concept in how American households integrate televisions into living spaces. It will no longer be so front and center, which will really allow for much better planning in glassy midcentury spaces where you don’t want to call attention to electronics.

“In working with historic houses, clients who respect the architecture and vintage features of the home make the creative process so much smoother,” Farris-Gilbert continues. “I can focus on highlighting the beauty of the original materials and unique elements, instead of trying to talk a client out of altering just for the sake of creating something new. It is great to collaborate and have a melding of concepts—and be sure your designer is hearing you out—but in the end, listen to the expertise of the person you’ve hired.

“Kristen and Alex have really made their home personal, but they understand they are temporary caretakers and they want to see the home thrive for generations to come. The end results are always better when you have clients who trust your advice.” 

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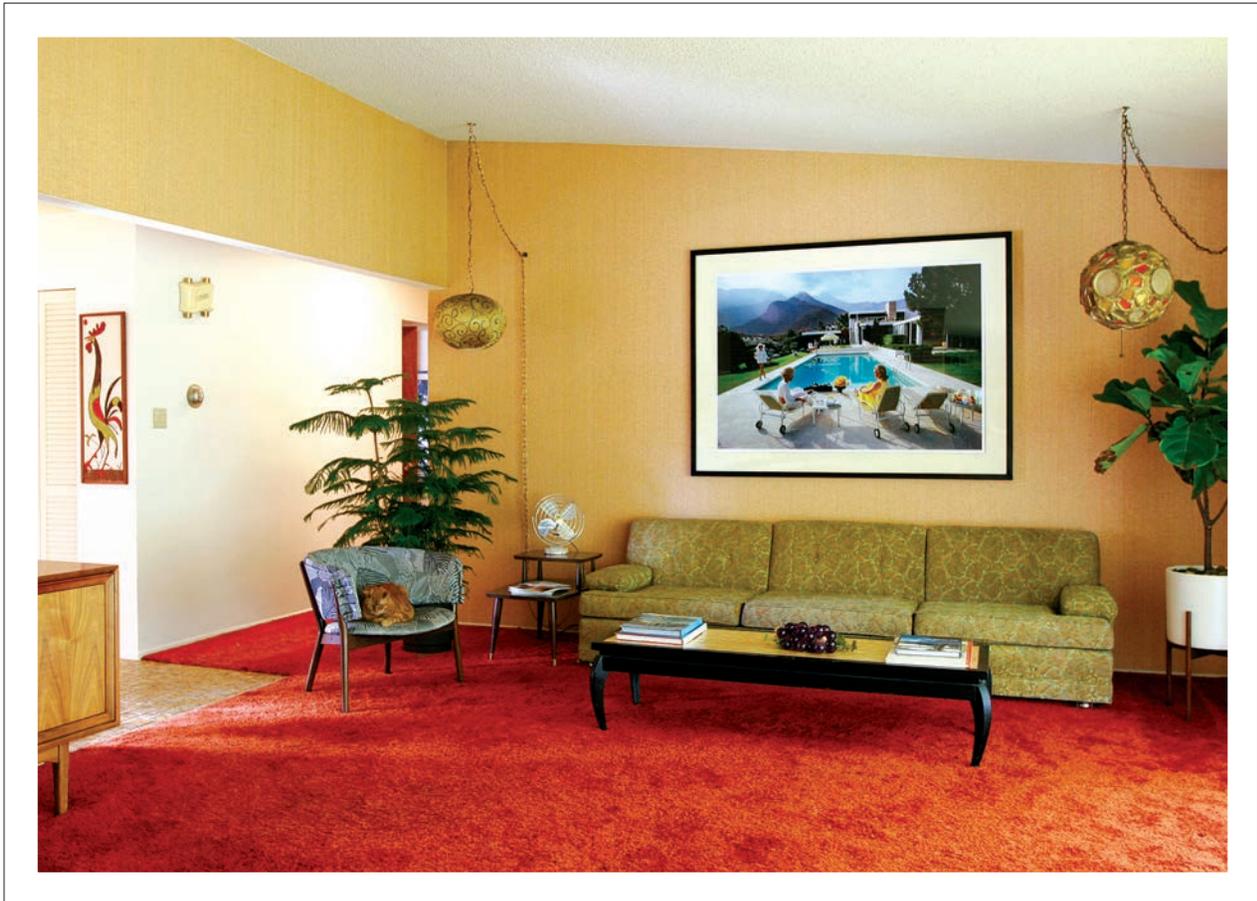
Opposite: The banquette and table are on the same level as the kitchen, while the living room is down several steps to the right of the built-in planter.

The geometric complexity of the architecture is most evident in the living room, where angles and pierced fenestration abound. Behind the pony wall is a small bedroom used as an office, the refinished original flooring is stained Douglas fir and the built-in

shelf near the Marshmallow sofa was designed as a telephone stand. Furnishings include two vintage Saarinen Executive chairs and an Organic Modernism sofa surrounding an Adrian Pearsall coffee table on a round Nani Marquina rug. On the right is an Eames Sofa Compact with a Saarinen pedestal table. Lighting includes a Nelson Cigar lamp in the office, a Praying Mantis floor lamp on the left and a Greta Grossman Cobra floor lamp by the faux-Rothko abstract.



my favorite space



I have been in love with mid-century modern design for years. After living in Los Angeles and vacationing in Palm Springs, I inherited an amazing 1955 ranch house from my grandparents in Great Falls, Mont., and decided to move there. The living room is by far my favorite space in the house.

When I first inherited the property, I was still living in L.A. and actually cleaned out the house and put it on the market. Then I realized—What am I doing? I want to live there!

The whole house was a blank canvas other than the existing elements: brick, wallpaper, carpet and tile. I had already saved some decor from my grandparents (the peacock, Picasso-esque mandolin print, glass grapes and fiberglass hanging globe light), so it was just a matter of reintegrating them into the room somehow.

The brick fireplace and orange grass cloth wallpaper were the backdrop for my design ideas. A Slim Aarons

photograph from my previous house is where I started in the room; it is my favorite possession. The shot, *Poolside Gossip*, is of the famed Neutra Kaufmann House. I was drawn to this photo because it seems to represent mid-century style and the Palm Springs lifestyle so perfectly. Nothing says ‘fun’ more than a group of ladies in lace resort wear drinking champagne by the pool!

Other pieces from my L.A. house include a Modernica planter and Barcelona-style chair. The rest of the furniture and decorative items were found in local thrift shops. A sofa, Danish chair, stereo console, side table, hanging lamp and vintage fan were all purchased in shops for under \$200 total. Eventually I’d like to replace the coffee table that I inherited with the house; I’d prefer a sleeker walnut table. And the sofa is more retro than mid-century modern, but we absolutely love it. It’s over 10’ long and seats a small army during cocktail parties.

Left: Our Slim Aarons numbered print from photographersgallery.com was definitely an investment piece. The Selig armchair that Sammi is sitting in was a \$35 find; I'm thinking the fabric is original, in part because of the flaps covering the arms, * and I'm not keen on reupholstering, if so. The Coast Air fan goes with us in the Airstream for hot days, and past the rooster mosaic is the front door and entry hall.



Most of the decorative pieces on the fireplace and adjoining wall were left in the house when I acquired it. The stereo console was an amazing find for \$80. It's a Motorola stereo hi-fi with turntable and AUX hookups. I'm not sure of the year, but it's in perfect condition. One challenge with the room is I don't have a spot for LP storage. I've been picking up the portable brass magazine holders and placing them around the room, but those only hold 15–20 records.



The original shag carpet has been a point of debate among friends. On one hand, I know that installing hardwood floors and an area rug would provide a cleaner look, but in the winter when the weather gets below zero, the carpet has its perks. If it wasn't a color that ties the room together, I probably would've put in hardwood.

Behind the fireplace wall is a small dining room with a huge built-in bar and a door that leads to the covered patio area and parking for our 1972 Airstream trailer. To the left of the fireplace is a wall of half a dozen picture windows looking out to a lush, green back yard—or a snowy winter wonderland. The metal peacock on the fireplace wall is always a conversation piece, with friends often commenting, “Hey, we used to have one of those when I was growing up!”

The living room is an amazing space for entertaining, and it's always fun to see the joy guests experience when having a moment of nostalgia. ✿

**Kristie Sotelo & Craig Duff
Great Falls, Mont.**

* Upholsterer Bill Herzog of HM Duke Design comments, “I think the unusual fabric flap over the top of the wood arm is a later reupholstery job. My educated guess is that it protected the chair from an understructure of a dining table. Selig, like Moretti, John Stuart, some Dux and G-Plan in the UK, were import houses, making some pieces hard to research since they sourced from different ‘Mobilers’ (designers) and countries through the years.”

cool|stuff



Handmade with solid hardwood and a seemingly infinite variety of customizable options, Chris Walsh's creations straddle the modern/midcentury divide. With 11 pieces currently available, WFOUR Design offers four different wood options and 10 standard colors to make it your own. Frustrated with furniture that's not the right scale for your space? Most items are available in a variety of sizes (or you can even go the full-custom route). From all wood to white lacquer with bright legs, the limits, as they say, lie with you.

Side tables start at \$649, sideboards at \$2,399; available at wfourdesign.com.





Dissatisfied with the low quality and high price of commercially available chicken coops, Ben McKechnie took matters into his own then-inexperienced hands. Think of it as pre-fab—and pretty fabulous—housing for your backyard flock. The Combo Coop line offers a shed roof, open-plan interior and plenty of indoor/outdoor living space; sounds like a split-level ranch to me. Or for a more alpine feel, the A-frame chicken tractors are mobile to help fertilize (or mow!) your lawn and garden. Available nationwide via flat-pack shipping, or with on-site assembly to California, Oregon and Washington. Tractors from \$375, Combo Coops from \$645 at chickengardener.com.



COOL|stuff



KATIE LEE



ADAM HORBINSKI



TYLER BAUM

A recent competition at the University of Oregon challenged the school's product design students to create artsy café chairs utilizing high-pressure laminate and other materials. Part of 'Wilsonart Challenges,' a scholarship program sponsored by the laminate manufacturer, the imaginative prototypes showed that today's designers are still exploring the potential of bent-wood, laminate and plywood—and the intersection of art and function. The Eameses would be proud.



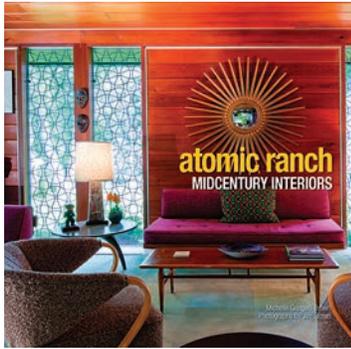
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JORDAN MILLAR

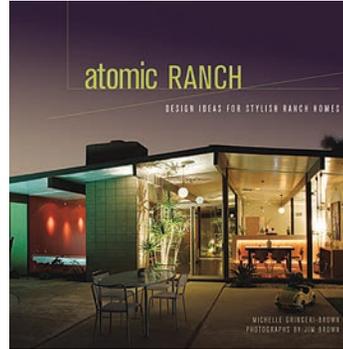
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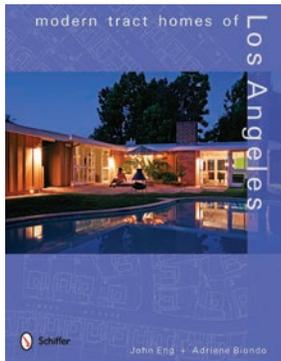
Atomic Ranch: Midcentury Interiors

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



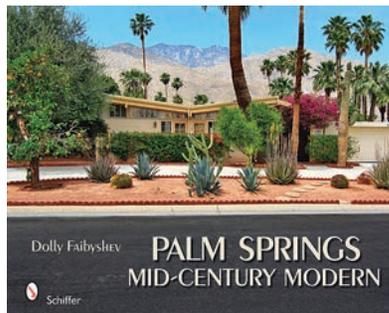
Atomic Ranch: Design Ideas for Stylish Ranch Homes

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



Modern Tract Homes of Los Angeles

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



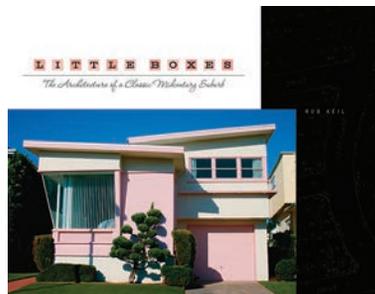
Palm Springs Mid-Century Modern

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



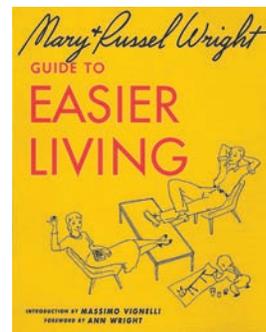
Trailerama

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



Little Boxes: The Architecture of a Classic Midcentury Suburb

Westlake is home to the houses that inspired the 'boxes made of ticky-tacky' song. Resident Rob Keil takes you through his neighborhood and shows what makes this tract so appealing. Hardcover, contemporary color and b&w vintage photos, 144 pp., \$35



Guide to Easier Living

Russel and Mary Wright personified modern design, and this reprinted vintage book shares their approach to informal living. The floor plans and advice about household chores and setting the dining table—with American Modern dinnerware of course—still resonate today. Softcover, b&w illus., 202 pp., \$19

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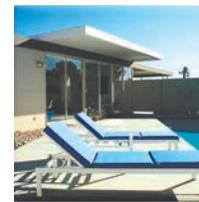
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Order books, back issues and gear at atomic-ranch.com



Collectors' dream house

text Steven Cohen
photography Jeffrey Bond



Contemporary pieces in the living room include the Cloud sofa, a red IKEA area rug, the black Saarinen Womb chair and the Herman Miller Eames Lounge chair and ottoman. The Eames molded-plywood coffee table, Saarinen side table, Bertoia Diamond chairs, Noguchi Cyclone table, wall-hung Nelson Cigar lamp and Weinberg 'Dancers' sculpture are all vintage. The '80s display shelves against the white-ash paneled wall hold some of the couple's glass and Cmielow figurine collection.



long

before we found our ideal ranch, I began my collection obsession. It all started with Will-George flamingos, which now reside in a Paul McCobb cabinet in my

home office. The highly detailed, beautiful colored porcelain flamingos were so different than the flamingos most people equate with '50s kitsch. Manufactured in the 1940s in Pasadena, Calif., by brothers Will and George Climes, these birds possessed a grace and beauty that seemed right at home with our furnishings.

Like FL Wright

In 1994 we decided it was time to start looking for our coveted midcentury modern home in Indianapolis. Our Realtor kept sending us listings of homes that were definitely ranches, just not atomic ranches. We saw a listing in the paper for what appeared to be the perfect house: "Authentic Frank Lloyd Wright: sprawling contemporary ranch with lots of windows, closets & built-ins, ceramic tile baths. Huge great room, plus formal dining room." At our urging, our agent went through the house and could hardly wait to show it to us.

As we pulled into the driveway, we told our agent we wanted it. While the inside was in poor cosmetic shape, my wife, Rhonda, and I immediately saw the incredible potential the home offered. The previous owners had retained all of the original flooring, windows, built-in cabinets, white-ash wood paneling and an Indiana Crab Orchard stone fireplace in the sunken great room. Over the years, several architects and historians have been unable to prove the Frank Lloyd Wright claims included in a front-page article in the *Indianapolis Star* when the house went on the market in 1959. Regardless, the outstanding layout and design make it perfect for us.

Once we moved into the 3,250-square-foot house, we realized our small collection of furniture and decorative objects would not nearly fill this large home; it was time to expand my collecting hobby. Rhonda is an interior design graduate whose favorite thing is to rearrange, and every time I purchase an item, she finds the perfect place for it. After 30 years of marriage, our roles have been defined: I'm the selector, she's the displayer.

As we pulled into the driveway,
we told the Realtor we wanted it.



Opposite: Wood tiles were a relatively inexpensive way to camouflage a cracked concrete walk leading from the driveway to the front door. The stone is Indiana Crab Orchard and the Bertoia Diamond chairs are vintage.

Right: The patio off the kitchen has repainted and rewebbed vintage Scroll outdoor furniture and a Knoll chaise and table designed by Richard Schultz.





my parents' pieces would eventually find their way to our home and kick-start new collections.



Opposite page: Rhonda chose all of the colors in the house, including the blues in the master bedroom, while Steve lobbied for the purple behind the Crate & Barrel Tate bed. All of the case goods are Knoll, and the Frederic Weinberg sculpture is a family heirloom purchased new in the '50s.

Opposite, bottom right: "I purchased a pair of Knoll Studio dressers in Indiana, then bought a three-piece set at a Rago auction and assumed they'd be the same sizes and finish," relates Steve Cohen. "Turned out they were Knoll Germany, which is slightly smaller and the pieces were painted." His favorite Murano horses and a two-part blue glass sculpture from his parents' collection share space with flamingos and an egret from Will-George, the latter on one of the German Knoll dressers. The 1962 lithograph poster for Deutsche Bundesbahn, the German federal railroad, encourages the public to travel with flair by train.

Left: Daughter Kat's bedroom has a Danish Jesper bed with a chenille coverlet from Linens 'n Things. A Bert Stern silkscreen of Marilyn Monroe hangs near a vintage Artifort chair by Pierre Paulin and two George Nelson metal and glass tables for Arbuck. The ball floor lamp and Royal Dux and Cmielow figures are also vintage.

The many moods of Will-George flamingos in a Paul McCobb cabinet in the home office.

Expanding the focus

Over time we have gone through phases where we concentrate on certain items. This resulted in a collection of vintage advertising posters, which led to midcentury modern classic furniture like our Saarinen Womb chair and Tulip dining and side tables, Eames lounge chair and dining chairs, Knoll Studio chests and dressers, and McCobb display cabinets and tables. That then led to replacing all the updated lighting with vintage fixtures like the Sputnik chandelier in our dining room and Louis Poulsen PH5 in the kitchen.

As a child growing up in the 1950s, my parents' home was filled with MCM furniture and decor, including a Fredric Weinberg wall sculpture, Howard Pierce horse, Danish modern accessories, George Nelson-style bench and bubble lamps, Italian glass, and a curved sofa purchased in 1952, the year I was born. Little did I realize that many of these pieces would eventually find their way to our home and kick-start new collections. Today, sprinkled throughout are stylized figurines by Ceska, Zsolnay, Royal Dux, Rosenthal and others. I've added Scandinavian and Venetian glass as well. But without a doubt, my favorite piece is a spectacular Murano glass trio of horses sculpted by Loredano Rosin for Salviati that I inherited.

In the early 1990s, I discovered the beauty of porcelain figurines produced in Poland during the 1950s and '60s. I was visiting a midcentury modern



I saw my first Cmielow figurine,



dealer in Cincinnati and saw my first Cmielow figurine, a wonderfully stylized gibbon. The dealer wouldn't part with it, but I knew I had to find one somewhere. With the advent of eBay, that quest became a lot easier, as I could purchase figurines from Poland, England (where the figures are definitely more popular than in the U.S.) and Canada. Subjects included wild animals, dogs, cats, fish and people, all incredibly stylized. I learned that the figures were designed by a number of artists from the Institute of Industrial Designing in Poland. Various Polish ceramics companies such as Cmielow, Chodziej, Wawel and Bogucice then produced these designs. It wasn't until just a few years ago that I finally was able to obtain the gibbon that started this particular collecting obsession.

Dining on history

One of our favorite features of the house wasn't even in place when we originally looked at it. A previous owner had put up a wall separating the dining room from the entry, but incredible Jetsons-style metal room dividers were found in the garage. Once the dividers were reinstalled, the room's built-in china cabinets provided me with the perfect opportunity to store and display another collection, midcentury dinnerware.

I had never paid much attention to this important part of MCM design, but at an auction I watched as one unbelievable pattern after another was sold. I jumped into the fray with absolutely no knowledge of what anything was worth (a big no-no in my book). I didn't spend a lot, but ended up with a few pieces of Franciscan Del Mar for \$10 (I loved the atomic look!), a large

The Cohens replaced white laminate counters with red, repainted the cabinet boxes to match the updated wall color, and put in a new sink and appliances. The floors, cupboard doors and drawers are original, and the chrome pendants are vintage but new to the house.

Opposite: The kitchen breakfast area has an inherited black lacquer table and chairs lit by a Poul Henningsen PH5 lamp. The Memphis-style rug on the floor is from Urban Bob-Kat, and the buffet bar is by George Nelson for Herman Miller, made by Whirlpool for Sears. "Your space age hot-or-cold food and drink server, the first of its kind for home and business," reads the brochure, which was printed by the company my dad worked for," says Steve. "I'm sure he got a great deal on the unit. When he designed his dream home, he added a special place to roll it in and out of for parties." The 1950 Disques Radio-Télé poster is by Béric, and the Japanese doll-head liquor bottles and Jens Quistgaard Dansk ice bucket were from Steve's parents as well.

a wonderfully stylized gibbon.



On display in the living room are gibbon, camel and pheasant figurines from Cmielow, while the snake charmer, African girl and opera singer are by Wawel. A blue Aalto vase sits on the top shelf, and a Memphis-inspired vessel by Transjo is on the bottom.





Pink Iroquois Casual teams with a Raymor Universal Choreography plate (top shelf) and Grant Crest Tempo; on the counter are two Wawel snack plates and three by Hallcraft—a Tomorrow's Classic gravy boat and a Century sugar bowl and teapot.



Russel Wright's Iroquois Casual (top & middle shelves), a Grant Crest Tempo plate and six pieces of Hall Tri-Tone; on the counter, from left, a Salem Free Form Tepee teapot, Midwinter Nature Study coffeepot, Ridgway Homemaker plate and Tomorrow's Classic gravy boat.



Steubenville's Raymor Contempora by Ben Seibel has a subtle, sgraffito-like surface design, seen here in Mist Gray; to the left on the counter are a creamer, coffeepot and sugar bowl in Hallcraft Tomorrow's Classic Harlequin pattern.



Red Wing Spruce plates and serving pieces designed by Charles Murphy fill three shelves; the triple-neck vase is not part of that pattern, but was a Murphy/Red Wing offering, too. On the counter are a Tomorrow's Classic satin black teapot and a white Castleton China Museum coffeepot.



boomerang serving tray, plus some assorted dishes of Metlox Mardi Gras and a Red Wing coffeepot. When I brought my new treasures home, Rhonda immediately fell for the Del Mar. I started buying pieces, and now we have a complete service for 12 that we use for our everyday dinnerware.

As I learned more and more (Michael Pratt's three *Mid-Century Modern Dinnerware* books and his MODish website are invaluable resources), I started collecting Eva Zeisel (Hall Tri-Tone and Hallcraft Tomorrow's Classic and Century), Grant Crest Tempo (very similar to the iconic Franciscan Starburst pattern), Russel Wright's Iroquois Casual, Ben Seibel's Iroquois Informal and Charles Murphy's Red Wing Spruce. I've also added a few pieces to my collection from Salem Free Form's Primitive, Comstock and Tepee patterns. But my favorite dinnerware is Viktor Schreckengost's Salem Free Form pattern. It's coveted by most collectors of this period and not easy to find.

In the past year, I've begun to sell figurines, dinnerware and home furnishings on Etsy and at local vintage shows, as we have finally filled up the wonderful space our home provides. My flock of Will-George flamingos continues to stand as a reminder of how buying a single beautiful object can turn into an obsession. Our modernist ranch is the perfect setting for all of the beautiful objects we've collected over the past three decades: a little Art Deco, a lot of mid-century modern and some 1980s Memphis make for an eclectic collection that brings beauty and history to our atomic ranch. ✨

The carpeting throughout is thought to be original, and the Cohens have no plans to replace it. New Herman Miller Eames chairs surround their vintage Saarinen Tulip table, and the white-ash china cabinet houses much of their mid-century dinnerware collection. A First chair by Michele De Lucchi and a Kariba fruit bowl by Matteo Thun—both for Memphis Milano—sit against the blue wall, along with a Nelson-style bench.

Steve and Rhonda Cohen are sales representatives in the gift specialty market. 'Stevie Sputnik' is their Etsy online handle, and they are active in Atomic Indy's 'Atomic Crash Party' scene and the Indiana Historic Landmarks' 'Back to the Future' tours. Indianapolis commercial photographer Jeffrey Bond is restoring a mid-century home that was slated for demolition. He serves clients in the architectural, automotive, industrial, health care and portrait fields.

keepitup

Tackling maintenance & renovation issues in your midcentury ranch ...

Oh Jeez—
Is that **ASBESTOS** ?!



Unfortunately for enthusiasts of midcentury homes, the use of asbestos in everyday building materials was peaking at the time many of these structures were built. Anyone who lived in the '50s, '60s and '70s probably encountered asbestos-containing elements almost daily at home or work. The materials were newly applied and intact, and the risk of asbestos fiber release was minimal.

But now that some of these products are 40 to 60 years old and beginning to fail or become aesthetically dated, we





9" vinyl floor tile



Ceiling plaster skim coat



Water-damaged asbestos popcorn ceiling



Floor tile and mastic



Asbestos spray ceiling on plaster



Damaged air cell insulation on pipes

are tempted to rip them out and replace them. You might not guess from watching flipping and DIY shows on television, but the potential health risks associated with asbestos increases greatly when a sledgehammer blasts through a wall or textured ceiling, or vinyl floors are scraped from their substrates. Repairs and renovations can be performed safely and without undue stress if a plan to assess and remove hazardous materials safely, and confirm that the space is safe for reoccupation, is in place.

Natural but noxious

Asbestos is a family of naturally occurring fibrous minerals mined from the earth. The fibers have been woven into fabrics to protect from fire and insulate against heat since Egyptian times, and its usage increased in the late-19th and early-20th centuries with steam and radiator

Opposite: The author encountered asbestos issues in his own home during a recent remodel. Testing revealed asbestos in vinyl flooring and its adhesives, as well as in the joint compound on several walls due for demolition; these were all professionally abated prior to the fun part of the project.

heating. In the mid-20th century when most ranches were constructed, asbestos was added to reinforce cement-based products and improve insulating properties in surfacing materials. These building products do not pose a health hazard as long as they remain intact and the asbestos fibers are bound into the matrix of the materials, but if damaged or they begin to deteriorate and crumble, fibers may be dispersed into the air.

Asbestos fibers can cause scarring or lung cancer if inhaled; however, individual sensitivities vary and adverse health conditions may not crop up until 20 years later. As medical research began to decipher the potential health hazards of asbestos exposure to workers who inhaled large quantities of fibers, spray-applied asbestos materials were banned in the United States in the early '70s and its use in insulating products was banned soon thereafter. By the end of the decade, most asbestos in building materials was phased out completely in the U.S.

Suspect materials

Private residences are mostly exempt from EPA or local regulations requiring evaluation by licensed inspectors, but

keepitup

that does not mean homes are inherently safe. (You may also have legal liability issues if you rent to other occupants.) If you plan to remove or otherwise disturb the matrix of suspected asbestos-containing materials, a licensed asbestos inspector can properly identify the risks.

In midcentury buildings, common interior structural materials that might contain asbestos include drywall joint compound, plaster surfaces and insulation on plumbing and heating lines and fittings. Interior finishes like sheet vinyl or vinyl tiles, flooring adhesives, sprayed 'popcorn' ceilings and troweled textured wall or ceiling surfaces may contain it, too. Suspect exterior materials include cement roof and siding shingles (often with a wood-grain look), asphalt roofing felt and sealant, window and doorframe caulk, and cement-asbestos panels used on soffits. Specialty asbestos-containing products include woven cloth wiring insulation, silver reflective fiber discs inside light fixtures and even the fake snow found on many '50s and '60s Christmas decorations.

This list is by no means comprehensive, but does include many basic building materials you may encounter. A licensed asbestos inspector can assist you by safely collecting samples and submitting them for laboratory analysis of asbestos content. The inspector will provide a brief report with the lab data and recommendations. Depending on your geographic location, his or her rates might vary from \$50 to \$90 per hour, and charges may include travel and onsite time, laboratory costs and report preparation.

Degrees of concern

Asbestos-containing materials are divided into two broad categories—friable and non-friable—based on their ability to be crumbled or crushed by hand pressure. Friable materials include sprayed or troweled ceiling and wall coatings, heating or plumbing system insulation, drywall joint compound and floor-leveling compounds; these may or may not contain asbestos, depending on the date of application. Friable materials can be dangerous to disturb since fibers are easily dispersed, and their removal should be carefully planned and executed.

Non-friable materials are those in which the asbestos fibers are bound into the matrix of the product, and the material cannot be easily crumbled by hand pressure. Think

roofing, siding shingles, cement-asbestos panels, vinyl flooring and adhesives. These materials can be handled safely as long as methods are used which do not make them friable. For example, the asbestos content in midcentury floor tiles and adhesives is minimal, but if the adhesive is removed from the subfloor or slab with a sander, the resulting airborne fiber concentrations in the home can be significantly elevated. Similarly, asbestos-cement siding can be removed safely with wetting and other certain precautions, but if the shingles are demolished by impact or dry cutting, significant fiber release can result.

DIY or a pro?

Basic precautions should always be undertaken to limit asbestos exposure, but homeowners should feel comfortable performing most everyday chores and repairs like nailing or drilling a hole into a wall, replacing a few floor tiles or patching a small area of damage. A little added water from a spray bottle can help limit dust and fiber dispersal for an extra safety measure for those chores. But if your project involves removing an entire ceiling, several hundred square feet of floor tile, or taking out walls to open up the floor plan, then hiring a trained asbestos





removed debris. Depending on the size of the project and the abatement work crew, the work could be completed in as little as a single day.

Homestretch

Once the materials are removed and before the temporary containment is dismantled, a third-party professional should be hired to collect and test air clearance samples, confirming that remaining asbestos fiber concentrations in the air are acceptable for occupation. This professional—an asbestos project monitor—can be found through the abatement contractor or inspector, or hired independently. Many project monitors can collect samples and test them onsite the same day. Acceptable testing results mean that the contractor can complete

abatement contractor will help ensure a safe workplace.

A licensed asbestos abatement contractor will utilize methods of removal and wear protective equipment to minimize health risks. Indoors, workers may construct negative air pressure containment with plastic sheeting so fibers stay in the work area, and use HEPA filters (which can remove 99.97% of particles from the air) to purify the workspace several times an hour. The contractor will also seal any air supply vents or air return ducts to and from the work area. With all these safety measures in place, the remainder of the structure remains safe for occupation.

The materials will be wetted during removal and the debris placed into disposal containers inside the contained area. For removal of flooring adhesives that will not easily scrape, solvents will likely be used to avoid grinding or sanding. When the asbestos removal work is complete, the contractor will clean with HEPA-filtered vacuums, break down the containment barriers and haul the debris to the appropriate landfill.

Outdoor projects like asbestos siding or roof shingle removal will not require air containment, but the abatement contractor will keep the materials wet at all times and place heavy plastic sheeting to collect and contain the

the removal of containment barriers and equipment.

Remember that most asbestos-containing products are safe as long as they are intact and not disturbed, but if you must rid your home of that textured ceiling or the gold-and-green kitchen flooring, know the potential risks and plan accordingly. Have your hazards properly evaluated, and then reserve an appropriate portion of the project timeline and budget to safely execute the work. And remember to request and keep testing and disposal documents from the contractors and other professionals so you can prove a safe home or workplace to future owners and occupants. ☸

Terence Davis is a licensed professional geologist, asbestos inspector and asbestos abatement designer living in a renovated 1963 modernist ranch in Knoxville, Tenn. An admirer of midcentury architecture and design, he shares his local vintage finds at KnoxModern; go to facebook.com/KnoxModern.

Send your queries and photos for our authorities' review, along with solutions that others may benefit from, to editor@atomic-ranch.com.

happy-go-lucky modern



text Bromley Davenport
photography Jim Brown

Pops of happy color appear on the Arne Jacobsen Egg chair, Hans Wegner-attributed wing chair and the back door leading to the shade garden. A Bertoia sound sculpture stands next to the window wall and the original baseboard hot water heating system circles the room.





Craig Wakefield is overjoyed to wear two hats these days—

one as a practicing dentist and the other as Philadelphia's midcentury modernist Realtor. "In 2008 I went home to Cincinnati and saw that Susan Rissover was specializing in midcentury," says the 51-year-old Wakefield. "I thought it was crazy that Philly didn't have someone comparable."

So he took the necessary real estate training, and in a few short months had a website up and was sharing his passion for Philadelphia postwar design. "There's a creative community in Philly with a large number of people who love these houses. The developers here are incredibly traditional, and I think we have less new architecture than a lot of cities, but there is a demand for these mid-centuries."

Three years earlier, he and his partner moved from a condo in center city to a compact 1955 ranch they saw advertised one Sunday. "We hadn't discussed buying a house, but within four hours we were under contract," Wakefield says.

Surrounded by late-Victorian and early-20th-century mansions in the Chestnut Hill neighborhood, the house is one of six midcentury moderns clustered together. "It's 1,700 square feet, three bedrooms and two baths—a bright, happy house. It's great for somebody who doesn't want to do a lot of yard work, and it's in a great location with miles and miles of trails and a cute little downtown with walkable restaurants." In other words they heeded the realty bromide, 'location, location, location.'

Other than cosmetic work—painting, furnishings, light fixtures and gardening—the couple had little heavy lifting to do. In the kitchen Wakefield installed new appliances and quartz counters, but kept the original cabinetry, the recent mosaic tile backsplash and even the green paint. "It's really cheerful and bright and I liked the colors, so I never changed anything," he explains. "I thought about opening up the wall between the kitchen and dining, but I love the compactness and how this house works."

"I am personally more of a purist, but I really believe people should be happy in their houses. There are some homes that are architecturally significant that would be greatly devalued if the kitchen was changed, but that's pretty rare. Material choices are important, and having

The tongue-and-groove paneling, Shaker-like built-ins and fireplace surround are all original. Wakefield uses the vintage desk and Eames Soft Pad Management chair on a daily basis, surrounded by generic midcentury decorative items and a painting on etched glass of his own over the fireplace.



A colorful vignette in the living room includes a vintage credenza, a contemporary abstract by Daniel Phill and a glass vase by Pacific Northwest artist Eric Brakken.



The main floor layout is pretty intuitive: From the front entry, a left takes you to the dining room and kitchen, while opposite the closet and striped rug are stairs up and down to bedrooms and baths. Two vintage George Nelson Pedestal side tables and a reissued Saarinen coffee table on a handwoven area rug surround the Bantam sofa. The black & white chair is vintage, while the Eames cowhide molded plywood lounge chair is new. Primary colors found in the four Alexander Calder prints and eBay mobile were repeated elsewhere in the room.





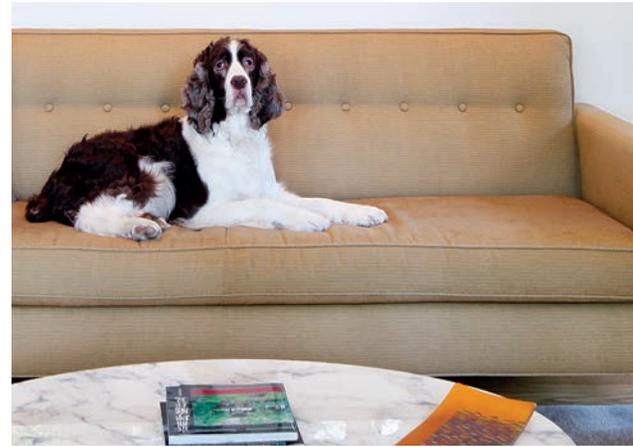


granite and all the newest stuff isn't always great. There were some unfortunate things done in the '80s and '90s when these houses weren't appreciated, but now people are updating their kitchens to today's technology and for the way their families function; I think that's all good."

The couple enjoys a variety of interior design aesthetics: His partner is partial to sleek Italian modern, and their shore house has a totally different look. At this Chestnut Hill home, casual comfort and materials friendly to Lukas, their English Springer Spaniel, prevail. The bright and happy theme begins at the chartreuse front and back doors, and continues inside, with white walls, yellow-green ceilings and living room hues that pick up the colors in the Alexander Calder prints over the sofa. "I think of the red Arne Jacobsen chair, the blue Hans Wegner chair and orange fireplace wall as less '50s shades and more '60s primary colors," Wakefield says.

The living room is a little small for two separate furniture groupings, and the couple like the sparseness and circulation space that their edited number of pieces offer. Wakefield's vintage desk sits next to the fireplace, rather than the couch, which instead looks out to the deck and garden. The Jacobsen Egg chair and a vintage maybe-Wegner wing chair form a conversational grouping by the windows.

Furthering the cosmetic-improvements-only theme, Wakefield added perennials to the foundation plantings and nurtured the front yard's moss for a relatively low-



Looking toward the kitchen and front door, three contemporary artworks include a Rothko-inspired glass piece by the homeowner on the partition wall, a wave-like wood sculpture and a mahogany bench by Keizo Tsukada. Six DARs (dining armchair, rod base in the Eameses' parlance) surround a vintage Saarinen Tulip table with a 'stabile' in the center.

The original kitchen cabinets and layout still look modern and work well with the new sink, appliances and counters.



A few favorites

Researching and touring outstanding vintage homes is a major perk of Craig Wakefield's real estate practice. Among his favorite Philadelphia residences and architects are these:



Barry Halkin



Jim Brown



Craig Wakefield (5)

Mitchell Residence

Designed by Ehrman Mitchell in 1956 as his personal residence, the four-bedroom, 4.5-bath home was owned by the family for five decades. A master bedroom, dining room and carport were added over the years, bringing it to 3,200 square feet. "His firm, Mitchell/Giurgola, was known internationally for projects like the Wright Brothers National Memorial in North Carolina, and the Australian Parliament House in Canberra. The Mitchell house is in a beautiful setting on 2.5 acres, and it has all of the classic modern elements—stone and glass—that give the home a feeling of substance, yet open to the outdoors," Wakefield says.

Hassrick Residence

"I also love some of the original Neutras here—they're pretty spectacular with their big glass walls, like the 1958 Hassrick House [coming up in Atomic Ranch]." The International Style house was inexpensively built for an artist and his young family out of local materials, and it has a 40' glass wall in the living room and a kitchen credenza by George Nakashima. "These houses sell themselves architecturally," the Realtor says.

D'Onofrio Residence

"Arthur Tofani's work made my hair stand up," Wakefield exclaims about his visit to the D'Onofrio residence. "It is one of the most unique houses that I've ever seen. With other homes, you can see that there are influences that they've drawn from, but I don't know of anything else like this one. The roof is just spectacular: It curves in multiple directions and was built like a boat hull, in pieces. All of the rainfall from the whole house [is funneled] to the living room end, and goes through a metal scoop to fall into a pool of water about four feet from the house. It's a major, beautiful fountain when it rains."



Carner and Sheppard Residences

"Frank Weise studied under Walter Gropius in Boston, and his work was fantastic. He did some cutting-edge stuff for Philly—steel-frame houses that were a reflection of the Farnsworth and Glass houses. They were elevated, all steel and glass with no exterior wood, floating in nature without trying to alter that nature," Wakefield explains.

"Each of Weise's houses is different. He only did about eight residences, all in the early '50s. The Sheppard House (above, left and center) has an expansive living/dining room, entry area, four bedrooms and two baths upstairs, and many wonderful architectural details. In the 1951 Carner House, the contrast between the Brutalist exterior (above, right) and the interior is startling: When you walk through the front door, the woodwork is original, with cork on some walls, and it's open, bright and very warm."



maintenance landscape. "When I moved in, it was 50/50 grass and moss, and I made a decision on which way to go," he says. "Moss is definitely native to our front yard, and it's taken years, but I've worked hard to make it a solid moss bed—I hand weed it in the spring."

The most noticeable change that the pair made was to the street facade. "I really struggled with the garage door. I love my house, but I think the front isn't as fun as the rest, and I wanted to liven it up," Wakefield explains. "But being a purist, it was hard for me to change out the original four-panel wood door. I debated if I'd be hurting my house to put in a modern garage door, but now I think it added to the look of the front."

"I bought this house before knowing about some of the

other modernist Philly houses, and we have the ability to move. But as all of these great ones come on the market, I'm not tempted. I still love my house." ✿

Learn more about the region's midcentury homes at modernhomesphiladelphia.com. For another great Philly home feature, we recommend 'Life Lessons' in Summer 2013, No. 38, available at atomic-ranch.com

Stone balls accent the sun-dappled moss lawn in early fall, and at driveway level you see the new anodized aluminum Avanti garage door from Clopay. Bottom: A trio of Richard Schultz 1966 Collection outdoor furniture on the back deck, with a bank of sweet woodruff groundcover in the foreground.



homework

Denver Curb Appeal



Approaching my 66th birthday last year, I decided it was time to downsize and find a house that could take me through my aging-gracefully years. As I searched for homes without basements and stairs, I happened upon the Krisana Park neighborhood of Denver. The tract of 174 homes was designed in the style of Joseph Eichler's California contemporaries and was con-

structed in the mid-'50s by developer H.B. Wolff & Company. The "3-D Contemporary," as Wolff named the house design I chose, had an open floor plan, exposed-beam ceilings and large window walls oriented to take full advantage of Colorado's abundant sunny days.

Because very little of the original character of the home had been altered over the years, architect Rosie Fivian

text Carol March
photography Rosie Fivian

BEFORE



and I were able to focus our efforts on taking the house to the next level. Rosie's keen eye for modern architecture can be seen in the dramatic effect we achieved by adding concrete block feature walls, moving the driveway and converting the side-entry carport into a front-entry garage.

The exterior paint color on the main house is Benjamin Moore Ashley Gray. We chose a darker Benjamin Moore color, Fairview Taupe, to add emphasis to the garage addition and the feature walls. The red front door is BM Caliente, and the interior features a variety of red accents. The turned-block detail on the garage is found throughout the neighborhood, and was chosen to help the new garage appear as if it had always been there.

Another goal was to make the house senior citizen-friendly. Achieving that included replacing the step-up to the front door with a concrete ramp, along with ramp

entries from the new garage and expanded backyard deck. The interior also got a facelift. We removed a wall blocking the view from the kitchen to the living room, replaced the kitchen cabinets and appliances, updated both bathrooms, widened doorways, converted the wood-burning fireplace to gas and replaced single-pane window walls with double-pane.

Though the original 1,200 square feet of livable space has undergone a thoroughly modern update, we believe the wonderful bones and winning design still shine through. I have no doubt that I can stay in my beautifully remodeled midcentury modern home for years to come. ✿

Carol March is a retired sales executive who completed some 23 renovation projects over the past 40 years; she saved the biggest and best for last. Boulder architect Rosie Fivian's website is architectista.com.

ranchdressing

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

Q: Fifteen years ago our 10-year-old son talked his mother into buying this chair at an estate sale; I believe we paid \$25 for it. We have never seen another like it and are curious if you can tell us anything about it. It was not in perfect condition—the plastic had fine scratches from use and there was a small



streak of white paint across the black leather seat cushion. It's comfortable to sit in but it's gotten very little use because it is so low. The house was filled with many other items dating to the 1950s, so I'm guessing it came from that era.

Steven Fisher

A: *Valery Lovely & Tony Aguirre of gonkedglookedandslurped.com reply: "The Lucite and leather chair seemed like a Laverne Originals knockoff at first look, but further research shows that it's a 1970s arm-*

chair by French decorator Raphael Raffel. If you Google his name, examples will show up."

Retrologo.com tagged a twin with brown synthetic leather as a 'Plexi Ball' chair, but that seems to be a descriptive name; other sites call it a Raphael lounge chair. A pair of these chairs sold for \$990 in 2011, and another pair in cognac-colored leather were listed for \$4,900, so your \$25 is looking pretty sweet.



Q: I got this typical but beautiful brass and enamel wall sculpture off eBay super cheap. It was dirty, cobwebbed and ugly, but I had seen these before and was hoping once I cleaned it off it would look better. To my delight, a spot of turquoise appeared, and as I kept wiping, more of the ugly tempura paint it was covered with came off and the shiny enamel was exposed.

I have no idea who the maker is and neither did the sellers. It took a lot of elbow grease and vinegar and water to remove all the paint. I went through three electric toothbrushes and hours of patience to restore it.

Hugo Hernandez

A: *Bobbie Ann Tilkens-Fisher from AtHomeModern.com took a look: "There is a chance that this piece is Curtis Jere, as they did do some enamel work early on. However, with the amount of scrubbing needed to restore the piece, it is doubtful that any trace of a signature still exists. It's lovely and was a good bargain, so enjoy it regardless."*

Q: I have been looking for pieces to fill my future ranch home, which led me to this discovery: a set of what I believe to be McCobb brass-framed side tables. Are they original? What year? What were the original tops on these? What are they worth in their current condition? Should I restore them myself (i.e. polish the brass) or should I leave that to a pro? What could they be worth after restoration and what could I expect to pay for professional services? Any info would be greatly appreciated.

Luis Borrero

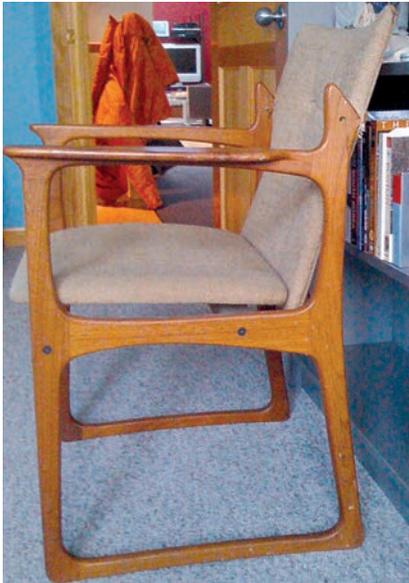
A: *We went to McCobb collector and historian Jonathan Goldstein (paulmccobb.blogspot.com) for the scoop: "These original McCobb pieces would have been produced by the Calvin Furniture Co. between 1954 and 1962, give or take a few months. There were four options for the table tops: a matching mahogany veneered wooden top, which I think we can effectively discount as these tops would more than likely still be attached to the tables; Italian travertine marble; 'Radio Black' marble (which was truly a granite and can still be obtained from original sources); and white Carrara glass—the most expensive option and arguably the most beautiful.*



"Any restoration should be left to a professional if you wish to maintain the historical value of these tables. It's very hard to estimate worth on things such as mid-century design, as among other considerations, the market is highly regional. A similar pair of tables with Carrara glass tops sold at auction awhile back for \$10,000-plus, which is not to say that your tables would necessarily fetch anywhere near this money, but just proves that miracles do happen. A good place to get an idea of auction results over the past few years is liveauctioneers.com. I might recommend looking for your tables on there to get an idea of what recent auction results have been in your area."

For more great information on McCobb's designs, we recommend 'Modern Masters' in Issue No. 35, Fall 2012, available at atomic-ranch.com.

ranchdressing



Q: I found this chair on the sidewalk in Boston. We are fixing the broken back and will reupholster it next. In the meantime, I'm looking for any information regarding a date, origin or designer. It has been identified as teak, but that's all I have.

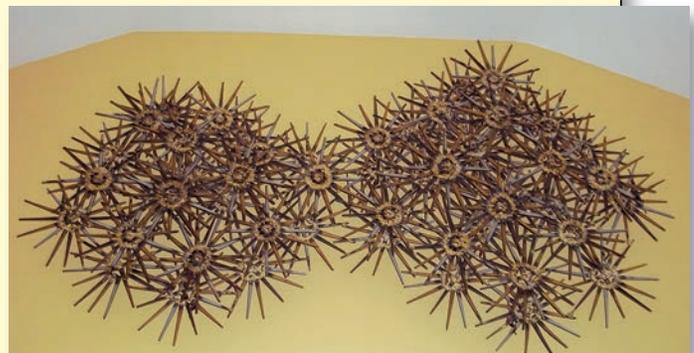
Patty Zerhusen

A: *Tilkens-Fisher conferred with a colleague for this one: "I consulted with my friend Jeremy Schneyer of Revolver Vintage Interiors (revolvervintage.com) and we both agree that this is Danish, from the 1970s and it was most likely manufactured by Glostrup as a dining chair. Grete Jalk designed for them."*

We didn't find a direct match online; the nicely detailed armrest is similar to some Jalk designs, but the horizontal stretcher at the base of the legs—which leads to the '70s guesstimate—is not.

croutons

The Brutalist sculpture on page 78 of the Spring 2013 issue was made by artist Mark Weinstein for his company, Marc Creates, and is called 'Radiance.' You can read more about Mark and his company on his website, marccreates.com.



His sculptures from the '70s have a small, round gold sticker (maybe 1" in diameter) on the back of the piece that says 'Marc Creates St. Louis, MO'; there's an example on the history page of the site.

Valery & Tony, Gonked Glooked & Slurped

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

atomic events

Through September 8 Los Angeles

A. Quincy Jones: Building For Better Living

The Hammer Museum examines A. Quincy Jones' Eichler tracts and custom homes (including this issue's Brentwood residence, page 10) in Pacific Standard Time Presents: Modern Architecture in L.A.; pacificstandardtimepresents.org.



The 2012 Market featured Herman Miller

September 27–29 Columbus, Ohio

20th Century Design Market

A weekend of home tours, cocktail parties, lectures, food trucks, Vespas and vintage and new midcentury wares at the Columbus Museum of Art; columbusmuseum.org/20cdm.



The 1964 Phillips House by architect John Sanders Chase

October 5–6 Nationwide

Docomomo Tour Day 2013

Celebrate the national modern architecture movement with a tour or lecture near you. This year's event focuses



Albert Gnidica

Wallace K. Harrison's Empire State Plaza

on structures and sites that are in transition, including Lawrence Halprin's Portland Open-Space Sequence fountains in Oregon; Austin residences and commercial buildings by John Sanders Chase, the state's first African American architect; and the midcentury modern Empire State Plaza, which itself replaced 1,500 historic homes in an Italian immigrant neighbor of Albany, N.Y. After September 5, visit docomomo-us.org/tourday for a complete listing and plan your weekend.

October 11–14 Palm Springs

Modernism Week Fall Season Kick-Off

The Columbus Day weekend event will include architectural tours, a retro yard sale, a swanky cocktail party and the Modernism Week Double Decker Bus Tours. Tickets at modernismweek.com, and special hotel rates are available at Hilton Palm Springs.

October 12 Palm Springs

Modernism Garage Sale

Vendors, collectors and homeowners selling midcentury clothing, furnishings, art and more at 1701 N. Palm Canyon Drive, 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. Proceeds benefit the Palm Springs Animal Shelter. More info at PaulKaplanGroup.com.

Through October 27 **Santa Rosa, Calif.**

Mid-Century Modern

For a light-hearted look at MCM, visit The Charles M. Schulz Museum's exhibition comparing the Schulzes' home lifestyle with iconic furnishings shown in '50s and '60s *Peanuts* comic strips. Two words: wine country; schulzmuseum.org.

October 29–November 2 **Indianapolis**

National Preservation Conference: Preservation at the Crossroads

Events and educational sessions were still being finalized at press time, so check the site for updates on topics of interest to midcentury enthusiasts at the annual conference put on by the National Trust for Historic Preservation; preservationnation.org.



Courtesy IMAC Collection

The 1959 AIA award-winning Washington Water Power Central Operating Facility.

January 12, 2014 **Spokane, Wash.**

Spokane Modern Architecture: 1948–1973

The city's architectural creativity during this 25-year period is showcased at an exhibit at the Northwest Museum of Arts & Culture. Explore the work of Ken Brooks, Moritz Kundig, Royal McClure, Bill Trogdon and Bruce Walker through vintage photography, drawings, models, select furnishings and decorative arts; northwestmuseum.org.

Through February 23, 2014 **Sacramento**

Ray Eames: A Century of Modern Design

The California Museum is celebrating the early work of hometown girl Ray Eames with an exhibition of family artifacts from her early life in Sacramento and work prior to meeting Charles in 1941; californiamuseum.org.

Ongoing **Miami Beach**

Cleaner, Healthier, Easier: Improving the Modern Home, 1900–1945

Interiors, furnishings and timesaving appliances that spoke to the world's interest in an efficient, hygienic home were popularized in the years before and after World War I. The Wolfsonian FIU brings together drawings, objects and advertisements that illustrate the drive to make one's home modern in this ongoing exhibition; wolfsonian.org.



Sori Yanagi Butterfly stool

Ongoing **NYC**

Plywood: Material, Process, Form

MoMA's collection of modern plywood designs dates from the 1930s through the '50s and includes furniture from Alvar Aalto, Eero Saarinen, Arne Jacobsen, the Eameses and Sori Yanagi, along with an architectural model by Marcel Breuer; moma.org.

resources

Mutual Admiration Society, pp. 10-21

Architect: Cory Buckner, corybuckner.com ✖ **Interior Designer:** Sarah Farris-Gilbert, gracehilton.com ✖ **Bedroom furnishings:** Alpine bed & nightstands, Bentwood V-leg bed, Eames storage unit, modernica.net ✖ Saarinen Tulip chair, knoll.com ✖ **Living & dining room furnishings:** Marshmallow sofa, Eames Sofa Compact, Saarinen Tulip side table, yiving.com ✖ Eames DCMs, allmodern.com ✖ Wood frame sofa, organicmodernism.com ✖ Bow Tie Console table, zurndesign.com ✖ **Kitchen & master bath:** Appliances, smegusa.com ✖ Counters, silestoneusa.com ✖ Backsplash, Rigidized Metals, rigidized.com ✖ Sinks, julien.ca ✖ Faucets, Kallista One, kallista.com ✖ Tile, heathceramics.com ✖ Fixtures, hansgrohe-usa.com ✖ Custom pulls, goebelfurniture.com ✖ **Flooring:** armstrong.com ✖ marmoleum.com ✖ flor.com ✖ Nani Marquina Rangoli rug, yiving.com ✖ **Lighting:** Nelson bubble lamps, Half-Nelsons, modernica.net ✖ Praying Mantis, organicmodernism.com ✖ Cobra, dwr.com ✖ **Windows:** metalwindowcorp.com ✖ Anco Glass & Mirror, Van Nuys, Calif., 818.780.9099 ✖ **Paint removal:** paintshaverpro.com ✖ XRF gun rental, equipcoservices.com ✖ Peel Away, dumondchemicals.com ✖ Sampedro Painters, Granada Hills, Calif., 818.481.9171 ✖ **Carpenters:** Carlos Lopez, 818.941.0625 ✖ Cliff vonWinkleman 626.390.6003 ✖ **Electrician:** Louis Talamantez, ltdeigns.com ✖ **Plumber:**

Homer Rhoades, Alchemy Plumbing, Santa Monica, 310.488.6240 ✖ HVAC: Chan Poland, 909.908.1104 ✖ **Countertop installation:** takeusforgranite.biz ✖ **Landscape consultation:** aprilpalmerlandscapedesign.com ✖ **Historic nomination:** Anna Brooks, victorianhomes.com/annamariebrooks.html

Collectors' Dream House, pp. 36-45

Furnishings: Cloud sofa and loveseat, Nelson Bubble lamps, modernica.net ✖ Saarinen Tulip side table, Saarinen Womb chair, Eames Lounge chair & ottoman, Bertoia Diamond Lounge chairs, Eames Molded Plywood table, Noguchi Cyclone table, Eames Molded Plastic side chairs: yiving.com ✖ **Tate bed:** crateandbarrel.com ✖ **Lighting:** Louis Poulsen Poul Henningsen PH5, yighting.com ✖ **Similar rug:** Bälum, ikea.com/us

Happy-Go-Lucky Modern, pp. 54-63

Furnishings: Eames DARs, Saarinen tables, Soft Pad Management chair, Outdoor furniture, yiving.com ✖ Bantam sofa, Jacobsen Egg chair, Onda barstool, dwr.com ✖ **Värde storage unit:** ikea.com/us ✖ **Art bench:** handandhome.net ✖ **Entry rug:** Gianni, crateandbarrel.com ✖ **Similar mobiles & stables:** Moderne, atomicmobiles.com ✖ Ekko, dwr.com ✖ **Artwork:** craigtwakefield.com

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SPECIALIZING IN DANISH AND AMERICAN MID CENTURY FURNITURE

The advertisement for Midcentury Møbler features a photograph of a wooden cabinet with drawers and a bench seat. To the right of the image is the company's logo, which consists of three stylized, upward-pointing starburst shapes. Below the logo is the company name "MIDCENTURYMØBLER" in a sans-serif font, followed by contact information: a phone number, an email address, and a website URL. At the bottom, a tagline reads "SPECIALIZING IN DANISH AND AMERICAN MID CENTURY FURNITURE".

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- ▶ Saarinen's ecclesiastical village
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