

# atomic ranch

MIDCENTURY MARVELS



SPRING 2012



\$6.95 us/can  
On sale until May 31, 2012

**doubling a ranch 60**

**keeping it original 36**

**the 'burbs of st. louis 12**



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# spring 2012

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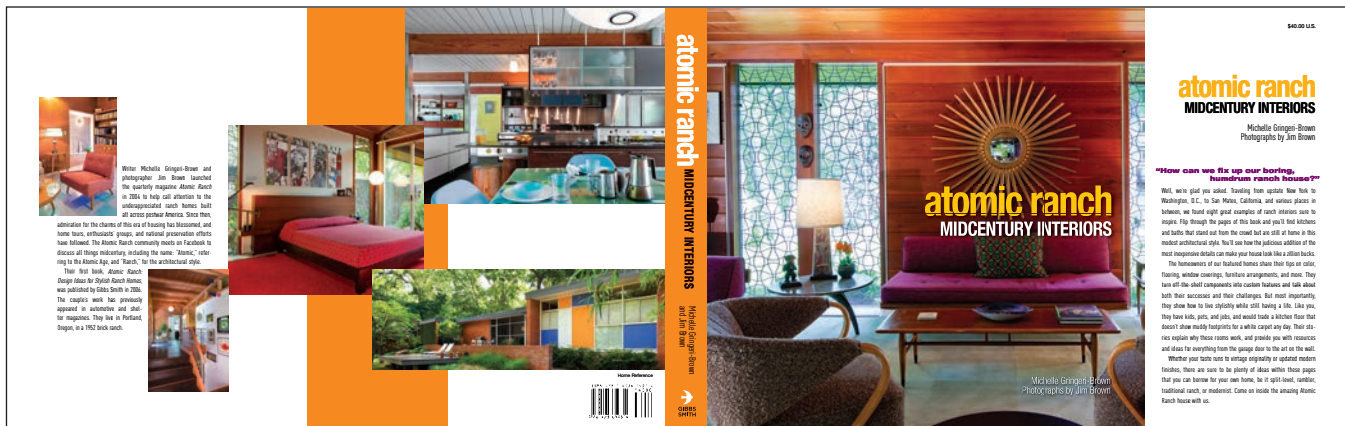
The living/dining room in this 1955 Eichler in Sacramento is filled with vintage furnishings and re-created original finishes, including pickled paneling and cork floors. The Eames elliptical 'surfboard' table was designed in 1951, and the black DCWs that began the duo's relationship with Herman Miller in the '40s, are teamed with an oval Florence Knoll dining table. The vintage armchair and couch are George Nelson designs, as is the spindle clock. The large abstract is by Craig Martinez and the two-tone Krenit bowls are Danish. Story page 36.



# my2cents

I never imagined we'd write two coffee-table books and be looking at our 10-year anniversary back when we were developing the magazine in the summer of 2003. We were so hot to get the title out there before someone else thought of it that we never considered five months was a pretty short incubation. Those of you who have Atomic Ranch no. 1 in your libraries know that issue was, indeed, modest. We featured an Eichler in Orange County and a custom home in Glendale, Calif. We even shot a relative's ranch and a retro exhibition at the L.A. County Fair. Ads were free, but resulted in some long-lived relationships—Orbit In, Paul Kaplan, Moon Shine Lamp and Shade, Out of Vogue, Otto and Contemporary Cloth are still with us today. Thanks, guys.

And when the opportunity to write our first book arose, we learned a lot about editing down the



lavish words and photos we enjoy sharing in the magazine. This time around, we knew we wanted to address fewer homes in more depth, hence our eight-house focus in *Atomic Ranch: Midcentury Interiors*.

In his publisher's letters, Jim has addressed his positive experiences shooting in seven cities, plus here in Portland, Ore., in the span of four months. He hasn't written about the joy of prepping 200 digital images for the printer, but if the hard copy is close to the pdfs we've viewed, that Herculean effort was worth it.

My job was to develop the concept, find the homes and winnow down about 12 hours of interviews and untold follow-up emails to 30,000 words. Here's what I learned in the process about great-looking midcentury interiors:

- The floor plan is what will make your home work, or not.
- Architects know more than homeowners; if you're adding on or doing a serious remodel, hire one—it will make a big difference in the final result.
- Continuity of materials and a limited palette go a long way: don't paint every room a different color and include all of the finishes you saw on HGTV last season.
- Keep or re-create original elements whenever you can; they'll look better in your ranch than faddish features.
- Your home's exterior architecture—modern, traditional, tract—should inform its interior; no luxury spa baths in a rambler, please.

As you read this, the new book should be on its way to stores, so check our site for updates. We hope you like it and find inspiration in its pages. It was fun, but now it's time for some R&R.

*Michelle Gringeri-Brown*  
Editor



# atomic ranch®

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# modernwisdom

In 1943, the U.S. government began the top-secret Manhattan Project. After flying over many possible sites, they chose the tiny Richland/White Bluffs area on the Columbia River in southeastern Washington state to build the world's first nuclear reactor to supply plutonium for the atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The government took over the territory and built a town from the ground up to house more



Teresa Knirck (2)



than 20,000 people for this war effort.

By 1958, for the first time residents could purchase homes and land. The houses built here in the late '50s and '60s are true Atomic Ranches in the Atomic City. Please consider a visit to learn more; the Columbia River Exhibition of Science and Technology has prepared an extensive history of the housing in Richland.

**Teresa Knirck**  
Richland, Wash.

\* I read that some folks think you have devoted too much space to “upscale, stuffy projects” (paraphrasing). I don't agree. I love the fact that you acknowledge that these homes can be brought into contemporary times and still remain extremely sensitive to the original

design. It is possible—I've done it myself.

The purists out there that can't stand anything other than pristine vintage can tend to get really kitschy and trite. I can appreciate both, but to me design is a careful editing of what you have to work with, and blind adherence to one style doesn't necessarily make for good design—if you get my drift.

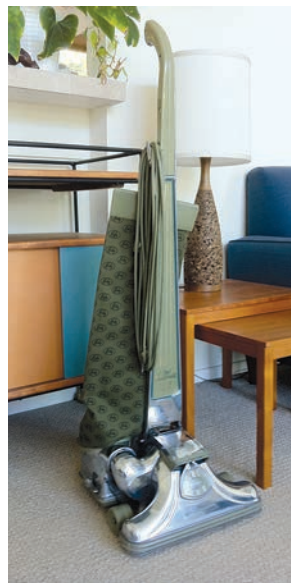
Keep up the good work; variety is important.

**Christopher Studach**

\* I feel so lucky to have found your magazine—I adore it! Maybe you've already covered this in an earlier issue, but how about doing a feature on MCM appliances? I'm always looking for nice old pieces to include as bric-a-brac around my Eichler. Most recently, I became interested in vintage vacuum cleaners like those designed for Electrolux by pioneer industrial designer Lurelle Guild. Just a suggestion; thanks again for a superb publication!

**Graham Davis**  
San Rafael, Calif.

*We've covered vintage kitchen appliances in the context of several whole-house features over the years, but an article devoted to the topic takes an enthusiast with a deep collection and good photographic skills. In addition to vacuums, there are tons of kitchen countertop*



Graham Davis (2)

*items—coffee pots, waffle makers, can openers, mixers, toasters, blenders—as well as vintage stoves, wall ovens, refrigerators, clocks, radios, irons—well, you get the idea.*

*We do have an upcoming article on col-*

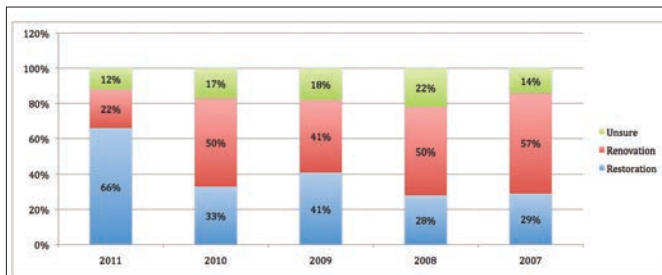


lecting Mirro Medallionware and refinishing Heywood-Wakefield, but we welcome proposals from would-be contributors at [editor@atomic-ranch.com](mailto:editor@atomic-ranch.com).

—ar editor

\* In the most recent edition of AR, I noticed several readers' letters commenting on what they perceived as an uneven distribution of articles in recent issues. Some saw this as a "trend" of sorts in the magazine. Being an unemployed social scientist, nothing bothers me more than people saying that something is a trend or such without any solid data to back that up.

Luckily, I have many back editions of AR and a little time on my hands, so I went back through the issues I have (with a few holes in data here and there) and



found that, apart from 2011, your readers don't necessarily have the data to back up their claims. I've attached the histogram to this email.

I did a rough classification of articles as either renovations or restorations or "unsure." I excluded articles on neighborhoods, specific MCM icons and landscaping. I also counted the number of houses, not the number of articles. Thus, in the Working Class Heroes articles that often contain more than one house, each home was counted. The houses in the unsure category were either ones that left me on the fence between reno and restore, or for which I couldn't find enough data to make a clear classification. I'm sure I misclassified some of these, as I really just pulled this together over my morning coffee.

It seemed to me that across the years there is more coverage of homes tending toward restoration than renovation. Thanks for indulging me with this!

**Heidi Swank**



**Before**



**After**

Suzanne Irwin

\* I spent a lot of time looking for a midcentury house with character that hadn't been stripped away already. After about a year of searching I found one covered in woodbine with a giant dead evergreen in front of it. There was no insulation in the attic and it had dead animals in the fireplace. It needed some work!

The previous owner built the house in 1957. I renovated the entire main floor and tried to add modern conveniences but maintain a midcentury aesthetic. Atomic Ranch was very inspiring and kept me focused on achieving a period-appropriate renovation and design for the house. Most of the furniture and fixtures were collected from online sources and vintage shops in the Minneapolis/St. Paul area. Unfortunately, because of my job, I have to move and put the home on the market, but I hope someone will enjoy the house for years to come.

**Brady Vickers**

*Grand Forks, N.D.*

\* We have an underground MCM scene here on the east coast of Australia that is found mostly in newer architecture paying homage to the style—nothing as powerful as the original houses you showcase. Atomic Ranch is a real find; I was unaware of the basis of the

# morewisdom

design of my house (admittedly a reinterpretation in time and place) but before AR, I had no idea!

I've fallen in love with my house now. Before, it was just 'around me'—now I'm 'in' it! What a beautiful thread you and your mag weave into the fabric of our collective lives. Well done!

**Kevin Hoschke**  
Queensland

\* Longtime (read "aging") L.A. hipster here. Recently, and against all odds on both counts, I got married and moved to Orange County—Fullerton, to be exact. Not too long ago I'd become a devotee of MCM and AR, and now find Eichlers and other midcentury gems popping up all over the place. Driving down Euclid Street, I came upon this monument in the middle of the road. I feel like I'm in a dream, or maybe I died and woke up in midcentury heaven.

**Barbara Buckles**



Barbara Buckles

\* Have you ever done a pictorial on the Stahl House in California and, if so, are there any back issues available? If you haven't, I think it would be a great addition to an upcoming issue.

**Greg Reuillard**

*We tend to focus on readers' homes as opposed to iconic houses like the Stahl Case Study residence, which some call the most photographed house in the world. Hyperbole aside, the Stahl family gives tours if one is visiting L.A., and a Google search will give you a nice vicarious fix with its links to articles, books and a night-time, albeit low-res, YouTube tour.*

—ar editor

\* I love Atomic Ranch and would like to see some features on split-levels. I'm stuck with one and could really use some inspiration!

**Stephanie Adams**



Jim Brown

*One of the homes in our new book, Atomic Ranch: Midcentury Interiors, is a split-level in Cincinnati with the bedroom wing down a level from the entry and the walk-out-basement family room several steps lower than that. Another, the above bi-level near Washington, D.C., has many of the same features and design challenges, and this issue's 'Home Page' includes a handsome brick split-level in Kansas.*

*Split-levels and walk-out ranches take advantage of sloping lots, and we've featured many of the latter in our pages, along with daylight basement rooms like those in Fall 2011's "Bright Idea"; there are others coming in the next few issues as well. Depending on what elements are stumping you—exterior paint schemes, continuity between floors, low ceilings or how to handle a foyer with stairs going up and down, perhaps—the single-level interiors we feature would apply to split-levels as well. For specific problem areas, try posting some photos on the AR Facebook or Google+ pages; there's been some helpful, non-snarky design advice online in recent months.*

—ar editor

Write us at [editor@atomic-ranch.com](mailto:editor@atomic-ranch.com)  
or send a note to Atomic Ranch, Publishing Office,  
3125 SE Rex St., Portland, OR 97202.  
We'll print the good ones.



# Show me the midcentury love

Just saying No to McMansions

*text* Toby Weiss

*photography* Bruce Daye

For 50-plus years, the ranch homes in a Creve Coeur, Mo., subdivision have stood essentially unaltered because it says so in writing. While teardown developers have pockmarked surrounding areas, generations of Ladue Estates residents have respected the original neighborhood covenants, making it a St. Louis County rarity: a fully intact Atomic Age neighborhood. Love of place has always been the motivation for preserving their community, but at the conclusion of a three-year historic registry process, the homeowners are also pioneers of midcentury preservation in Missouri and beyond.





lands a Missouri neighborhood on the National Register







## Westward Ho!

---

In the 1950s and '60s, St. Louisans enthusiastically embraced modern architecture. Eero Saarinen's Gateway Arch was going up in downtown, and other new construction also reflected this desire for a clean, fresh look. The place where Charles Eames was born and educated also nurtured renowned hometown architects Harris Armstrong, Isadore Shank and William Bernoudy.

During this fertile design era, urban dwellers moved west some 20 miles into mid-St. Louis County for suburban elbow room. Low-slung, clean-lined ranch homes were the preferred look; a stark contrast between the old, vertical city and the new, horizontal county was fully intended.

The Creve Coeur (rhymes with 'Steve Door') area remains a highly desirable ZIP code, and when the housing climate clamored for McMansions, it also achieved "Teardown Capital" status. While original ranch homes were razed all around them, Ladue Estates remained intact primarily because the original vision of developer/builder Ben Goldberg was so perfectly executed.







This 1958 model has exterior wood detailing accentuated with gray-blue paint and a largely original kitchen complete with aqua-colored metal cabinetry. Between the GE ovens are two wall-hung refrigerators and a freezer; (see page two for a closer view).

The divider wall in the foyer of the same house, owned by Mario Conte, has original grass cloth and parquet wood flooring.

On the previous spread; One of three plaques designating the neighborhood as historic; the home in the background was built in 1963.



The original hardwood floors and fixed-pane windows of the dining room in the brochure house opposite. The homeowners have updated the entry wall and floor with new slate tiles.







The front entrance of the home shown in the 1958 sales brochure as it looks today.

## Keys to Gracious Living

The St. Louis Jewish community faced instances of relocation discrimination during the postwar building boom. Goldberg's purchase of 85 acres of farmland to create what he called "Country Living, Luxury Style" facilitated the westward movement for wealthy Jewish friends and business associates who longed for a home that epitomized the suburban ideal.

With an investment of \$42,500 to \$58,000, buyers gladly signed up for a "ranch-type one-story dwelling with no less than 1,500 square feet" on an average of .89 acres of land. From 1956 to 1965, Goldberg & Company built homes designed by local architect Cay George Weinel that were rectangular in shape with attached side-entry garages, minimal ornamentation and full basements.

All Ladue Estates homes share similar floor plans, with



open public spaces radiating out from a central fireplace, while on the outside, each facade is unique. Roofs range from hip or gable to butterfly and shed. An abundance of large fixed-glass, sash, casement and clerestory windows flood the houses with natural light. Decorative stone and extruded brick are laid in bonded or stacked patterns on walls and built-in planters, sometimes all on the same elevation.

"Every home is about the play of asymmetry conveying a strong sense that the builders had fun and asked, 'OK, what can we do differently on this one?'" observes resident and architectural designer David Connally.



## Cohesion and Quality

Within the subdivision's 10-year building span, one sees a full arc of midcentury design trends. Beginning in 1956 with a standard ranch style, followed by a burst of adventurous Jetsons-esque motifs in the early '60s, the plans mellowed and returned to more traditional architectural when the last homes were built in 1965. Although the designs varied over the period, the builder worked with the same basic palette, making the neighborhood impressively cohesive.

Each home came with an electric GE kitchen with metal cabinets in the homeowner's choice of white, yellow, pink or turquoise. Just two original kitchens remain, complete with wall-hung refrigerators and freezers flanked by two ovens and a countertop range—all still working just as efficiently as when first installed.

The gable roof on this 1960 model has a playful trifold plate section on the front facade.

The quality craftsmanship shows in these homes' excellent present condition: most walls are still perfectly plumb, and because of a patented drainage system invented by Goldberg's son-in-law, Harold Kessler, the basements remain dry and the thick foundations sturdy.

Through the decades, original bathrooms and kitchens have been remodeled, and many homes have rear additions hidden from the street view. Each alteration to an original plan had to be approved by the subdivision's trustees to assure that the bylaws were respected. This steadfast adherence to original architectural intent creates a beautiful time capsule, but it in no way cramps the lifestyles of those who have gladly chosen to maintain this mid-20th-century way of life.









## Safeguarding the Future

Each of the three current neighborhood trustees cites the Ladue Estates covenants as a factor in his or her decision to move here. Mario Conte and his wife wanted to live in a single-level home. When they found their house in 1992, they loved the fact that the neighborhood still had about 50 percent of its original residents (two remain). “The indentures sealed the deal. We were assured that no one could build a two-story monstrosity next door,” says Dr. Conte.

Suzanne Walch recalls the first time she and her husband, Rick, drove through the neighborhood. “We were taken by the fact that there were no teardowns, and it was like being back in the ’50s. Especially at night, it was like stepping back in time because of the lit lampposts in the yards.”

And when Lea Ann Baker came in 2002, she also appreciated the originality of Ladue Estates. “We first saw our house with a For Sale By Owner sign, and after reading the sales brochure felt it could work for us. Driving through the subdivision, we noticed no teardowns. We stopped to ask a resident out tending his front yard about this. He said, ‘Well, it’s because of the indentures. You

could tear down one of these and build new, but it has to be a single-story ranch home. Why build something new when you can just take care of these?’ I knew immediately that this was where we needed to be.

“The beauty of these homes is the sustainability factor,” continues Baker. “They sustain older folks because the houses function on one floor. They sustain families because they’re large homes in which to spread out, with yards for the kids to run in. Finally, they appeal to and sustain a large mix of people, making it a 75-home village.”

The bylaws also provide a sense of investment security. “Before we bought, we did read the indentures, and knew we would have to honor that,” says 10-year resident David Connally. “But it didn’t feel heavy-handed, and it’s never been overbearing. We soon realized that’s what makes this a place where people care about the neighborhood—the way it was and how it is now.”

Opposite, top: An early home in the subdivision, this more traditional model dates from 1956. Opposite, bottom: Stacked limestone, brick and wood detailing in the entry of a 1961 home.









## Valuing Their Treasures

Several years ago when the indentures were challenged, the neighborhood decided they liked things exactly as they were. Wondering if there was another way to help preserve their community (Creve Coeur has no preservation ordinances), Lea Ann Baker discovered the National Register of Historic Places. She began filling out the application, unaware that people paid professionals to handle this detailed process or that it would take three years to complete.

Luckily, she found expert help from St. Louis County Parks Preservation Historian Esley Hamilton. "I had no

idea what I was getting into," Baker says. "I'd complete a step and ask Esley about the next step. It was always another challenge, a winding path of detective work. At one point, to prove a former resident's religious affiliation, I ended up in a cemetery in Arizona looking for a grave!"

Baker also credits Missouri State Preservation Reviewer Michelle Diedrich for "tough love that made a strong application." In May 2010 the National Parks Service granted Ladue Estates National Register of Historic Places status for meeting three criteria: architecture, community planning and development, and ethnic heritage. It is the very first postwar neighborhood in Missouri to achieve this honor, and National Parks Service Historian Barbara Wyatt has used the groundbreaking application as a template for training national staff in the still-developing area of mid-century preservation. Considering that St. Louis is home to the icon of American Modernism—the Gateway Arch—it is a proud achievement that Ladue Estates reflects and promotes Atomic Age preservation.

Trustee Mario Conte still marvels at Baker's dedication and determination when working on the application, pointing out that the Missouri Preservation Board gave her an award that recognized "a grassroots movement spearheaded by one woman. The rest of us did help, but the correct analogy is this: Lea Ann pulled a three-year all-nighter, and we made the coffee and cookies to keep her awake." 

*Toby Weiss is an architectural writer and photographer documenting St. Louis mid-century modernism at the B.E.L.T. blog ([belstl.com](http://belstl.com)) and Modern StL ([modern-stl.com](http://modern-stl.com)). St. Louis photographer Bruce Daye's images have been published in magazines, books and commercial advertising projects; visit [digitalbruce.com](http://digitalbruce.com). Learn more about the neighborhood and access their National Register application at [ladueestates.org](http://ladueestates.org).*

Suzanne and Rick Walch's 1960 home has a clerestory over the front door and strong modern lines. The fireplace, floors and windows are all still original.





# home page



## Emporia, Kansas

We absolutely love our 1953 custom split-level ranch. It was designed and built by a professor of industrial arts at Emporia State University, who lived in the house until 1995. The house has steel-beam construction and is built into the side of a steep (well, Kansas steep) hill so it is very efficient to heat and cool. We have never lived in a home that was more thoughtfully designed or solidly constructed. We bought it three years ago after falling in love with the huge windows and the indoor/outdoor feel; now we can't imagine living anywhere else!

**Mike & Jennifer Erickson**

## Cedarburg, Wis.

We started collecting midcentury furniture years before buying this, our first home. We also wanted a bit of land, so when we found this fixer-upper in a great suburb, we were sold. Our home was built in 1958 on 1.5 acres. With the help of skills honed by tracking down lost high-school reunion invitees, we found the original owner/builder. He sent a mix of pictures shot during construction, as well as original plans that now hang as art in a hallway. We look forward to lightening up the '60s maroon exterior paint job with a more modern gray and natural wood. Perhaps even an orange front door!

**Michael & Jennifer Kraus**

## Lagrange, Ga.

Our home was built by Dr. and Mrs. Mark Whitehead in 1953. We have all the original blueprints and even a plot layout. I used to visit the good doctor in the 1980s and always loved the house because I grew up in one like it in Kentucky, and this looks like a bigger brother to that one. Our house has "Stran Steel" floor joists and rafters, and is about 98.735 percent accurate to the blueprints—right down to all the cork floors, the sandblasted plywood decorative tile on the foyer ceiling and the 92 vertical louvers at the car park area.

**James & Davie Biagi**

We can always use homes for our fridge; send in a high-resolution photo or sharp snapshot and a couple of sentences about your cool pad for our next issues. See contacts page 5.





Emporia, Kansas



Cedarburg, Wis.



P

H



Lagrange, Ga.





# Missoula Makeover





*text* Bromley Davenport  
*photography* Steven Begleiter

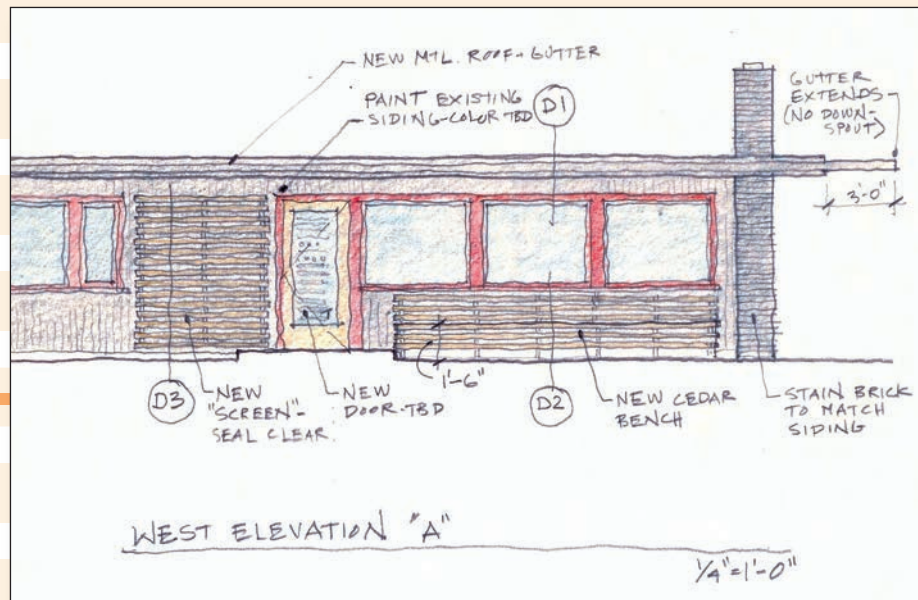
“My brother, Seth Wilson, is a conservation biologist and his wife, Jennifer Ellis, is a teacher,” says Portland, Ore., architect Webster Wilson. “They and their three kids have lived in a 1960s ranch in Missoula, Mont., for several years and always had thoughts of a modest remodel, especially to the exterior.”

Web Wilson looked for a creative and economical way to modernize the exterior without having to rip off and discard the T-111 siding, which was in good shape. “On a modest budget of 45K, we

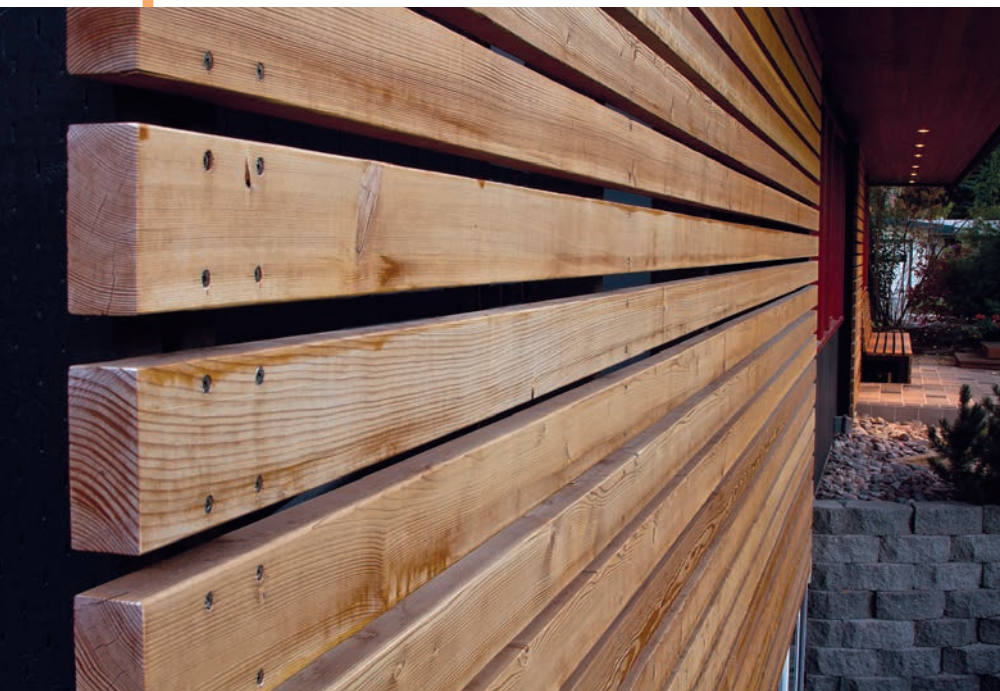


**Before**





The same material forms **a bench**,  
 clads a portion  
 of the now-painted **brick chimney**  
 and serves as **privacy fencing**








repainted the siding a dark gray and added wood screens that float on the building and extend into the landscape to delineate exterior rooms and provide privacy," he says. "The scope of work included a membrane roof and new soffits, fascia, custom gutters and recessed lighting. To me, these simple and affordable upgrades transform the house but still maintain the lines and integrity of a midcentury ranch."

The horizontal larch wood screens are mounted to the house on vertical gray-painted 2x4s; the larch was milled locally and finished with penetrating oil, which means it will weather to a natural gray. The same material forms a bench, clads a portion of the now-painted brick chimney and serves as privacy fencing near the front door and a storage shed.

The metal gutters are integral to the new fascia and extend past the roofline several feet; this means no downspouts and an exaggerated horizontality that pleases Wilson's architect aesthetic. The red door and trim color was a joint effort, with Jen doing many paint tests before landing on the right red. And while all concerned would like to replace the previous owner's busy tile-clad patio with dark gray pigmented concrete slabs and site-poured pavers in a year or three, the two-month exterior makeover was deemed a success.

"I think in turns of budget-to-value it is a good recession-era model for people who have a generic or aging ranch house and want to modernize it without having to pump hundreds of thousands of dollars into it," Wilson says. "And by working with the existing shell of the house, the project has a responsible, green aspect, as well." 

See more of Web Wilson's work at [websterwilson.com](http://websterwilson.com); photographer Steven Begleiter's site is [begleiter.com](http://begleiter.com).



# atomicbooks

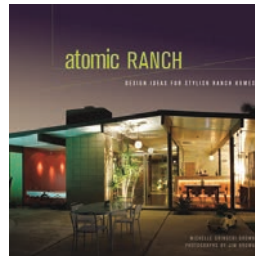
## JUST OUT!



### 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, 192 pp., 200 color photos, \$40

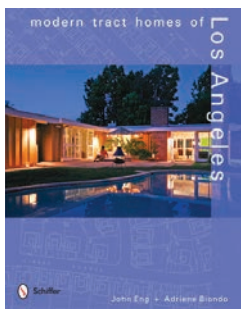
## AUTOGRAPHED!



### 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, 192 pp., color and b&w photos. \$40

## NEW!



### Modern Tract Homes of Los Angeles

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

## NEW!



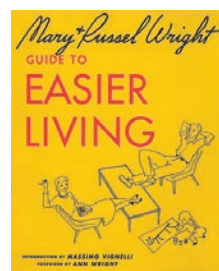
### Palm Springs Mid-Century Modern

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



### Little Boxes: The Architecture of a Classic Midcentury Suburb

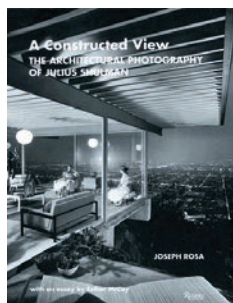
Westlake is home to the houses that inspired the 'boxes made of ticky-tacky' song. Resident Rob Keil takes you through his neighborhood and shows what makes this tract so appealing. Contemporary color and b&w vintage photos, hardcover, 144 pp., \$35



### Guide to Easier Living

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### Saarinen

This small gem introduces you to Eero Saarinen's architecture—the St. Louis arch, TWA terminal, Case Study House #9 and many more. It also looks at his chairs and his collaborations with Charles Eames. Pierluigi Serraino, color photos, softcover, 96 pp., \$14



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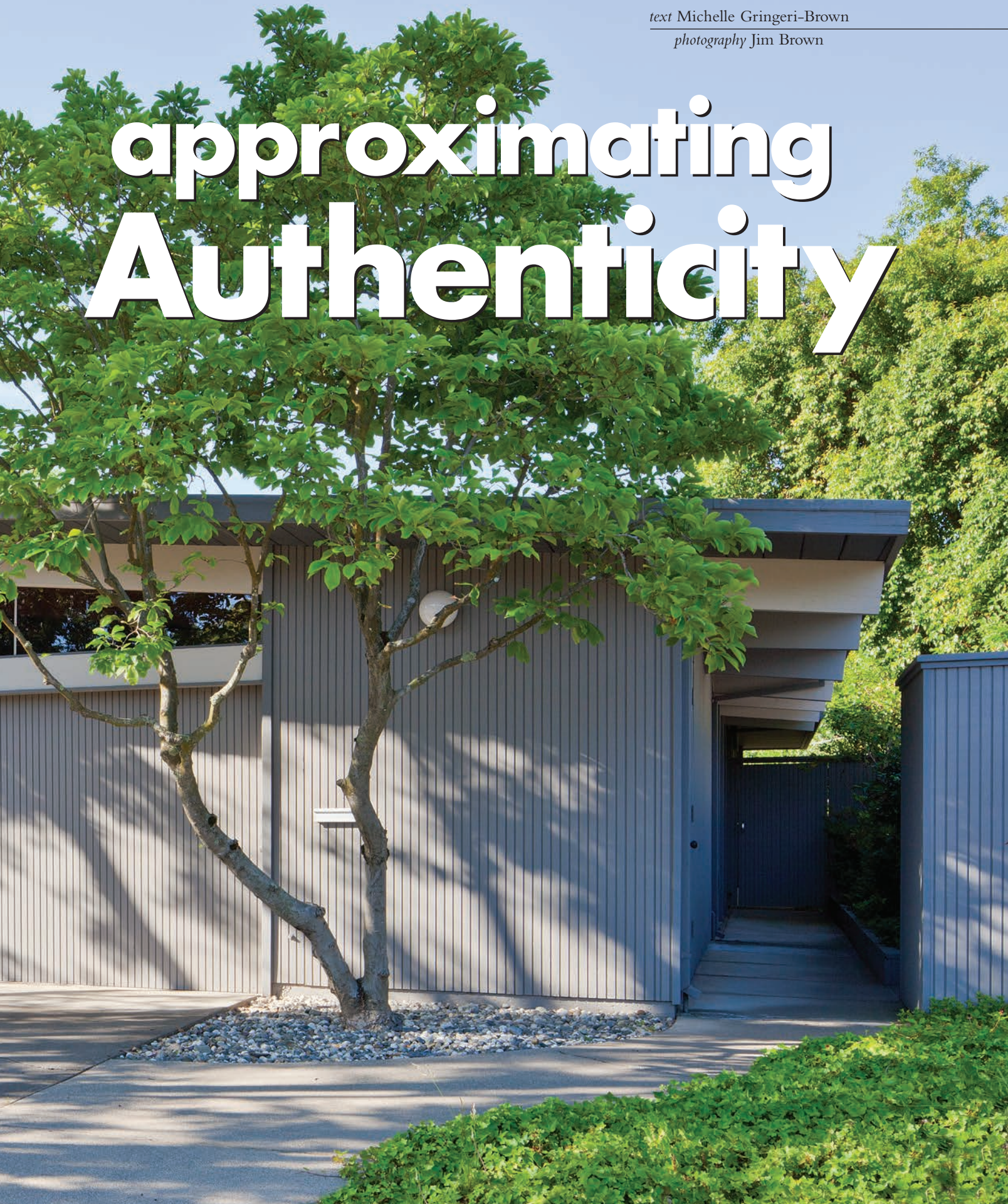
344



*text Michelle Gringeri-Brown*

*photography Jim Brown*

# approximating Authenticity









**Blame it on the DCWs.** It was 2004 and, post-divorce, Dane Henas was in need of some dining chairs. “A friend who was a big Eames and Nelson collector said there were some DCWs on eBay,” Henas recalls, referring to the Eameses’ ‘Dining Chair Wood’ in shorthand. “I bought those and thought I was all set, but then I needed a table.

“I was going through a period where I was bored, so I started collecting furniture while living in a little Spanish-style bungalow in east Sac. I thought, You know, the furniture doesn’t go with this house and I’m getting so much of it, plus I wanted a fresh start. So I started driving around looking at what I considered to be ‘50s modern homes.”

The 57-year-old graphic designer had always appreciated modern furniture and design but didn’t know his hometown of Sacramento harbored a handful of Eichler houses, concentrated on three blocks. “I’d read about Eichlers in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, but didn’t know there were any here,” he says. A friend’s realtor mother clued him in to their location and he started stalking the neighborhood the next morning.



Looking toward the clerestory windows on the front of the house, the vintage furnishings in the multipurpose room include a reupholstered Florence Knoll Parallel-Bar sofa and a black Nelson platform bench. The fiberglass rocker with a cat’s-cradle base, round plywood table, lounge chair and ottoman, Time-Life stool and first-production ESU (Eames Storage Unit) were all designed by Charles and Ray Eames. Lighting includes a vintage bubble lamp and ‘Eyeshade’ floor lamp, both by Nelson, and a three-arm ‘Treluci Piccolo’ lamp bought at Lumens in Sacramento. The Curtis Jere metal sculpture over the sofa dates from the ‘60s and the acrylic painting is by JoAnne Beck.





Dane Henas' affection for George Nelson's and Charles and Ray Eames' designs is in ample evidence in the living and dining room. The Nelson pieces include the couch, armchair, tray tables (on either side of the couch) and the music-, vintage audio- and book-filled Comprehensive Storage System. The Eameses' contributions to the tableau include the black DCWs surrounding a Florence Knoll dining table, the low elliptical coffee table, a brown preproduction LCW (against the wall) and a red aniline dye LCW. The sculpture over the couch is from Mel's Metals in Oklahoma and the

ball lamps are original. Regarding the red LCW, Henas says, "That particular chair was painted white when I got it, except the bottom, which showed that it was a red aniline LCW underneath. It looked like crap, so I went ahead and stripped and refinished it myself—including using authentic aniline dye. It isn't 100-percent original, but it looks a lot better than a painted one. Normally, I just leave [vintage pieces] alone, aside from a gentle cleaning and a little Howard's Feed-N-Wax. I think they're more interesting with a few scars—it shows that they're survivors."





Decorative details include a vintage Eames LCM (Lounge Chair Metal), a period candleholder near the fireplace and the contemporary photograph by Donald Satterlee. Henas says that the gray 4x4s that run parallel to the glass walls are only found in this era of Eichler homes.

“There were no For Sale signs, so I wrote and dropped off a generic letter—maybe 30 copies or so—at potential homes. I got a call a week later from a homeowner offering a tour of her pretty-much-original Eichler. Then, a couple of months later, another call from an elderly owner. That house looked good outside, but inside it was all painted white and had nasty shag carpeting; I knew the interior would be a project.”

Negotiations to buy the 1955 four-bedroom home were complicated by the death of the owner and an heir moving in who had ever-morphing conditions for the sale. In all, it took a year and a half from when he first toured the house for Henas to close on it, but it was worth it, he says, as nothing else in the Eichler blocks of Sacramento had come on the market in that period.

Early on, Henas decided he wanted his interior to be as authentic as possible and noted the archetypal elements remaining in his and neighbors’ homes. He pored over modern blogs discussing the nitty-gritty details, and drove 90 miles to Palo Alto to view an original-condition Eichler, where he took a slew of photos for reference. Then it was a matter of mentally processing







In the master bedroom, Henas cobbled together a queen-size bed from a platform and four Eames LTR (Low Table Rod) bases. The case goods are from the Nelson Steel Frame series, and the lamps are a Poul Henningsen PH4/3 and a vintage Half-Nelson. On the left is a portion of one of two Nelson Swag leg chairs, above the bed is an 'Ellipses' mosaic by Evelyn Ackerman and the Ball clock is from Vitra.







The hallway bath has the same vintage-look Azrock vinyl floor and original vanity as in the master bath, as well as Kohler 'Conical Bell' vessel sinks, which Henas likens to LaGardo Tackett bowls. Both baths have Kohler 'Purist' faucets and Hakatai mosaic tile mixes.

what was original to his home versus other Eichlers, and was that material still available and a viable, high-quality product.

For instance, he noted bloggers' complaints about the cave-like nature of homes with dark mahogany paneling and cork floors, but didn't personally find those elements made the Palo Alto model dungeon-y. The paneling in his own house was mostly painted, except in a couple of bedrooms where the original light pickled finish remained. Henas decided to replace all of the painted paneling and matched the authentic finish with a custom concoction of Cabot stains—the same brand Eichler used. The guys at the lumberyard thought he was nuts to stain and finish today's lesser-grade mahogany paneling, a product they considered suitable for warehouse wall sheathing.

The ceilings were a similar conundrum. They too had been painted, and sandblasting or stripping was out. "I realized Eichler ceilings were dark for a reason: I've seen homes with white ceilings and the unevenness and gaps between the 1" x 6" tongue-and-groove redwood boards is really distracting. If it's dark, that covers it up. Otherwise, sometimes people take about 1,000 pounds of caulk [and seal the gaps].

"I painted the ceilings flat black first, then did a wash with a big paintbrush and watered-down gray paint for a faux wood grain. It looks just like the original ceilings," he says. The beams were painted off-white for contrast.

Outside there was a newish foam roof, but the previous owner had also installed a low peaked roof over the back portion of the house. Three homes on the block had received this treatment, the rationale being it eliminated leaks and allowed room for insulation. "My neighbor, Nadine, who's an original owner, says the worst thing was when the wind would blow and the original tarpaper would [vibrate and] make this buzzing sound and the black backing







The Zolatone-finished cabinetry, laminate counters, cork floors and original ball lamps make the kitchen look like 1955 all over again. The butcher block section offers a place for chopping and hot pots—two no-nos for laminate counters.

Just inside the front door, a wall hanging of Alexander Girard's 'Feathers' pattern sets the tone for bright accents of primary colors in the largely neutral-palette house.





from the tar paper would come raining down inside the house. I faced the portion of the roof that shows in the back with some new Eichler siding so it blends better.”

Henas did archeological sleuthing to find the home’s ’50s color palette. “I didn’t have the original front door—there was a god-awful oak and leaded glass one on when I bought it—so I painted the new one Eichler orange. Right after I got it done, my neighbor came by and said, ‘You know your door was originally red, right?’ ”

Choices inside are a mix of Authentic 2.0 and I’m-getting-something-better-’cause-it-exists. Henas found a company that makes virtually identical 12” cork tile with beveled edges, but thicker and of higher quality than the Armstrong originals he found under the living room carpet. For the bedrooms, he chose Azrock vinyl tile in a similar pattern to ’50s asbestos tile, but in 12” squares instead of 9”. Determining that the smaller size was too expensive and hard to find, he installed the vinyl tile wrong side up, as he preferred the pattern on the back.

When it came to the kitchen, Henas felt that none of the IKEA, high-end custom or Danish modern cabinetry he’d seen worked as well as the original design. “Eichler kitchen cabinets were really minimal, pretty unique and go with the aesthetic of the house,” he says, “but most people have taken them out and put them in their garages. They were made of really cheap plywood, with recessed finger holes in the Masonite sliders and no hardware.”

His kitchen cabinets were still in place, but the original speckled Zolatone finish had been painted over. Henas decided to go back to Zolatone, which he found at an automotive paint supply store and which required a special applicator. “When it comes out of the spray gun, it’s really thick stuff, like cottage cheese,” he says. “The guy I bought the paint from warned me, ‘It comes out really thick and it looks like you’re in trouble, but it’s great when it dries.’

“The worst thing about it was the smell—it probably broke some OSHA laws—and later I switched to Rustoleum American Accents ‘Stone’ spray paint for my bathroom cabinet doors. The Zolatone covers up that these are the cheapest plywood cabinets imaginable—it filled in splits and gaps. And it was brilliant marketing—plastic-coated cabinets that are easy to keep clean; that was Eichler, they had the best marketing materials.”

Henas called in a pro to install a gas line for a Miele cooktop, but kept the







Thermador oven and found a repairman for its Telechron clock motor. He installed new Formica counters and backsplashes in a variegated linen-weave pattern, which he says are very forgiving when it comes to stains. And an Amana counter-depth refrigerator was just the right width for the space.

The baths are where he took more liberties. Laminate counters and showers lined with plastic or metal embossed-tile panels laid over mahogany paneling—yes, paneling inside the shower enclosure—were the original materials. His baths had been upgraded to 4" tile, which he used as the substrate for 1" mosaic glass tile. He chose a Kohler vessel sink that reminded him of an Architectural Pottery piece, and didn't care for the generic light fixtures Eichler used, so selected one he thought looked like a Nelson bubble lamp.

Talking to Henas, you hear the names 'Eames' and 'Nelson' a lot in describing his furnishings. We asked why those two specific design houses, and about recent chatter regarding which iconic pieces George Nelson personally designed. "I just really like the minimalist approach and the honesty of materials of the Eames designs. I got turned onto George Nelson later, after getting a reprint of a vintage Herman Miler catalog," he comments. "I've

never really been attracted to the goofier Nelson designs like the Marshmallow sofa or Coconut chairs. I like his systems more—the CSS and the earlier slatted bench storage systems.

"As far as Nelson taking the credit for Irving Harper's and others' designs, that goes back a long time—I'm sure Raymond Loewy and Donald Deskey didn't design everything with their names on it. It's always been the accepted practice that, if you pay for the lights and heat, and if something comes out of your namesake shop, you get to put your name on it. The graphic design biz is the same: I'd credit other designers if we submitted their work for awards or publication, but when we show a portfolio, we'd say, We did this for [so-and-so]. In the total scheme of doing business, that's what happened; sometimes the individual designers got credit, but unfortunately, usually not."

After spending a year living under tarps while he worked nights, weekends and early mornings on re-creating an authentic-looking house, Henas is glad he did it his way.

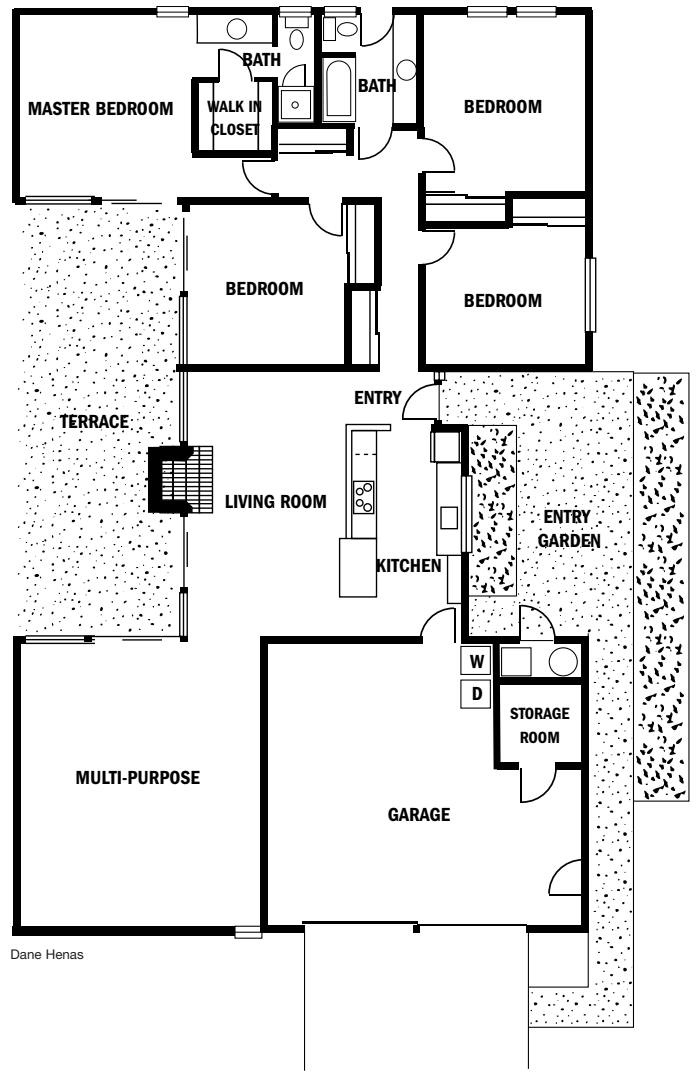




“It’s too important for all of this original stuff to go away,” he says. “But it didn’t have to be 100 percent purist.

“Peeling back the paint, I thought, These people were really sharp; they had all this stuff dialed in and put a lot more care into things like that than in a more conventional ranch house. I appreciate and like to be reminded of that by living in it. It still looks very contemporary—not at all like a poodle skirt.”

Like the Krenit bowls and storage units in this home? Don’t miss ‘Cool Stuff’ on page 56; other resources, page 73.



Above: A second CSS unit in the multipurpose room houses some of Henas’ vinyl collection and vintage Bang & Olufsen audio equipment; an Alexander Girard La Fonda chair sits on a Pier One area rug.

Opposite, top: The post-and-beam architectural elements are painted in original Eichler colors, which emphasizes the continuity between inside and out.

Opposite, bottom: A Heath mosaic, missile nosecone used as a planter and original round Eichler wall sconce at the new front door.

Henas in his home office, working at a Nelson-designed OMNI shelving system with the assistance of Monk—one of his “jazz cats.” The RCA portable is one of several vintage TVs he’s collected.





# modern masters for your ranch:



Thomas Ibsen

## **Nanna Ditzel**

*text* Timothy Sullivan

*photography* Nanna Ditzel Design A/S



Ditzel's design for the Round series lounge chair makes it useful not only for the living room, but in the dining room as well.

PHOTO CREDIT: Brahl Fotografi

Seeking to banish unsightly legs from the modern home, the Ditzels created Sitting Rings to encourage lounging on the floor. In 2002–3 the pieces were featured in a 'Stairscapes' exhibition in Copenhagen and Paris. PHOTO CREDIT: Pernille Klomp



**C**hair-aholics be forewarned! This article may cause you to add yet another seat (or two or three) to your collection. If you like comfortable, sculptural midcentury furniture, then look no further than the work of Nanna Ditzel, a Danish designer whose pieces marry form and function to perfection.

While Ditzel is perhaps best known for her iconic furniture designs, like the immensely popular “Sausage Chair,” she was prolific in other mediums as well. Her jewelry, home accessories and fabric collections merge the finest in traditional Danish craftsmanship with innovative materials and shapes. Striving to create products that were practical and beautiful, she took inspiration from everything from modern sculpture to insects, but never compromised when it came to ensuring that all her designs be useful.

Nanna Ditzel was born in 1923 to a prosperous and cultured Copenhagen family. Her father, a prominent haberdashery wholesaler, came from a family that liked to draw

and paint. Her uncle, a professional artist, created illustrations for the daily newspaper, *Politiken*. Art and good design were common topics of conversation at home, where Nanna and her three sisters were encouraged to pursue their interests in ceramics, fashion and furniture design. As a child, she was absorbed with drawing, but the prolifically artistic environment of Copenhagen permitted her to expand her interests into bookbinding and cabinetmaking.

Nanna followed her older sister, the ceramicist Inger Thing, to Denmark’s renowned School of Arts and Crafts at the Museum of Decorative Art. There, Nanna was surrounded by a cadre of innovative designers whose work would become popular in midcentury America, including Peter Hvidt and her fellow pupil, Grete Jalk. It was at the school in 1943 that she met her most important collaborator, Jørgen Ditzel, who had trained as an upholsterer. They fell in love and by 1944 were collaborating on







The Sausage or Ring chair could easily be disassembled and flat-packed, which helped to make it easy to export. PHOTO: Artek

designs for exhibitions and competitions. The pair soon married and began designing practical glassware, textiles and multipurpose furniture for apartments—items they could use themselves. By 1945 they had already begun to win prestigious awards.

The 1950s were productive years for Nanna and Jørgen. While managing a house with three young children, they became increasingly innovative with their designs. One day, they counted the furniture legs in their house, jumped onto the dining table, and agreed they preferred the perspective from above. The result was their design for a “legless inte-

rior,” a multilevel living area with built-in furniture and Sitting Rings where one could read and relax unconstrained. They also experimented with lightweight, stackable materials for their furniture. Nanna's iconic Egg-Shaped Basket Chair could be used comfortably while suspended from a ceiling, a well-known design that is still in production today.

Success brought Nanna to Paris. While her children slept, she found just enough time to sketch jewelry, which came to the attention of the famous firm of silversmiths, Georg Jensen. Designs like the 1957 Jensen Necklace established her connection with trends in European modern art and were hugely successful. This led to other practical commissions from Jensen, including an elegant Corkscrew, which has been adapted to new materials and remains in production.

Among Nanna Ditzel's most famous designs of the 1950s, however, are undoubtedly her iconic chairs. These include the Round Chair and the Sausage Sofa and Chair, both of which are based on the circle, a strong theme in Ditzel's organically inspired work. The Round Chair, an immensely capacious yet shallow-seated lounge, doubles as a fine dining chair. Its teak frame and cushions unite Nanna's traditional cabinetmaking training with Jørgen's upholstery expertise. While that may be their most popular chair design, it was the Sausage group that was their real tour-de-force. That form required the use of challenging



Daughters Dennie in the egg chair and twins Lulu and Vita in the 1955 award-winning highchair.



PHOTO: Keld Helmer-Petersen, left, & Kryn Tagonis, Magnum for Look.





Ditzel designed a sterling silver corkscrew for Georg Jensen in 1957. The firm found the grip to be so ergonomic that it used the same shape as doorknobs at one of its shops. Rereleased in 2010, it is now made of stainless steel and aluminum. PHOTO: Georg Jensen

This stunning necklace produced by Georg Jensen was based on organic forms, a strong theme in Nanna Ditzel's work. PHOTO: Courtesy the Ditzel family

The wicker egg chair, among the last designs that Nanna Ditzel would create with her husband Jørgen, remains popular and in production today. Made of stainless steel and wicker, it retails for approximately \$4,000 from unicahome.com. PHOTO: Pierantonio Bonacina

upholstery techniques, yet was modular and could easily be deconstructed for shipping, which helped to make it successful as an export.

Following Jørgen's untimely death in 1961 at age 40, Nanna Ditzel continued to build upon the design legacy that she and her husband had created. Her prolific output, which extended virtually until her death in 2005, garnered her international acclaim and a legendary status among midcentury enthusiasts and collectors. While some Nanna Ditzel designs continue to be produced by a handful of manufacturers like Getama Danmark, Kvadrat and Georg Jensen, many of her most famous pieces from the 1950s

have gone out of production. Originals can be found on websites like 1stdibs and eBay, but for the more adventurous buyer, look at local shops specializing in midcentury furniture, where her work occasionally surfaces. If you soon find yourself carrying a Ditzel piece out to your car, don't say that you weren't warned! 

*Read more about Ditzel and see her children's furniture, textiles and later works at [nanna-ditzel-design.dk](http://nanna-ditzel-design.dk). Items in production currently are available through the Danish sites [snedkergaarden.com](http://snedkergaarden.com), [kvadrat.dk](http://kvadrat.dk), [georgjensen.com](http://georgjensen.com), [getama.dk](http://getama.dk) and [kitani-g.co.jp/en\\_main/products/products.html](http://kitani-g.co.jp/en_main/products/products.html).*





# homework

## DIY MCM Dog Bed

Joe Hernandez & Kim McAlexander  
San Diego





**We live in a 1951 ranch in the Rolando Park** neighborhood of San Diego. In an attempt to keep Dinah, our 55-pound beagle/boxer mix, off of our newly reupholstered \$80 sofa, we set about building a dog bed that was functional while also fitting in with our decor.

We began by salvaging the tapered, brass-tipped legs from a thrift-store table and then built a platform using materials from The Home Depot. A 12mm-thick 2' x 4' piece of sanded "Handy Panel" plywood was cut down to 2' x 3' for the platform. For the edge, we used 1" paint-grade pine corner molding that cost about \$1.40 per foot. We measured and cut them to size with a miter saw so that all the corners joined up nicely. After the pieces were cut, we glued and nailed them to each side of the plywood using small diameter nails countersunk beneath the wood surface. The molding gives the bed visual thickness and also helps to keep the cushion in place.

The legs are attached using metal plates, which we fastened to the platform about 3" from the corners at a 45-degree angle. The plates came with a shim that

makes the legs angle slightly toward the edges of the bed. We used ½" zinc wood screws that were short enough to not go through the top of the plywood and long enough to provide strength to support the weight of the dog.

The tricky part was trying to stain the molding so that it matched the vintage legs. For this we did some testing on leftover pieces of molding, ultimately deciding that Red Oak was our winner. There was some leftover fabric from our reupholstered couch, so we asked our local upholstery shop to cut a piece of 3"-thick foam to size and make a zippered slipcover to match.

We estimate that, all told, the project cost in the neighborhood of \$100. Not bad for a visually stunning, vintage-look functional piece for our pooch. The best part is, she loves the bed. When we're home Dinah is exclusively on her bed; what she does while we're at work, however, is a different story. ☼

*If you like pets and MCM furniture, don't miss our "Pet Pix" contest winners in no. 31, Fall 2011, available at [atomic-ranch.com](http://atomic-ranch.com).*





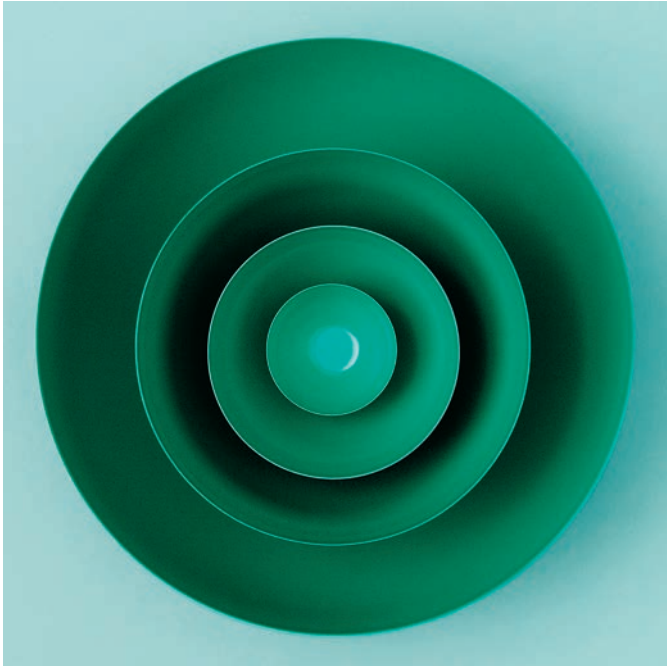
# cool|stuff



Vintage wall storage units like those in the Sacramento Eichler (pages 40, 47) were practical and stylish at the same time. But if new is more your thing, ISS Designs has some great options. Available as customizable components or preconfigured, they come in two mounting styles—wall or pole (like the Nelson OMNI system or with a spider leg, like the CSS). Choose from three hardware colors and seven wood laminate finishes or anodized aluminum for the 6"–12" deep shelves. Then there's base and upper cabinets, drawers, desk units, built-in bookends—lots of options at [issdesigns.com](http://issdesigns.com).







First offered in 1953, Krenit bowls are available once again. Out of production since 1966, the iconic bowls designed by Herbert Krenchel have returned in eight appealing colors and six sizes. Made of steel and melamine (rather than enamel like the originals), these graceful bowls are equally at home as functional kitchenware or a decorative object. Starting at \$18, available from [normann-copenhagen.com](http://normann-copenhagen.com).

More modern and linear than the curvy original Big Chill fridge, the Retropolitan gives the ranch owner another option for an appropriate but not vintage kitchen appliance. Born of the desire for an original-era refrigerator without the joy of monthly defrosting, this offers the look but not the hassle. Energy Star-rated with a bottom drawer freezer compartment, it's available in eight vintage colors, from Pink Lemonade to Cherry Red. Priced at \$3,395, at [bigchill.com](http://bigchill.com).







Zander Lichstein bought his 1957 house from the second owners in 2001. Located in Santa Monica Canyon, by 2006 he and his wife, Morina, were debating adding on versus moving to a larger place, but they loved their neighborhood and the midcentury details of the 1,860-square-foot home.

The couple met with several architects and even hired one before deciding it just wasn't the right fit. Second up to bat was Cory Buckner. "[The first architect] did not understand the driving elements we loved about our midcentury home, such as maximizing views and privacy, the warmth of the natural beam construction and catching the ocean breeze here in the canyon," says Morina. "We were certain Cory was the right architect to work with when she climbed our hill and our rooftop, observed the wind and the sun's path, and appreciated the design elements we enjoyed about our home."

"We had seen Cory's work in a few publications and assumed that she would be out of our budget," adds Zander. "However, at our first meeting, it was obvious that she understood exactly what we valued in our original home, and exactly how to make the expansion fulfill our dreams for the house. She also struck us as very practical, experienced and easy to communicate with. Cory returned a few days later with sketches and a scale model that totally nailed it. The final plans are nearly indistinguishable from that first proposal—it was that spot-on."

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*text* Michelle Gringeri-Brown

*photography* George Pesce & Briand Guzman



*Lady*





# of the Canyon





## invested in the aesthetic

Buckner has serious roots in midcentury architecture. In addition to new construction emblematic of the era, and high-end renovations like Courteney Cox's \$20 million A. Quincy Jones home in Beverly Hills, she wrote the book—literally—on Jones in 2002. And her interest wasn't just professional: after losing their 1961 modern home in Malibu to a brush fire, in 1993 Buckner and family moved to a midcentury home designed by Jones, Whitney R. Smith and Edgardo Contini in Brentwood's Crestwood Hills.

"Of the 350 homes in our neighborhood, only 31 houses remain of the original 160 designed by the joint venture known as the Mutual Housing Association," Buckner explains. "We restored the house and tried to establish an HPOZ (Historic Preservation Overlay Zone) in our area, but were unsuccessful since we did not have the backing of two-thirds of the community.

"In an effort to save the few remaining MHA houses, I submitted ours and four others for monument status with the City of Los Angeles. After a great deal of persuading, we were granted historic status for four of the five. Every few years after that first submittal, I would gather together applications for another four houses until we had close to half declared historic. Recently, individual homeowners have submitted their own houses and we now have more than half of the remaining structures declared Historic Monuments with the city."



## melding old and new

The Lichsteins' home had two bedrooms, one of which they use as an office, and a single bath, but they wanted more room for a future family. Buckner's proposal called for a master suite, two bedrooms and two more baths in a butterfly roofed second story, as well as a playroom on the ground floor. The existing kitchen was remodeled and a wall removed to open it to the living and dining rooms. The back bedroom was turned into a family room with accordion doors that can close it off from the living room or the play area. Radiant heating was installed throughout and a new fireplace and built-in seating added to the living room.

"We had spent many years conceptualizing how [an addition] could be done—stair placement, rooflines, etc.," recalls Zander. "Before we started the process, I had sketched every roofline that I could imagine integrating with the existing pitches. Cory's butterfly solution, and the rearrangement of the first floor, were both surprises and brilliant solutions to the problems that we tried to solve on our own."





Brand Guzman (4)







“The basic structure of the addition was designed to echo the midcentury structural system of exposed beams and 1" x 6" tongue-and-groove ceilings,” Buckner says. “Clerestory windows and a butterfly roof further give a nod to the original character of the house. Because it is set against a hillside, it was important to capture as much light as possible.”

The couple chose the finish materials, making sample boards and sharing them with Buckner in what Morina calls “disaster check” meetings. “Cory sent us to Ann Sacks, where we found the subway tile used in the guest and children’s baths, as well as the 1' x 2' floor tiles we had loved at another home she worked on. One thing Cory absolutely drove was the selection of the neutral subway tile in our kitchen. We had fallen in love with a wonderful retro orange/red/lime glass backsplash tile that would have ruined the room, and she knew it and kindly steered us back to safer ground. We love our kitchen now, thanks to her help.

“On the baseboards, Cory actually suggested a modern solution of a simple reveal versus a traditional molding. We wish we took her advice, but at the time thought it might look too minimal not to have a baseboard.”


## more than they bargained for

The project took two years, almost double the predicted time, the Lichsteins say. During that period, they went through two contractors, had several vendor issues and put things on hold when their son, Oliver, arrived early and spent five months in NICU.

“The biggest challenge to the project was meeting the city’s requirements for remodels that exceed 50-percent added footage,” Buckner explains. “Since the original house was so small to begin with, it was impossible to avoid falling under those restrictive requirements. A great deal of time and engineering was needed to prove [the integrity of] existing foundations, as well as adding new foundations and two-story retaining walls to meet current code and support the hillside beyond.”

“Everyone says that construction estimates of time and money should be doubled,” relates Zander. “It was true [in our case] and that was a challenge. But the biggest surprise was how difficult each decision point is, and the level of detail each step can involve when you are working with a contractor on a time and materials basis. For example, the precise layout of tile to minimize odd joints required foresight and planning all the way back to the framing stages.”

“The extent of the demolition and shoring up of our existing home was shocking to us; nearly every wall was torn down to the studs,” adds Morina. “The office and its accompanying bathroom downstairs were the least touched by construction, but even there we replaced a closet with a Murphy bed and file cabinets, and added an egress window. In addition, that bathroom’s beautiful yellow and grey ’50s tile work was damaged by the demolition on the opposite side of the wall. [Fortunately], our amazing original wood beam living room and office ceilings only need a teeny touchup after construction.”

“Now that we are all done and in our refreshed midcentury home ... on the lot and in the neighborhood we love, it might have all been worth it,” muses Zander. “We love the home Cory designed for us and with us. A testament to her design is that most visitors have a hard time identifying which areas of our house were part of the addition. In an era of monster lot-fillers, I think every one of our neighbors has told us how delighted they were with the seamless look and matched scale that we achieved.” 

*Photographer George Pesce's work can be seen at [scarletbohemian.com](http://scarletbohemian.com); Briand Guzman's site is [briandguzmanphotography.com](http://briandguzmanphotography.com). Learn more about the Mutual Housing Association's work at [crestwoodla.com](http://crestwoodla.com).*







# ranchdressing

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

**q:** I love your magazine and pore over it every time it comes; please keep up the good work. My wife and I just built a very simple ranch house and the interior resembles a mod ranch. Wanting to get some modern furniture pieces as well, we picked up this 'bench seat' in a Rehoboth Beach, Del., antique shop for \$100. It has



no markings and I am very interested in who could have made it. Any help is appreciated.

**Jeff Sellers**

**a:** We tapped Mike Atta, from *Out Of Vogue* in Fullerton, Calif., for a reply: "The versatile daybed was a staple in many midcentury living rooms and dens. Manufactured by both high- and low-end companies, hundreds of variations exist.

"Designers like George Nelson and Paul McCobb in the U.S., and Peter Hvidt and Hans Wegner in Denmark all created iconic models. This particular generic, Danish-style one was probably manufactured in the USA using stained fir wood for the frame. The Fagas straps—made with rubber and metal clamp tips that fit into a slot—along with the bolt-through legs, lead me to believe this was a mid-priced model in its day. Newly upholstered pieces like this sell in our store for between \$700 and \$1,000."

**q:** Here is a photo of some front door handles (outside and inside) that we can't get repaired and want to replace with the same or similar ones. We believe they are Schlage 'E' models.

**Rane & Carse**

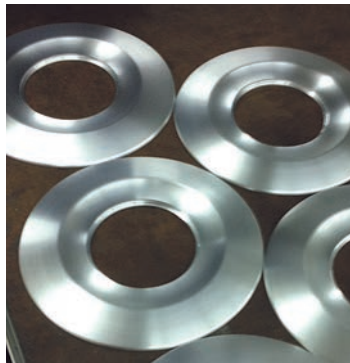
**a:** Two friends of AR address the issues of replacing original hardware; first, David Hines from *Doors & Company* ([doorsandcompany.com](http://doorsandcompany.com)) in Austin: "The first constraint when selecting replacement hardware for an existing door is to choose new hardware that fits the existing door prep. The determining specs are the B, B & C-C (bore, backset and center-to-center).

"The bore is the diameter of the hole(s) drilled through the face of the door. This is most commonly 2-1/8", but can be less, depending on the mechanism of the lockset.

"The backset is the distance from the edge of the door to the center of the bore, most commonly 2-3/8" or 2-3/4". Some of the original MCM doors had backsets of 5" and we all loved the look of the 18" backset knobs



Jonathan Jarrett (2)



that were centered horizontally in the door. Unfortunately, those extended backset locks didn't hold up well over time and were less than ergonomic in their function.

"The center-to-center dimension is the vertical distance from the center of the latch bore to the center of the deadbolt bore. The most common spacings are 5-1/2", 6" or 3-5/8". If you are installing a new one-piece escutcheon that contains both the latch and the deadbolt, this is a critical spec. If you are installing separate latch and deadbolt escutcheons the dimension is less critical but still must be considered for a pleasing spacing between the two escutcheons.

"I would guess that the Schlage locksets in your photo require two 2-1/8" bores on 3-5/8" centers. There are lots of choices to fit these specs. I would probably suggest an Emtek set like the 'Modern 3-5/8" C-C Keyed Style,' which is available with a choice of several contemporary knobs at no additional charge. List on this set is \$149.

"I recommend buying hardware locally rather than from far-flung suppliers, though. We have a joke around here about why they call it HARDware. There are a lot of details involved in the selection and purchase, and getting installation help or parts after the sale is worth the brick-and-mortar premium, in my opinion."

Jonathan Jarrett's home was featured in issue No. 4, winter 2004. Since then, the machinist has been crafting round aluminum door escutcheons for fellow Eichler owners as a sideline, which has taught him a thing or three about the minutia of vintage doorknobs. "To the best of my knowledge, this appears to be an A-series Schlage tulip (or bell) knob on the back half, and an A-series Schlage orbit on the front half. Schlage's A-series is for commercial applications (heavier-duty), while the affordable F-series is more for residential. If there is an 'E' series, I haven't heard of it yet.

"As most Eichler, Strengh and Rummer owners know,



Jonathan Jarrett's Schlage escutcheon with a bell-shaped knob.

Sargent was the original door set specified for those tracts. Kwikset's keyed-entry door set (the one I use for my Eichler kit) in either 'Polo' (globe), or 'Tylo' (cone) knob styles, approximates the shape of the Sargents.

"My Schlage escutcheon plates shown here are based on vintage Schlage plates circa the late-'50s. These concave plates are made to be used with Schlage F-series 'Orbit' or 'Bell' keyed-entry door sets, but are not compatible with Schlage A-Series hardware. They are 'rosette-style' escutcheons, meaning they are held in place by the knob, which allows you to place the plates on both sides of the door if you prefer."

Jarrett's handmade custom assemblies go for \$100 to \$275; email him at [thinkmat@aol.com](mailto:thinkmat@aol.com). The Schlage and Kwikset keyed knobs retail online for between \$15 and \$35, but David Hines' advice about buying locally is a great cautionary note.

**q:** While visiting my dear aunt in Minneapolis, I discovered this chair tucked away in the basement. The only distinguishing marks are both under the seat: an ink stamp of the numbers '1053' and an impression stamp of the letters 'DCM.' Could it be the Eames Molded Plywood Dining Chair? The only reason I question this is because there are no identifying marks for Herman Miller. The chair is in excellent condition; could you advise on value and provenance?

**Tom Freeman**



# more ranchdressing



**a:** Dane Henas, this issue's cover homeowner, offers his expertise: "It's really hard to pinpoint the year and manufacturer (Evans Plywood or Herman Miller) but the feet suggest Evans—they're known as 'Domes of Silence' and were used until the early '60s I believe. The shock mounts were consistent throughout the run, unlike the mounts for the wood-legged chairs. Evans was also more lax about putting decals or stickers on all the chairs—they often ran out, apparently. The black frame isn't seen as much as the chrome plated ones, so I'd estimate at least \$400 to \$600 in its present condition, maybe more."

**q:** I have a Hans Wegner dining table and chair set I purchased via eBay from an estate sale. I know the set is by Wegner and manufactured by Carl Hansen & Son, but am not sure what the third marking of 'Povl Dinesen' is. It says cabinetmaker, and the person I bought it from said that was the broker, so I am wondering if this is the store or showroom that it was sold through. I also have seen plenty of Wegner chairs, but no dining room tables. They are definitely a matched set, as the horizontal supports of the table match those of the chairs; does it have a model number or name?

**Jed Splittgerber**

**a:** JM Cava, who wrote about Wegner's work in Winter 2011 'Modern Masters,' reports he just sold a Wegner draw-leaf table made by Andreas Tuck; a quick search online shows a variety of dining tables by the designer, some vintage, others contemporary releases. "I'm not a super expert, but as far as I've been able to

make out, about 95 percent of Wegner items are branded and signed, like the table," he wrote. "Povl Dinesen was a high-end furniture (and cabinet) maker, like Carl Hansen, etc. Several people designed for the firm, including Eric Buck and Arne Vodder, but not Wegner.

"I highly doubt that the chairs are a Wegner design; the curved wood bracket/support you mention was a common device used by many designers, so it's not a given that it's a match to the table just for that reason. I've seen this chair around, though."

Since you know the table is from Carl Hansen & Son, you might try writing them to see if they have a model number for you and if perhaps Povl Dinesen functioned as a subcontractor for Hansen in the past. Your chairs share some similarities with Wegner's CH30 design, but its seat is less elongated and there is decorative joinery on the inside backrest where the uprights are affixed. It will

require further digging to put a name to your chairs, and you may or may not find out their exact provenance. Both PP Møbler (pp.dk) and Carl Hansen & Son (carlhansen.com) have good websites to get you started.



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



# croutons

✘ At our public library used-book sale, I picked up a book, *Build Your Own Modern Furniture*, by Arthur Colliani (Home Craftsman Publishing Corporation, New York; 1954). On pages 48–49 were the plans for a 'Lightweight Three-Legged Chair'—the same one pictured on page 71 of 'Ranch Dressing' in the Summer 2011 issue. Sorry, not Eames.

Steve Katrosits



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Vintage and new modern furniture, fine arts and collectibles, plus lectures, architectural tours and more. At Winter Street Studios, [houstonmodernmarket.com](http://houstonmodernmarket.com).



LaGardo Tackett, Architectural Pottery, ca. 1955

Through March 25

Los Angeles

## California Design, 1930–1965: Living in a Modern Way

Furnishings, film, graphic design, industrial design, fashion and jewelry are the core of an exhibition exploring how California design shaped American material culture before and after WW II.

Beginning with 1930s modernism, it also explores design innovations that used wartime technologies, such as fiberglass and molded plywood chairs. The largest section focuses on

open floor plans, indoor/outdoor living and then-new types of furnishings. [lacma.org](http://lacma.org)

March 25 Pasadena, Calif.

## American Modern: USC Style and Beyond

Pasadena Heritage's spring home tour features a reception at a Buff & Hensman residence on March 20, followed by a Sunday self-driving tour of five modernist homes, including a John Galbraith design. [pasadenaheritage.org](http://pasadenaheritage.org)

April 12–15 NYC

## New York 20th Century Art and Design Show & Sale

The Tent at Lincoln Center in Damrosch Park will host 40 1stdibs exhibitors dealing in furniture, lighting, artwork, accessories, fabrics and vintage clothing. [nyc20.net](http://nyc20.net)

Through April 15 San Diego

## San Diego's Craft Revolution: From Post-War Modern to California Design



John Dirks, teak ibex

courtesy Mingei International Museum

The Mingei International Museum hosts the works of local artisans exploring ceramics, jewelry, sculpture and more from the 1940s through the '70s. Part of the Getty Foundation's Pacific Standard Time series, it includes works from Toza and Ruth Radakovich, Rhoda Lopez, Jack Hopkins, Arline Fisch and others. [pacificstandardtime.org](http://pacificstandardtime.org)

April 21–22 Dallas

## White Rock Home Tour

MCM and sustainable architecture is the focus of the tour of five Dallas homes around White Rock Lake. [whiterockhometour.org](http://whiterockhometour.org)

April 27–28 Alexandria, Va.

## Hollin Hills House and Garden Tour

Tour midcentury modern homes in Hollin Hills, featured in *Atomic Ranch: Midcentury Interiors*, on Saturday, the 28th, from noon to 6 p.m. Tickets for the self-guided tour are available through [hollinhills.net](http://hollinhills.net). On Friday evening the 27th, the Department of Interior Design, The Corcoran College of Art + Design will host a panel discussion on midcentury modern design and architecture; check preceding website for the latest details.





Hollin Hills tour

Chris McNamara, cmc-photo.net



Cliff May

Philbin residence, 1959–1960, Cliff May

### Through April 30 **Los Angeles**

#### **Indoor Ecologies: The Evolution of the Eames House Living Room**

See the living room contents of Case Study House #8 at LACMA at the Pacific Standard Time exhibition. [pacificstandardtime.org](http://pacificstandardtime.org)

### May 4–6 **Santa Monica**

#### **Los Angeles Modernism Show**

Dolphin Fair's annual show at the Barker Hangar at the Santa Monica Air Center will feature 65 exhibitors of 20th century furniture and art. [lamodernism.com](http://lamodernism.com)

### Through May 20 **Rochester, N.Y.**

#### **Crafting Modernism:**

### **Mid-Century Art & Design 1945–1969**

A survey of the studio craft movement that followed World War II includes works by Harry Bertoia, Anni Albers, Isamu Noguchi, Wendell Castle, Peter Voulkos, Harvey Littleton and Margaret Tafoya at the Memorial Art Gallery of the University of Rochester. [mag.rochester.edu](http://mag.rochester.edu)

### Through June 17 **Santa Barbara, Calif.**

#### **Carefree California: Cliff May and the Romance of the Ranch, 1920–1960**

The University Art Museum at UC Santa Barbara exhibition explores May's influential ranch houses through drawings, photographs, scale models, marketing materials, periodicals and film and TV clips. [pacificstandardtime.org](http://pacificstandardtime.org)

# resources

### **Approximating Authenticity, pp. 36–47**

Sacramento modern blog: [sacmcmhometour.blogspot.com](http://sacmcmhometour.blogspot.com) ✘ Cork flooring: Globus Cork, [corkfloor.com](http://corkfloor.com), ✘ Vinyl flooring: Azrock, [azrock.com](http://azrock.com) ✘ Paneling & 'Eichler' siding for fencing: Burnett & Sons Mill and Lumber Co., Sacramento, [burnett-sons.com](http://burnett-sons.com) ✘ Paneling stain similar to 'Moonstone': [cabotstain.com/colors-and-finishes/families/Custom-Tint-Colors.html](http://cabotstain.com/colors-and-finishes/families/Custom-Tint-Colors.html) ✘ Kitchen cabinet paint: [zolatone.com/home](http://zolatone.com/home) ✘ Kitchen counters: [formica.com](http://formica.com) ✘ Oven clock repair: [telechronclock.com](http://telechronclock.com) ✘ Bath fixtures & faucets: [kohler.com](http://kohler.com) ✘ Glass mosaic tile: [hakatai.com](http://hakatai.com) ✘ Authorized Eames furniture reissues: (wire chairs, shell chairs, lounge chair and ottoman, molded plywood chairs, Time-Life stools, elliptical table, ESU, molded plywood table and molded

plywood folding screen), [hermanmiller.com](http://hermanmiller.com) ✘

Authorized Nelson bench and Swag-leg chair reissues:

[hermanmiller.com](http://hermanmiller.com) ✘ Contemporary version of Florence

Knoll sofa: Split-rail line, [modernica.net](http://modernica.net) ✘ Lighting:

Treluci Piccolo, [lumens.com](http://lumens.com) ✘ Half-Nelson, PH 4/3,

Nelson bubble lamp: [ylighting.com](http://ylighting.com) ✘ Nelson Ball clock

& Alexander Girard wooden dolls: [vitra.com](http://vitra.com) ✘

Architectural Pottery vessel: [architecturalpottery.com](http://architecturalpottery.com)

✘ Living room artwork: metal sculpture, [melsmetals.com](http://melsmetals.com)

✘ photograph, [satterleephotos.com](http://satterleephotos.com) ✘

Alexander Girard wall hanging: [maximodesign.com](http://maximodesign.com)

### **Lady of the Canyon, pp. 60–65**

Architect: Cory Buckner Architects, [corybuckner.com](http://corybuckner.com)

✘ Tile: Ann Sacks, [annsacks.com](http://annsacks.com)



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