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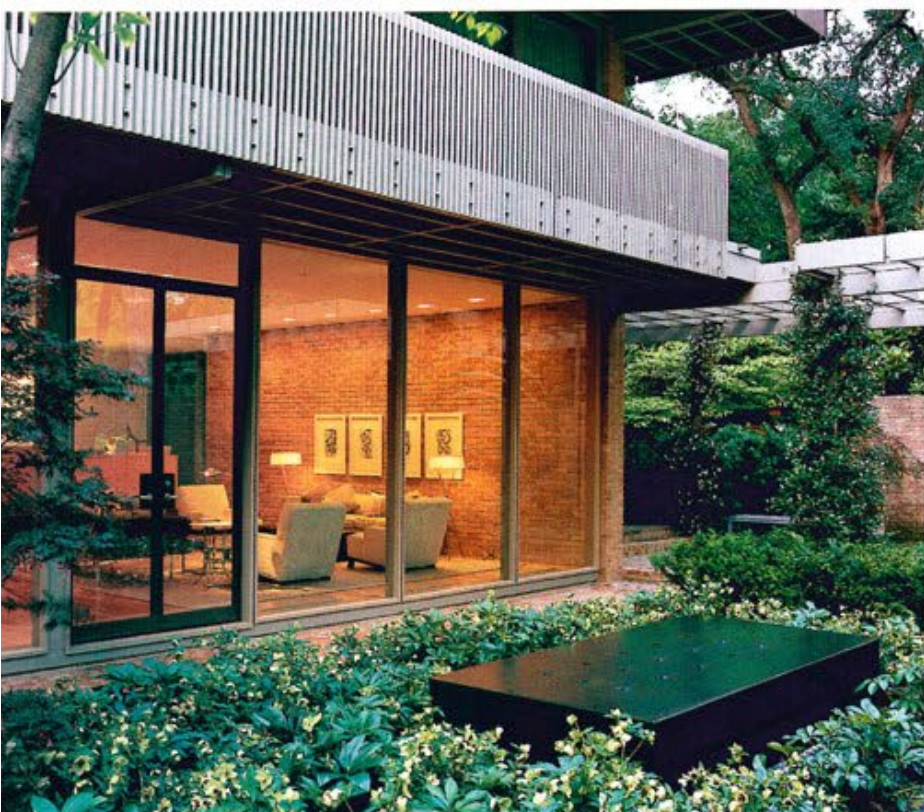
TEXAS TWO-STEP

IN ITS ELEGANT RENOVATION OF AN EARLY '60S HOUSE IN DALLAS, THE DESIGN TEAM OF MIL BODRON AND SVEND FRUIT HONORS THE IDEALS OF MODERNISM WHILE ACCOMMODATING THE NECESSITIES OF CONTEMPORARY LIVING

At the formal, street-front entrance, the planes and angles of the 1963 house, designed by International Style architect E. G. Hamilton, are made

gentler by tall elm trees, evergreen ground cover, and brick-walled garden beds filled with needle palm.

THE HOUSE HAS A TEXAS-TEMPERED MODERNIST STYLE, WITH SOFT-HUED BRICK WALLS AND WIDE, SHADY OVERHANGS



Janus, the Roman deity of new beginnings—January is named for him—was depicted by the ancients with two faces, one looking forward, the other back. Were the gods of old still honored, a certain set of architects and designers would be sacrificing lambs to Janus: restorers and renovators who must respect the past even as they redefine a building's use for the present and future. "With projects like this, the aim is to achieve a careful balance," says Mil Bodron, an interior designer who, with architect Svend Fruit, heads the highly regarded Dallas-based firm Bodron + Fruit. "You want to work within the philosophy and goals that informed the original design, but you can't be too pure. The fact is that, in order to save buildings like this, you have to bring them up to date."

The structure in question is a house in the Highland Park area of Dallas, built in 1963 to plans by local architect E. G. Hamilton. Situated on a relatively spacious corner lot, the house is set among mature elm and cottonwood trees and surrounded by brick walls and low planters that offer privacy without turning a cold shoulder to the neighborhood. An adherent of the International Style, Hamilton created a classic pavilion in a garden. The five-bedroom, two-story glass and brick rectangle is arranged around and above an open-plan living and dining space. "The house is a clean, timeless composition of planes," says Fruit. "You understand the way it works immediately."

While Hamilton's work would please Mies van der Rohe, the house, as Bodron notes, "is definitely of the region." Details and materials in Hamilton's design have

TRADE SECRETS

A courtyard fountain of black granite, above, was part of the 1963 design. FURNITURE In the living room, opposite page, Bodron and Fruit matched '40s armchairs and ottomans by Billy Haines, a Mies van der Rohe Barcelona daybed by Knoll covered in Spinneybeck leather, and T. H. Robsjohn-Gibbings's Tripod lamps, by Hinson Lighting. **CARPET** A custom-made ribbed linen rug by Martin Patrick Evan.



THE KITCHEN'S CUSTOM OAK CABINETRY COMBINES SLEEKNESS AND GENEROUS STORAGE SPACE



a Texas tang, with wide overhanging eaves and garden arbors to shelter residents from the sun and rain. For the living room walls and the dining area floor, he chose bricks from the St. Joe works in Louisiana, which are made from clay flecked with black, like a pinto pony, and that change color in the light, from sienna to pink.

How Bodron and Fruit dealt with the interior brickwork is emblematic of their treatment of the entire house. The living room walls had been covered with an oil-based paint. Since St. Joe brick is very soft, removing the paint would have been nearly impossible. The solution was brilliant in its simplicity: the designers dismantled the walls and turned the bricks around. In the dining area, they removed wall-to-wall carpeting that covered a flooring of brick ground down so that its face is flush with the mortar. The space makes a striking showcase for the Billy Haines–designed dining room chairs that Bodron found (along with four Haines armchairs and an ottoman, now in the living room).

Public or ceremonial spaces are the forte of high modernists, but most gave short shrift to kitchens, considering them utilitarian areas for servants. Hamilton, however, had provided a large kitchen, as a place for family and friends to gather. It was an architectural detail appreciated by Bodron and Fruit's thoroughly contemporary clients, a young professional couple and their two boys. The designers freshened the kitchen with a Tonka Toy–friendly white terrazzo floor and sleek, ceiling-high white oak cabinets. They created a casual breakfast area on one side of the space, placed

TRADE SECRETS

CABINETRY Cerused white oak was used in the kitchen dining area, right, and for an 8-by-5-foot door leading to the master bedroom and study, above. **FURNITURE** Eero Saarinen chairs by Knoll surround an oak table by Dominic Gasparoly. The study has a Saarinen Womb chair and a '50s Robsjohn-Gibbings ottoman. **ACCENTS** Vases and dishes by Ted Muehling, through Stanley Korshak, Dallas.

THE NEW BEDROOM WING, WITH ITS **SWEEPING** WALLS AND HEIGHTENED INTERIORS, IS AT ONCE DISTINCT FROM AND IN KEEPING WITH THE ORIGINAL DESIGN



BODRON AND FRUIT BLEND NEW AND OLD

➤ **ADDITIONS** These should complement, not pretend to be part of, the original structure. Mil Bodron and Svend Fruit used the same materials as in the house for a bedroom wing, but its design is clearly their own.

➤ **RAISE THE ROOF** The wing's fascia, this page, juts out at ceiling level, but two raised roof sections open space for a ribbon of clerestory windows.

➤ **LIGHT TOUCH** Inside, opposite page, solid and glass walls and the clerestory light create a cozy, bright space.

a conversational grouping of chairs on the other, and installed pivoting glass doors that lead to a courtyard patio.

Then the real work began. Essentially, the designers added two wings to the house—an expanded garage and a new master bedroom suite, which includes an office/study area. (The old master bedroom became a den and playroom that doubles as guest quarters.) The new bedroom wing is an exemplary piece of architectural augmentation, distinct from, yet in keeping with, the original house. The courtyard wall formed by the bedroom wing consists of three sweeping sections: glass, brick, and copper. A copper-clad fascia juts out at the height of the first-floor ceiling; the roof is three feet higher, with the interstice filled by clerestory windows. Inside, the effect is bright but private, a welcoming refuge.

In the garage, the designers created a sleek, three-car space that opens into a hall and gallery leading to the breakfast area and the kitchen. “You have to give as much thought to the way the owners move in and out of the house every day as you do to the reception areas for visitors,” Fruit says. On those who are mindful of both comings and goings Janus smiles. □



TRADE SECRETS Neutral shades enhance the air of sanctuary in the master bedroom, this page. **FURNITURE** Cubo ottomans by Paola Lenti sit at the foot of a Charles bed by Antonio Citterio for B&B Italia. The walnut bedside tables are custom. The courtyard, opposite page, features '50s pieces by Russell Woodard. Sources, see back of book.