



Forged-steel railings and natural maple treads update a blatantly '60s staircase (see "before"). The chandelier and the African vessel (opposite, far right) are as spare as modern art.

meanwhile back at the ranch an iconic house of the '60s finds itself right at home in the kinder, gentler modernism of the '90s.

In a Dallas neighborhood bristling with complex Tudor cottages, one house stands out—by not standing out at all. It's classic '60s style: low-slung and lean, with lots of glass. Before its recent renovation, it would have been easy to imagine the Brady kids bursting into the terrazzo-tiled entry hall. But even in its raw state, the house caught the eye of Dallas designer Mil Bodron.

"I remember driving by and thinking, 'That's a great one. All it needs is new front doors,'" he says. When the new owners asked him for advice, Bodron suggested replacing the massive Regency-modernesque ones. "I probably got the

job," the designer says, "because we all loved the house and hated the doors."

Although it may not have been obvious to the casual eye, there was a lot here to love. "These houses have great shape," says Bodron. "They're all about

volume and separation of materials into planes." He knew that much of his task involved deactivating layers of fussy formality. "The key is knowing not to drape up the windows," he says, "because they're a part of the architecture."

Produced by Newell Turner and Diane Carroll. Photos by Maura McEvoy. Written by Helen Thompson.



Before





Most people don't warm up to the strenuous simplicity of '60s houses—unless they are already enthusiasts. And, curiously enough, the new owners had not been hunting for a modern house. When this one came on the market, however, the couple was instantly attracted to it. It turned out the house had been designed by Bob Perry, the architect who also built the husband's childhood home (where his parents still live). After little deliberation, the couple decided the house would be the perfect place to raise their own three children.

Bodron went to work liberating the entry hall from its dimly formal terrazzo floor by replacing it with hardy Italian limestone, which sweeps through the stair hall and into the dining room. He pulled down silk valance curtains from an expansive glass wall that encloses a landscaped central courtyard (left, bottom), then ejected a garish brass stair railing and gutted the kitchen. He streamlined the rest of the house to make way for a growing family by extending the master bedroom over a terrace and adding another child's room upstairs.

Bodron used the couple's traditional furniture, such as the dining chairs (left, above), juxtaposing it against modern art and a quixotic dash of the oddball: The base of the dining-room console is a salvaged rice bin from Asia. Seemingly antithetical to the contemporary house, the furniture invigorates the rooms with the same nervy understatement as the renovation. "There isn't anything that is showy or formal," Bodron says. The simple French daybed in the living room (right)—where the couple's young daughter likes to steal in for a nap—is a knowing nod to the spare interiors. The smart Mario Bellini chairs are, in their souls, overstuffed Victorian pieces.



In the living room an antique daybed and modern chairs strike up a dialogue between old and new; in the dining room (opposite, top) '40s artwork and found objects continue the exchange.

The new kitchen doubled the size of the old one (see "before"). Everything above the counters is open to view (storage is on glass shelves). See-through doors (right) make it easy to keep an eye on children in the adjacent family room.

The new heart of this house is its kitchen/family room. Bodron tamed a welter of awkward spaces—a laundry room, service entry and walk-in bar—into one simple room anchored by a granite-topped island (left). "It had to be big—everything winds up on it," insists Bodron. The "magic glass box," the owners' term for the stainless-steel and glass column at the end of the island (which holds the microwave and dishes), is a droll monument to practicality.

"It represents the trials and tribulations of redesign," Bodron says. "It ended up where it is by process of elimination." But it's no accident that it ends up as a visual axis for the room. Glass-paneled cherrywood sliding doors separate activities in the kitchen from such livelier goings-on in the family room as hide-and-seek and fort-building.

The Flexform armchairs there (right, top) are utilitarian underneath the teadied linen slipcovers, and are favorite components for the children's projects. The family room also occupies an enviable position in the house: Thanks to glass doors opening on to the backyard, the quality of light is as much a part of the architecture here as the furniture and the walls. The family, says Bodron, wanted a casual house, not an imposing one. This informality was what those '60s houses were all about. "We simplified," he says "and took the house back to what it was intended to be."



details Sixties houses are the contrarians of architecture: Their impact lies not in detail but in the lack of it.

1 When Bodron extended the master bedroom out a few feet, he wanted to downplay the cantilevered effect, so he "propped it up" with sturdy pillars: "Additions should look like they haven't been added on," he says. **2** The new living room mantle is kept simple enough that it doesn't compete with flanking (undraped) windows. The crisp lines of the windows emphasize intangibles like light and space. **3** In a square nook of the master bathroom, light filters in through panels of clear and textured glass—reminiscent of Japanese shoji screens. **4** In the bedroom, a Shaker-style pencil-post bed echoes the architecture's geometry and warms it with rich wood tones.

For Resources, see last pages.

WHAT THE PROS KNOW ABOUT RENOVATING WITH GLASS Bodron used textured glass as a motif throughout the house—on the front doors, on interior doors, in windows in the bathroom. "It gives privacy," he says, "but lets natural light filter in." Texturing is a manufacturing process, and design options are limited only by the imagination—swirls, squiggles, dots, even Art Deco squares are all possible. For doors, however, federal law requires tempered safety glass, which won't shatter into dangerous shards and is only produced in a limited number of designs. Simply patterned tempered glass starts at about \$6.50 per square foot; more elaborate designs can cost \$20 per square foot. Sandblasted, or frosted, glass looks similar and is available in the same price range, but it's less practical—dirt and oil cling to its abraded surface. And if you want a design, it must be etched in at extra cost. ■

