

# A PEDIGREED HOUSE

A midcentury home by Arch Swank and reimaged by Bodron+Fruit blends seamlessly with art and original furnishings from design icons.



BY PEGGY LEVINSON  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY SHAYNA FONTANA  
STYLING BY JOSYLN TAYLOR



Rand Horowitz and Shayna Fontana had a fond appreciation for Perry Heights, a charming historic single-family neighborhood close to downtown. But they were also drawn to modern design, so when a rare midcentury modern house actually became available in Perry Heights, they immediately called. Something about the line of the roof and the exact placement on the lot made them think an architect must have done this. Little did they know they were buying one of the few Arch Swank homes left in Dallas. Swank was a protégée of O’Neil Ford, worked with the master in the late thirties, and then went on to design some buildings of Parkland Hospital, two Neiman Marcus stores, and Stanley Marcus’s residence among others.

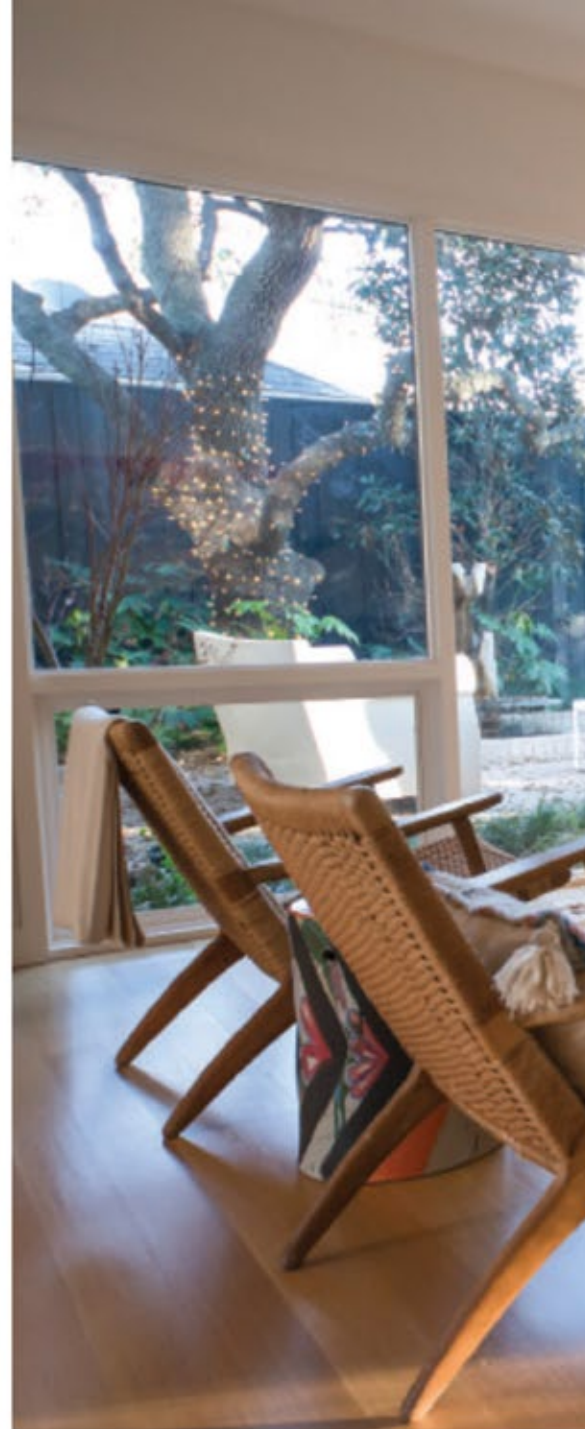
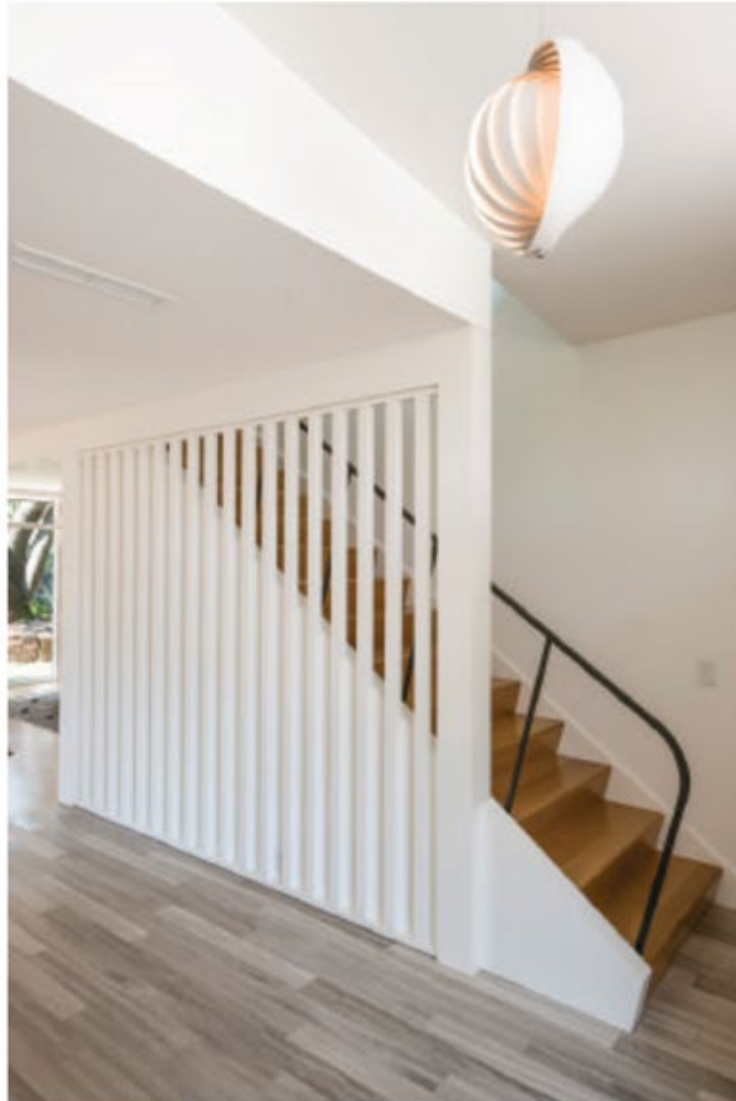
Not only did their house have the prestige of being built by a master architect, they realized the great Ray Entenmann—known as the father of local Japanese landscape architecture—had designed their backyard. The Harvard-trained Entenmann, at one time the director of the Modern Museum of Fort Worth, studied under garden master Kinsaku Nakane where he learned the principles of a Japanese garden—that it be organic, simple, and neutral, that it integrate the landscape, not

stand out from it. Horowitz and Fontana retained the original design—they just enhanced the landscaping around the setting. It is a peaceful haven for them to entertain, read near the fountain, and offers an official playground for their two-year-old son Oliver.

The bones of the 1954 house were good, but a previous owner had added some extra layers, and they wanted to restore it to the original design, but update it for today’s living. They interviewed many of the talented local architects but Bodron+Fruit stuck out as having a special appreciation for architectural preservation. And for them, it was an honor to work on a house done by one of Dallas’s more notable modern architects. Says Fruit, “Before Swank had his own firm, he was partners with O’Neil Ford, and they did one of my favorite houses in Dallas—the Bromberg house. One of the things that Swank might have picked up from Ford was the importance of craft and detail to a design. This house has a fantastic serpentine brick wall out front that is only one brick wide.”

Bodron+Fruit approached the house as they do all of their remodel projects. Says Fruit, “First, we study the house and all of the original documentation. We were lucky to have Swank’s original drawings to

This page: The late master gardener Raymond Entenmann designed the backyard’s original landscape with outdoor furniture by Richard Schultz and Philippe Starck. Opposite: Rand Horowitz, Shayna Fontana, and their son Oliver look out from the living room.



This page: (above) The staircase with original metal banister, fronted by a vertical element designed by Svend Fruit; Moon Pendant lighting by Verner Pantan. (below) Helen Frankenthaler's *Dream Walk* lithograph hangs over the Como sofa by Giorgio Soressi; coffee table by Adrian Pearsall. Opposite: The living room with Richard Serra's *Reversal I and II* are installed above an Edward Wormley sofa; original Hans Wegner chairs; coffee table by Michael Coffey.

go by and provide details. Second, remove all of the subsequent remodelings, finishes, and work that have been done to the house to get back to the original intent. Third, come up with a design that honors that original intent and also brings the house up to today's standards." They recognized the importance of maintaining the exterior design, but opened up the second floor by raising the roof 18 inches, thus allowing for lots of natural light in a tree-house-like setting. Although the walls were taken down to the studs, the footprint remained almost the same. Downstairs, important elements were retained, like the curved metal banister and original windows, but an interesting vertical architectural detail both opens up the staircase and leads you into the living room.

Shayna Fontana is a professional photographer and Rand Horowitz is a developer, but they share an interest in modern design. He got a little intense in being true to midcentury originals

and wanted only to purchase original manufactured designs from icons like Georg Nelson, Hans Wegner, Finn Juhl, and Edward Wormley. "Shayna softened the home and brought warmth with more unique finds and bohemian found art." In the living area, highly textured rugs on the wood floors complement the sleek finishes on furniture and surfaces. A seating arrangement of an original Edward Wormley sofa, Hans Wegner chairs, and a Michael Coffey table is framed by a vintage Moroccan rug. The abstract painted column table is by Renaldo Sanguino. Local wood artisan Dan Phillips designed both the wall unit in the den and the dining table. The dining room rug is by textile artist Jan Kath.

Both Horowitz and Fontana have a strong interest in the arts, and are using their home as an opportunity to take art collecting seriously. Their first acquisition was the Ed Ruscha *Drops* in the living room. "He's our personal favorite and put us



Above: Ed Ruscha's *Drops* installed above a Cassina chair. Below: *Sexy Sixties Snug*, acrylic on spandex and wood by Dallas-based artist Samantha McCurdy; dining chairs by Finn Juhl from Collage; custom dining table by Dan Phillips; Jan Kath rug.

Above: John Baldessari's *Keys (with intrusion)* is situated over a bench from Motley in Los Angeles. Below: A custom wall unit in the den designed by Dallas furniture maker Dan Phillips.

This page from top: Master bedroom with a vintage oil on canvas painting, artist unknown; Eero Saarinen chair from Sputnik Modern; ceramic rabbit by George Sellers. Below: Oliver's room with a pendant lamp by Poul Henningsen for Louis Poulsen from Collage; an original Herman Miller lithograph poster. Opposite: Outdoor sitting area with Bubble Club sofa and armchair by Philippe Starck for Kartell.



on the 'collecting' trajectory," says Rand. Particularly timely are the Richard Serra paintings in the living room. They visited the Gemini G.E.L. studio in Los Angeles and actually watched them produce some of the featured Paintstik work. "We were already fans of Serra's sculpture work and really loved the *Reversals* series. Again, we are amateur collectors so it was pretty cool seeing this series on exhibit at Nasher."

A *Moon Pendant* by Verner Panton lights the entry. The painting is by John Anthony Baldessari, an American conceptual artist known for his work on found photography. *Sexy Sixties Snug*, a sculptural painting in the dining room is by local artist Samantha McCurdy—the couple chose the colors. The den, with custom

cabinetry by Dan Phillips, has Helen Frankenthaler's *Dream Walk* over the sofa.

The light-filled master bedroom on the second floor has a tree-house atmosphere with the extra space created with the remodel. A vintage abstract is over the bed; the long chest across has a ceramic rabbit by George Sellers and a graphic painting by John-Paul Philippe, whose design aesthetic has been at the forefront of the Barney's New York store concept design and interior art throughout the United States and Japan. An original Herman Miller lithograph poster is over Oliver's bed. We have a budding art collector in the making. **P**

