

NEUTRAL TERRITORY

Clean lines meet vintage and boho elements in an updated ranch-style home in Houston.

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It was a diamond in the rough just waiting to be discovered—or, in this case, rediscovered. Located amongst a mix of new builds and remodels, the 1970s ranch-style house stood as a rare architectural gem destined to shine again in the hands of its new owners, a couple with an appreciation for its cozy West Coast bungalow vibe. “We believe it’s our job to find the true essence and style of our clients, elevate it and make their home reflect them rather than us,” says interior designer Jana Erwin. With that in mind, Erwin and co-interior designer Audrey Tehauno collaborated to transform the abode with clean, modern spaces filled with boho and vintage elements for a warm and inviting feel.

Despite multiple renovations over the decades, the sprawling single-story structure retained much of its original charm, including brick floors and a two-faced wood-burning fireplace bracing the corner between the living room and kitchen. The layout, a U-shaped configuration wrapping around a courtyard, also remained untouched. For the owners, that easy, breezy indoor-outdoor connection made the house unique and, more importantly, made them feel at ease. “They hoped to recreate the kind of ‘al fresco’ lifestyle they enjoyed while living on the West Coast, but the Texas heat doesn’t exactly accommodate one,” explains Erwin. “We compensated for that by placing a set of 10-foot metal accordion doors across the back of the house that fully retract to offer a seamless transition from the kitchen to the outdoor dining and living areas.”

The duo also designed interior walls in the dining room, hallway and main bedroom with floor-to-ceiling windows looking out onto the lush courtyard. For an air of authenticity, the courtyard is encased by vertical beds containing a wide variety of succulents, grasses and other plantings similar to those native to California. “You’re surrounded by green, which allows you to experience the beauty and tranquility of the outdoors without needing to leave the comfort of air conditioning,” chimes Erwin.

In fact, Mother Nature played a role in many of the selections. “We considered the environmental

impact of our design decisions,” recalls Tehauno. From the framework to the furnishings to the finishing touches, eco-friendly elements abound and enrich the crisp, white-walled interior with layers of visual and tactile interest. Segreto Finishes hand-applied Tadelakt plaster to the back wall in the powder bathroom as well as the tub and shower area in the main bathroom. Rooted in the ancient Moroccan decorative arts tradition, the lime soap-based plaster is recyclable and biodegradable with a finish that is both watertight and anti-microbial. The powder bathroom countertop is comprised of simple concrete, as is the built-in bench seat running the length of the living room. Natural grass cloth wraps the walls of the main bedroom to create a cocoon-like effect softened by piles of organic linen and cotton bedding. Even the mattress is organic. “We thoughtfully sourced products made from honest, durable materials that also convey a luxurious, high-end sensibility,” Tehauno adds.

Where possible, the duo also either purchased items nearby or reused pieces from the owners’ existing collection. “Shopping local allows us to support small businesses in our community while limiting waste from shipping materials and cutting down on gas consumption and emissions,” Tehauno notes. To that end, many of the new acquisitions came from close-by favorites—select floor lamps from Found, side tables from Area and seating from Kuhl-Linscomb, just to name a few—and the dining table is a family heirloom. Meanwhile, reviving and repurposing vintage and antique pieces further contributed to the sustainability efforts, with Murano-glass lighting, an African Senufo stool and a coffee table made from an Indian wooden ox cart lending the interiors a bespoke flair and worldly aesthetic. Grounding each space, vintage rugs deliver warmth, depth and a hint of color, including a vintage Moroccan Azilal rug in the Zen-like entry and a Turkish Kilim one in the main bedroom.

“The combination of boho accessories, natural textures and live greens infuse the residence with a sense of personality and whimsy,” Erwin explains. “But, overall, the quiet monochrome palette, clean-lined furnishings and contemporary forms keep the ambience hip and sleek.” And for their clients, it simply feels like home. ■



Against walls painted Sherwin-Williams’ Pure White, an abstract painting from Memorial Antiques & Interiors marks the entry to this Houston home with interiors by NEST Design Group. Below it, a Buddha statue from the homeowners’ collection sits atop a rustic pine console. A vintage Moroccan Azilal rug completes the vignette.



Above: In the sleek and understated kitchen, a custom metal hood by James Dawson Design, Inc. melds seamlessly with cabinetry painted Sherwin-Williams' Urbane Bronze and topped with light-colored quartz from Arizona Tile for contrast. The Wolf range is from Expressions Home Gallery.

Opposite: Dining room artworks include a larger piece by Matt Messenger from Hardy & Nance Studios and a Pat Washburn work from Area. A brushed-brass chandelier found on 1stdibs hangs above an heirloom table, which joins RH chairs sitting atop a long-pile vintage Moroccan Beni Ourain rug. Custom draperies feature Kravet material.

The main bedroom features a natural linen slipcovered RH bed and walls in Phillip Jeffries' Manila Hemp Shadow grass cloth from David Sutherland. Vintage brass lamps and Bernhardt chests flank a Carbon mirror by latesta Studio from Culp Associates. Seating includes a chair from Kuhl-Linscomb and a stool from Found under a Papyrus console from Lam Bespoke.





Above: Segreto Finishes coated the floors and walls of the main bathroom's tub and shower area with low-maintenance and non-toxic Tadelakt plaster. The BainUltra tub and Brizo fixtures are from Expressions Home Gallery.

Opposite: Topped with quartzite from Arizona Tile, the main bathroom burl-wood veneer vanity's floating design reveals more of the Mullican Wexford flooring from Southern Star Finishes. The Magie suspension lamps by Vistosi and plush vintage Moroccan rug were both found on 1stdibs. Brizo faucets are from Expressions Home Gallery.

