

HOUSTON

# house & home

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THE COMPLETE RESOURCE MAGAZINE FOR YOUR HOME



**Modern Mix**  
1960s home  
revamped for  
this century

INSIDE: LANDSCAPE PLANNING • MASTER BATH MAKEOVER • TEXAS HOME & GARDEN SHOW GUIDE

# FEBRUARY contents



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## on the cover

Ron and Leanne Coben purchased a 1968 home designed by Joel Brand and then worked with Kathleen Reardon of RD Architecture, interior designer Anne Breux and Goodchild Builders to remodel and enlarge the Mid Century Rancher located on a wooded lot in Memorial. *Photo by Miro Dvorscak.*

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A sensitive remodel and addition give new life to a 1960s home on a lush Memorial lot



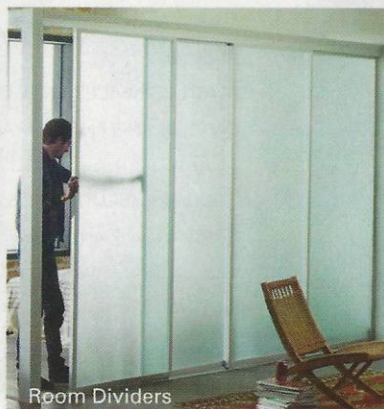
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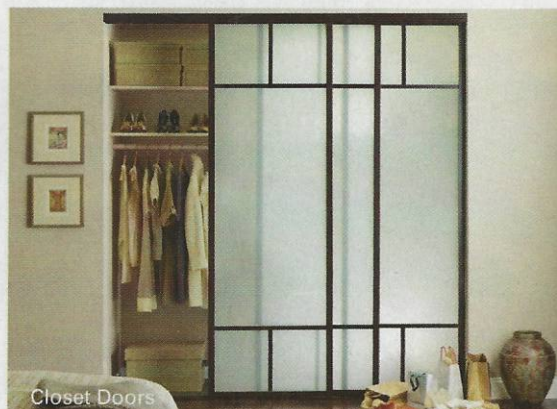


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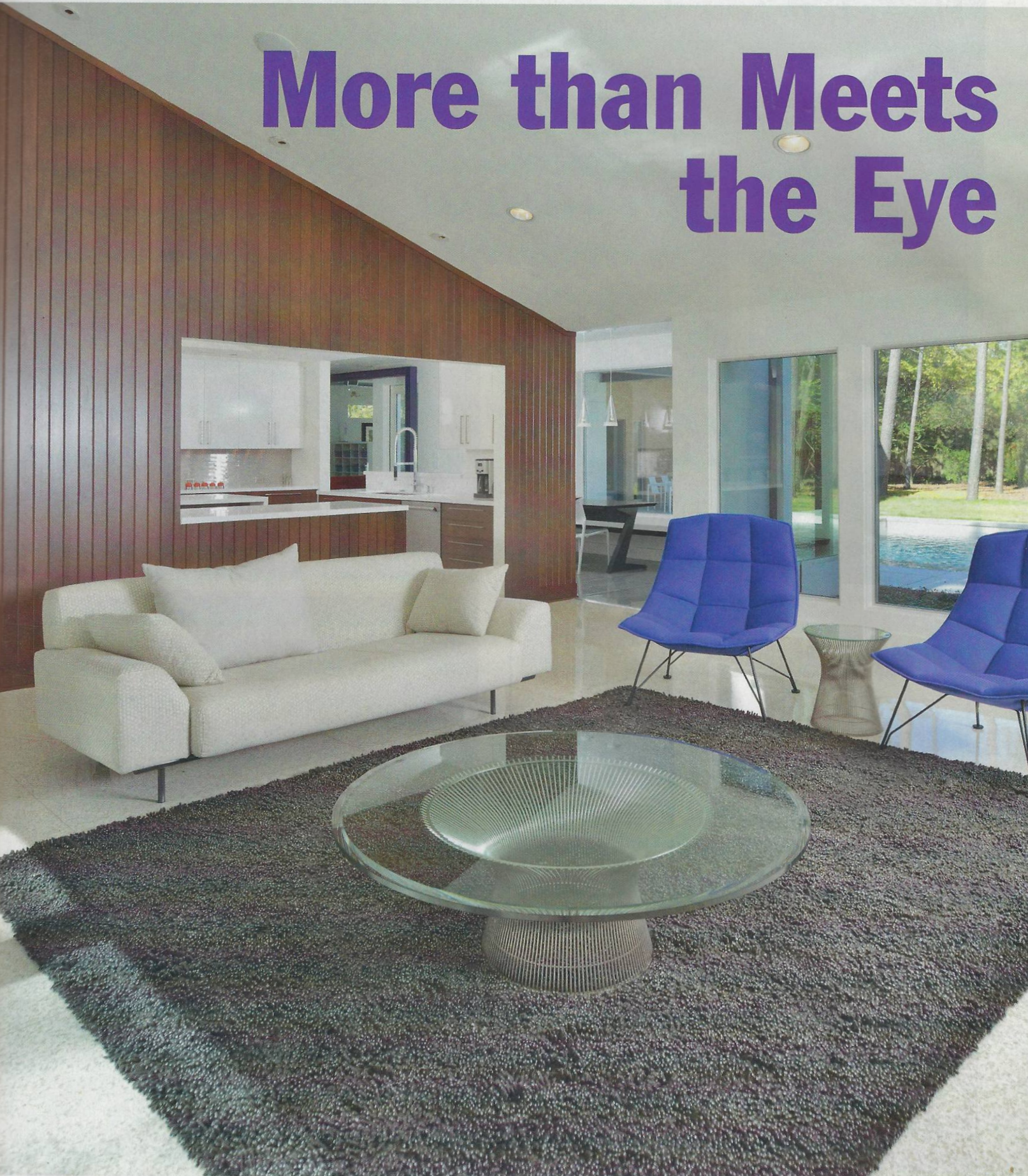


Room Dividers



Closet Doors

# More than Meets the Eye





**ABOVE:** The Cobens had a great relationship with builder Steve Goodchild and were pleased with the architect Kathleen Reardon's efforts to accommodate their design tastes.

**RIGHT:** Ron and Leanne Coben purchased a 1968 home designed by architect Joel Brand for the original owners who had lived there 42 years. The Cobens preserved the 2800-square-foot, long, narrow structure and added two wings onto the back of the house. The front view is virtually the same from the street after the remodel and additions.

**LEFT:** The well-preserved original redwood paneling warms the central rooms of the house. Anne Breux helped the Cobens realize that rooms don't have to be permanently decorated in one layout. She encouraged them to buy things for the way they live and allow for other uses when needed. The Cobens rarely need seating for more than four, so they simply move chairs from other rooms when hosting guests in numbers.



## A sensitive remodel and addition give new life to a 1960s home on a lush Memorial lot

BY SANDRA COOK • PHOTOGRAPHY BY MIRO DVORCAK

**A**fter searching for a home in the Memorial area for more than a year, Ron and Leanne Coben knew they'd found the right house almost instantly when they attended a realtor's open house in Piney Point Village.

"We saw right away that the house had straight, clean, modern lines that we could work with," says Ron Coben of the Mid Century Ranch Modern they purchased in the fall of 2010. "We knew we wanted to add on to the existing house—we weren't sure how it would work, but we had the vision to build on the existing house."

The Cobens noticed that most everyone else who attended the open house didn't bother touring the interior of the house, but merely scoped out the dimensions of the almost one-acre lot for tear-down/new construction possibilities. By contrast, the Cobens liked the existing 2800-square-foot home, built in 1968 and designed by architect Joel Brand for the original owners. The same couple lived there for 42 years and were pleased to find a buyer who planned to keep, rather than tear down their home.



## PROJECT PARTNERS

When the Cobens were looking for a builder and architect to take on their remodel and addition, they decided to talk to the builder who had completed a remodel on the house next door, since their neighbors seemed quite pleased with the process and the results of their project.

Steve Goodchild of Goodchild Builders and Kathleen Reardon of RD Architecture had done the house next door, and had proven to be a strong team. Not all builders, architects or designers are up for remodeling and reinventing an older home, but Steve Goodchild was very keen on the Coben's home project.

"You got to want to do a remodel, restoration or renovation," says homeowner Ron Coben. "Other builders were only OK with the remodel, but it was not really their preference—architects, too."

The Cobens viewed opting to remodel and add on as less daunting than starting from square one on a new house.

"Because it was a remodel and because we wanted to save the floors, we needed to minimize the number of walls to that we moved," says Leanne. "For me, that actually made the design process easier, because it wasn't a blank sheet of paper. We had to work within certain specifications."

"It made it harder because it boxed us in, but it also made it easier, because once you accepted that you wanted to live with what was here as much as you could, it simplified the choices," says Don.

After the Cobens decided to keep much of the existing house intact and make some alterations to it, they focused on getting as much of their own personalities into the design as possible. Functionality, ease of maintenance and capacity for entertaining were priorities for the remodel and the added square footage.

Both Leanne and Ron have worked for years in marketing, so they tend to be creative and thrive on the collaborative process.

"It was nice to have an architect who brought a lot to the table," ►



The Cobens say their new kitchen is very livable and functional. Throughout the design process Ron constantly sought materials, finishes and storage options that would not require frequent polishing or sealing or fussing with. White Zeus Silestone provides a stunning and sturdy work surface. Cabinetmaker Jim Farris built all the cabinets. The lower cabinets feature a post-catalyzed conversion varnish on rift-cut cherry, while the upper cabinets are treated with an 25-step Italian post-catalyzed polyurethane, hand polished to a full gloss.







**ABOVE LEFT:** Ron and son Justin collaborated on the design for the atrium fence and gate, seen from the dining room. A wall shelf behind dining table serves up small-scale art exhibits, such as this tomato-soup tribute to Andy Warhol.

**ABOVE:** The breakfast room table, built by Jim Farris, offers views of the cleverly reshaped pool and the sculptural steel "spine" structure. Light fixture from Lighting Unlimited.

**LEFT:** Anne Breux worked with daughter Sydney to design her room, which features a palatial bed chamber partitioned off with illuminated sheers, as well as a flexible art studio/study space and hang out area, complete with hanging bubble chair, folding futon bench and art supply storage with Sherwin Williams Holiday Turquoise wall color.

**RIGHT:** Creative use of Artistic Tile's Effervescence in Sydney's bathroom shows off the work of the tile crew, who cut square sections to look like a mound of foaming bubbles.

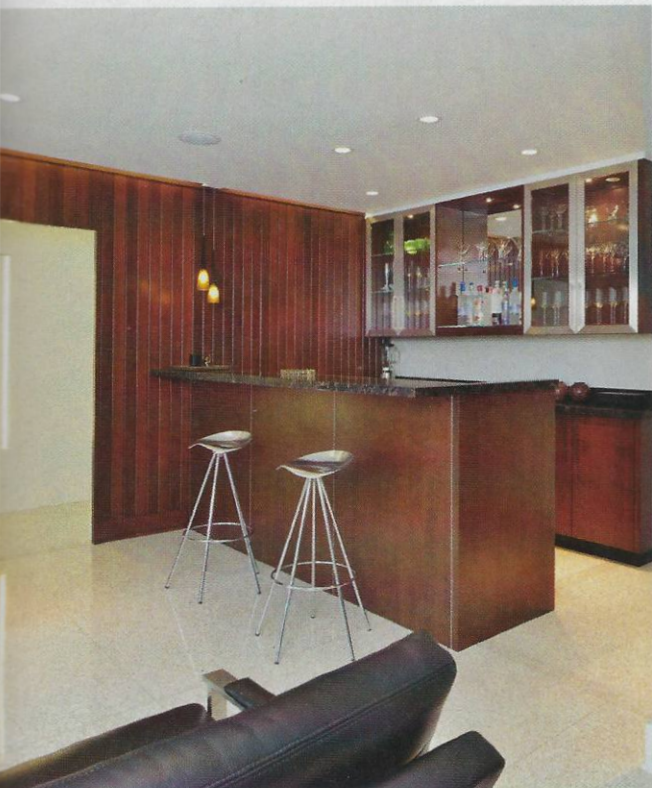
says Ron. "Kathleen Reardon did a great job of listening and accepting our input. Some creative people can be difficult to move down a path the didn't choose to begin with, but we felt like we had the best of everything in working with people who were creative and willing to make sure that we were satisfied with the outcome.

"Steve Goodchild always made me feel like he felt like this was his house—he was building it at that level," says Leanne.

Reardon and Goodchild had worked together previously, but neither had many modern-inspired homes in







**LEFT:** The bar area was enlarged from a tiny booth to more of a lounge area with a variety of seating and a generous bar counter for serving guests.



**RIGHT:** A half bath and game room occupy a portion of the new wing that connects to the kitchen.

**BELOW:** Ron Coben envisioned the creative solution for updating the kidney-shaped pool by giving it a new rectangular surface boundary.

**BELOW RIGHT:** The purple steel spine accentuates the connection between the old and new sections of the house.

their portfolios. The Cobens were impressed with the efforts that both the architect and builder dedicated to the design and build out of their home.

## GIVING THE PROJECT WINGS

With the decision to keep the existing house, the Cobens decided with architect Kathleen Reardon to add on two wings to the back of the home, which yielded a U-shaped home that wrapped around the original pool. The more than 3/4-acre lot had a bounty of trees—more than 100 trees, many of them tall pines. So from the beginning the goal was to leave as









**ABOVE:** The Cobens hired Lothar Hofbauer of Element Garden to blend the woody back yard with the new shape of the house and pool deck. Hofbauer employed Zoysia grass and blocks of concrete and crushed stone for a modern effect. Furniture from the Richard Schultz 1966 Collection provides sculptural seating for enjoying the view.

**LEFT:** A roomy office above the master suite gives mom and dad a serene space to work or workout.

many trees standing as possible as they drew up the additions.

In the main rooms of the original home, the high, sloping ceilings showcase the original rooflines. And much of the homey, yet oh-so-mod solid redwood paneling remains. For the remodel, all the wood was removed, numbered and carefully stored so it could be replaced in its original arrangement.

The builder and homeowners alike marveled as the sheetrock was removed to inspect structure and upgrade wiring and plumbing. They could see just how high the quality of the original construction was. This assured the Cobens that embracing this older home was the right thing to do and motivated the design and construction team to achieve a similar level of excellence in the new finishes and additional spaces.

A major aha-moment of the design process was the inspiration to go with a Mid Century-inspired butterfly roof design for both of the additional wings.

“We wanted something ’60s-inspired,” says Ron. “The end result is an organic asymmetrical butterfly shape.”

With the additions taking shape, the Cobens and their architect focused on the challenge of how to connect the old house with the new sections.

“We had wanted structural steel to be a significant design element,” says Ron. “And Kathleen came up with the idea for a visual spine made of the steel—some inside, some outside.”

With the shape and visual function of the steel spine laid out, interior designer Anne Breux wisely suggested painting the captivating, sculptural indoor/outdoor bridge a rich purple.

The Cobens freely admit that Breux’s color sense elevated the look of their home and is a main reason



**ABOVE:** In the master bedroom, the windows are placed high to yield both daylight and privacy. For their full-length poolside window, the Cobens are quite pleased with the flexible sheer shades purchased from The Shade Shop. One wonders if the woman in artist Rex Kare's painting *Dia* might prefer to be on the Le Corbusier chaise.

**BELOW:** The sleek master bath is anchored by more of Jim Farris' gloss-white cabinets topped with grey Silestone from Associated Marble and stylish sinks from Westheimer Plumbing.



they sought her expertise. It seems that Ron and Leann found they were repeatedly gravitating towards grey finishes and fabrics, but they felt certain that their '60s home needed some fun pops of color. Enter Anne Breux.

Breux was familiar with the work of Joel Brand, the architect of the original home, and Breux instantly connected with the project. The Cobens were relieved that Breux agreed with most of their choices, but are quite pleased with Breux's subtle and successful design tweaks.

"She understands the vision of the project," says Ron. She is brilliant and creative without necessarily being expensive. For Anne, it's really about the idea and how to bring the vision to life."

"She brings limited choices, which was so helpful," says Leanne. "We knew that she'd done her homework and we could trust that they were the most appropriate options."

"Anne is a minimalist," says Ron. "She was already conceptually there. When she suggested painting the sculptural steel structure purple, she explained that purple is a complementary color to the green backdrop of the wooded lot.

"It's funny, the simple things aren't always simple, but she gets there quickly," says Ron. "Her ideas are massively interesting. It's a place we wish we could play, but we need her to get there."

## Resources

**ORIGINAL ARCHITECT:** Joel Brand, 1968

**REMODEL/ADDITION ARCHITECT:** Kathleen Reardon, RD Architecture, 713.432.7377

**BUILDER:** Goodchild Builders, Steve Goodchild, 713.984.2272

**INTERIOR DESIGN:** Anne Breux, 713.301.0143

**CABINETS:** Jim Farris Cabinets, 713.947.2153

**COUNTERTOPS:** Silestone, Associated Marble, Chris D'Agnolo, 713.772.3434

**KITCHEN APPLIANCES:** Thermador, K & N Sales, 713.868.3611

**PLUMBING FIXTURES:** Westheimer Plumbing, Jeri Stein, 713.942.9519

**WINDOW TREATMENTS:** The Shade Shop, 713.623.0750

**CONTEMPORARY FURNITURE:** Sunset Settings, 713.522.7661

**ASIAN FURNITURE:** Balinskas, 713.227.7919

**IT/ELECTRONICS:** Digital Innovation, Shawn Merryman, projects@digitalinnovate.com

**LIGHTING:** Lighting Unlimited, Gary Andrews, 713.626.4025

**LANDSCAPE:** Element Garden, Lothar Hafbauer, www.elementgarden.com, 713.694.2200

**FLOORS:** Architectural Floors, Chris Mehling, 713.627.2112, www.architecturalfloors.com

**BATHROOM TILE:** La Nova Tile, Erick Calderon, 713.796.9050

**POOL REMODEL:** Pool Works, 713.466.3300