



AS A HOUSEWARMING PRESENT, ELIN'S DAD AND STEPMOM GIFTED HER WITH A DELIGHTFUL MOBILE, THINKING IT WOULD TIE IN WITH THE LEGO WALL'S RAINBOW COLORS. ELIN SUSPENDED IT OVER THE STAIRS WHERE IT GIVES THE ROOM A LIGHT, PLAYFUL FEEL.

"I'm a believer in using similar materials throughout the home, **creating continuity.**"



A Family

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Affair

An interior designer and a realtor curate their vision for a Midcentury Modern inspired home—and create the perfect place to unify their blended family.



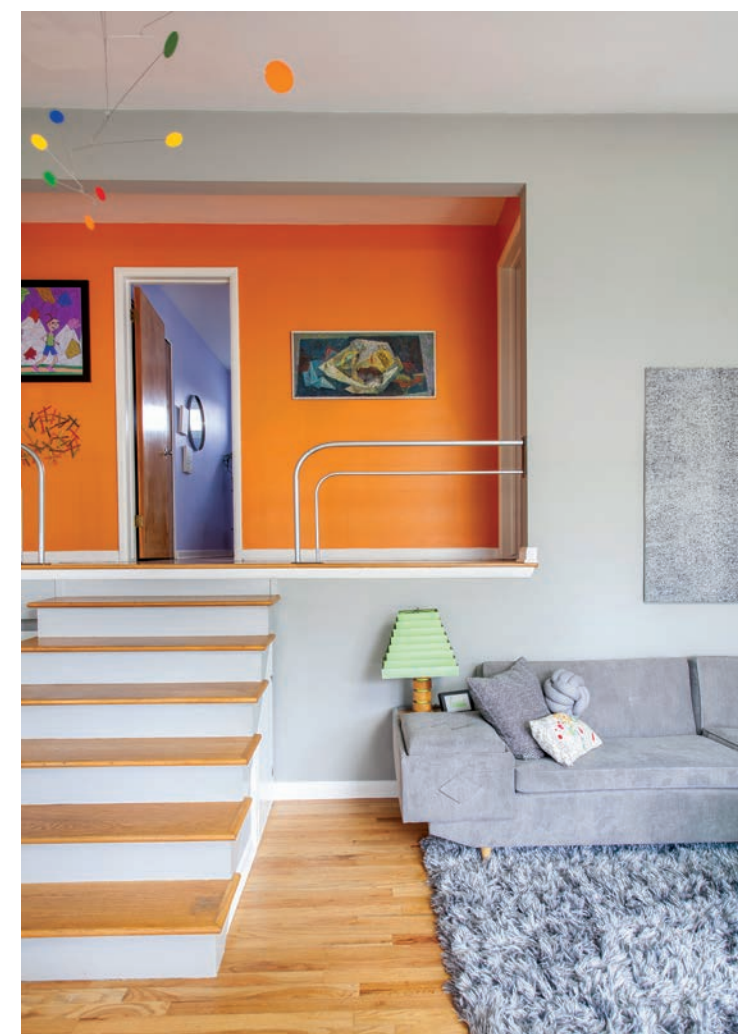
When interior designer Elin Walters and her realtor husband Christian Ward first saw the green and maroon tri-level 1958 home in Ann Arbor, Michigan,

they'd been touring properties in the area for a couple of months, seeking, as Elin puts it, "an affordable, manageable home with an open floor plan and good bones." For Elin and Christian, their search was particularly significant: Whatever home they found, it would be the place to bring together their blended family of seven.

This one, with its unfortunate color scheme and unattractive porch might have turned away other potential buyers but Elin and Christian weren't deterred. Instead, their years of design and realtor expertise (she is the principle designer and owner of Exactly and he is a realtor with Reinhart Realty) enabled them to see the residence for its potential—and, in the areas it was lacking, opportunities to truly make it their own and fit the needs of their family. "It didn't have any curb appeal," Elin says. "But inside we noticed things that both of us really liked."

As they walked around, they fell in love with the vaulted ceilings, Midcentury Modern lighting in the living and dining rooms, and open floor plan. It quickly became clear that they had found the perfect place to unify their family and articulate their vision of a stylish, Midcentury Modern inspired home filled with vintage pieces, IKEA finds and clean, Swedish lines.

WHEN IT CAME TO REVAMPING THE HOME'S EXTERIOR, ELIN WENT FOR A "LESS IS MORE" APPROACH. TO DRAW THE EYE, SHE HIGHLIGHTED THE FRONT DOOR, GARAGE DOOR AND ROOF TRIM IN ORANGE PAINT, SAYING THAT THE COLOR "PROVIDES A TINY BIT OF ENERGY."



ABOVE: PIECES OF METAL CONDUIT OVERHANGING THE DECK DRAW THE EYE UPWARDS WHILE A FULLY RUSTED FIREPLACE FROM HOUZZ TIES IN WITH THE PLANTERS. "THE FIREPLACE GAVE ME THE IDEA TO LET THE HANGING PLANTERS RUST AS WELL," ELIN SAYS. "I'M A BELIEVER IN USING SIMILAR MATERIALS THROUGHOUT THE HOME, CREATING CONTINUITY."

ELIN AND CHRISTIAN REMOVED THE WROUGHT IRON RAILING ON THE STAIRS AND EXCHANGED IT FOR A CUSTOM BENT ELECTRICAL PIPE TO MIMIC THE RAILING ON THE PORCH. THEY ALSO PAINTED THE WALLS ELLIE GRAY FROM SHERWIN WILLIAMS AND ADDED IN AN ACCENT WALL IN VALSPAR'S CARROT CAKE.

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THIS ADDITION TO THE HOME IS A GORGEOUS REFLECTION OF ELIN AND CHRISTIAN’S PASSION FOR MIDCENTURY MODERN STYLING AND SLEEK, MINIMALIST LINES. HERE, THEY DESIGNED THE ROOM AROUND THE VINTAGE FIREPLACE AND MIXED IN A VARIETY OF BOTH OLD AND NEW PIECES. “THE BEAUTY OF DESIGNING FOR MY OWN HOME IS THAT I DON’T HAVE TO RUSH THE PROCESS,” ELIN SAYS. “I CAN CURATE OVER TIME, PICKING UP VINTAGE PIECES TO ADD TO OUR COLLECTION AS WE FIND THEM AND ULTIMATELY CREATING SPACES THAT MIX OLD AND NEW, ADDING SOUL AND ENERGY TO THE MODERN.”



STAIRS ARE THE PERFECT OPPORTUNITY TO ADD IN A BIT OF DÉCOR. HERE, ELIN PLACES RED POTTERY ON THE VARIOUS STEPS. “THESE PIECES WERE PURCHASED FROM AN ANTIQUE DEALER IN GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN. THEY ARE DUTCH, WE THINK, AND DEFINITELY MIDCENTURY MODERN,” ELIN SAYS.



WHEN DESIGNING THE ADDITION, CHRISTIAN REQUESTED A SMALL DESK SOMEWHERE IN THE SPACE. “WE CAME UP WITH A VARIETY OF LOCATION AND DESIGNS,” ELIN SAYS “BUT LANDED ON THIS ONE IN THE END. IT WAS SUGGESTED AND CONSTRUCTED BY MY STEPFATHER.”

THE MASTER BEDROOM IS LOCATED IN THE 600-SQUARE FOOT ADDITION. ELIN AND CHRISTIAN DESIGNED THE ROOM AROUND A CONCRETE WALL CONCEPT. “WE HAD SEEN A SIMILAR USE OF CONCRETE IN A HOUSE PRESENTED IN AN *ATOMIC RANCH* BOOK,” ELIN SAYS. “IN OUR APPLICATION OF THE WALL, WE DECIDED THIS COULD BE THE DIVIDER BETWEEN THE SITTING AREA AND THE BEDROOM. WE WANTED THERE TO BE FLOW, BUT STILL RETAIN SOME PRIVACY.” A NATURAL, IMPERFECT LOOK WAS ATTAINED BY ASKING THE CONCRETE POURERS TO LEAVE THE BUBBLES AND BAR MARKS IN.





EXCITING EXTERIORS

One of their first moves? Repainting the home's exterior in a unique orange and gray color scheme. "Orange is my favorite color and gray is Christian's," Elin says. Bright yet minimal uses of orange for the trim, front door, and garage door give the home's exterior mod-friendly interest and intrigue. Restored windows and a new glass front door "took our home back to its original form and honored the midcentury mode of bringing the outdoors in." They ripped off the small, deteriorating porch and collaborated with Elin's stepfather to create a new face for the home with a porch roof cantilevering over a concrete patio with metal conduit that extends the porch's linear reach.

In addition, the couple also designed and built an outdoor living space that sits between a 600-square foot addition and the garage. "We decided that the area would be best used if we connected the two buildings with a deck," Elin says. Like over the porch, metal conduit was cut and hung, giving the illusion of an open ceiling and creating an intimate atmosphere. "The space is a haven where we retreat to in the evenings," Elin says. "I particularly love that it was designed as a family and constructed as a family. That's just how we like to do things."



THOUGH THE KITCHEN HAD BEEN REDONE BEFORE ELIN AND CHRISTIAN MOVED IN, CHANGES WERE NEEDED TO FIT IT TO THEIR AESTHETIC. THEY KEPT CERTAIN ASPECTS AND GAVE OTHERS MAJOR FACELIFTS. "ALTHOUGH WE DID NOT LIKE THE LOOK OF THE CABINETS, WE APPRECIATED THAT THEY WERE WELL MADE AND FUNCTIONAL," ELIN SAYS. THEY WORKED AROUND THE EXISTING CABINETRY, INCORPORATING IT INTO THEIR STYLE BY REPLACING THE DOORS AND DRAWER FRONTS AND REPAINTING THE CABINETS.



ACRYLIC CHAIRS TIE IN WITH THE LIVING ROOM'S ACRYLIC COFFEE TABLE AND DON'T DISTRACT FROM THE FUNKY LEGO WALL.



A NO FUSS, NO FRILLS LIVING ROOM

The living room, which is situated in the 600-square foot addition that Elin and Christian added onto the home, is an ode to the Midcentury Modern aesthetic: no fuss and frills, natural materials and simple form. A half wall and concrete stairs give the room interest while minimalistic furnishings are comfy and welcoming.

"We relish the surprise that almost always is expressed by visitors as they walk down the stairs from the front of the house and see the entry to the addition," Elin says. "It is exactly the effect we wanted to achieve." Elin and Christian styled the room around a vibrant orange vintage Malm fireplace, mixing in other pieces like a Thaden-Jordan sideboard, reproduction shell chairs inspired by Hans Wegner's 1963 design, and a Dot & Bo sofa.


A built-in desk with a bookshelf unit was created for Christian. In a move to unify function and design, the whole bookshelf can be pulled out of the wall to reveal the boiler for the heated floors and house water supply. "We read, play games by the fire and entertain here," Elin says. "We find this space to be quiet and peaceful."

FOR THE LOVE OF LEGOS

The couple decided to keep the original small yet

cozy kitchen layout. They removed the kitchen cabinet doors and drawer fronts and painted them turquoise. Elin's stepfather built slab doors out of natural birch plywood and clear-coated them. For the counters, "we removed the [old] laminate and toyed with replacing it with concrete until we discovered this amazing pattern of Wilsonart laminate. Knowing that laminate was used in Midcentury Modern homes, it seemed fitting to use this material," Elin says. And while the kitchen has many visual charms and Midcentury Modern nods like a vintage kitchen dining table, its crown jewel is the handmade Legos wall that shields the dining area from the entry.

"The wall itself was there when we moved in, but we decided to face it in Legos to make it more interesting," Elin says. "We purchased used and new Legos on eBay over the course of a couple years and built it as a family as we bought the Legos." The project, which incorporated the entire family, is particularly beautiful, a symbol of unity as the blended family worked to create something unique for their home.

The residence, which is an intersection of midcentury and modern design with dashes of DIY renovation, is Elin and Christian's dream home as well as the unifying backdrop to the blending of their families. 

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OPPOSITE: THIS ROOM BELONGS TO ELIN AND CHRISTIAN'S TEENAGE DAUGHTER. SHE CHOSE A DARK GRAY COLOR AND ELIN SUGGESTED THAT THEY PAINT TWO, RATHER THAN FOUR, OF THE WALLS GRAY IN ORDER TO KEEP THE ROOM LIGHT. THE DUVET COVER AND POÄNG CHAIR ARE BOTH FROM IKEA AND THE 3D FLOWERS TO THE RIGHT OF THE HEADBOARD ARE FROM A PAPER KIT FROM MICHAEL'S, ALLOWING FOR "TEXTURE AND SCULPTURE."

BOTTOM LEFT: THIS MASTER BATHROOM/LAUNDRY/WALK-IN CLOSET COMBO SERVICES THE MASTER BEDROOM IN THE ADDITION AND THE FOURTH BEDROOM IN THE LOWER LEVEL OF THE ORIGINAL HOUSE. A GLASS BLOCK WALL SEPARATES THE ENTRY FROM THE TOILET AND VANITY, PROVIDING PRIVACY WITHOUT SHUTTING OUT LIGHT. WHITE PENNY ROUND TILES MAKE UP THE WALK-IN SHOWER STALL AND IS DIRECTLY ADJACENT TO THE STACKED WASHER AND DRYER.

BOTTOM RIGHT: ORIGINAL BLUE TILES IN THE UPPER FLOOR BATHROOM DICTATED THE DESIGN. CHRISTIAN REPLACED THE VANITY, TOILET, AND MIRROR, WHILE ELIN INCORPORATED TURQUOISE DETAILS TO SHOWCASE THE GORGEOUS TILES.

