

Into the Woods

Glass and wood do the heavy lifting in a home whose design transports you to a seemingly magical midcentury woodland.

By Sarah Jane Stone | Photography by CJ South | Styling by Elin Walters



ELIN HAD PLENTY TO WORK WITH IN THE LIVING ROOM. THE COUCH, WOMB CHAIR, DANISH MODERN LEATHER CHAIRS AND HANGING LIGHTS BESIDE THE FIREPLACE WERE ALREADY IN THE HOMEOWNER'S REPERTOIRE. ELIN GROUNDED THE ROOM WITH A FREEFORM COFFEE TABLE AND ADDED PERSONALITY THROUGH ACCENTS AND REPURPOSING ART FROM ANOTHER PART OF THE HOUSE.



Nestled in the woods sits a quietly breathtaking masterpiece.

Boxy and clean-lined, this midcentury home simultaneously stands out and fits perfectly among the flora and fauna of its surroundings. Inside, original details have been painstakingly preserved—from the floorplan all the way to the wood paneling. With homeowners keen to cultivate a period-perfect aesthetic with few restrictions and a generous budget, this particular home is a designer's dream. Enter Elin Walters of Exactly Designs.

STARTING WITH GOOD BONES

Not on the market for a number of years, this flat-roof 1960 home by local legend Ted Smith was already a masterpiece before Elin brought her magic touch to its interiors. With windows and decks that run the length of the house and beams that reach through the glass panels, bringing the outdoors in has never felt more natural. "It's classically midcentury in a very simple way. There are no crazy rooflines. It's one with the property, with the light and the way it sits on the land," says Elin. Despite sitting on less than an acre, the home feels miles away from the bustling world outside.

Creating a consistent theme throughout the house while simultaneously breaking up hard lines, Elin worked in a freeform coffee table to both the living room and master bedroom.



(RIGHT) LOCATED OUTSIDE THE MASTER BEDROOM, THIS SPOT WOULD QUICKLY ACCUMULATE COATS AND SHOES BUT WASN'T ORGANIZED. ELIN TURNED IT INTO A PINT-SIZED LANDING AREA FOR THE HOMEOWNERS' LITTLE ONES—GIVING TINY OUTERWEAR AND BACKPACKS A STYLISH HOME.



"THEY'RE NOT VERY COMFORTABLE, BUT WE LOVE THEM," WAS THE HOMEOWNER'S STATEMENT REGARDING THE GREEN STEEL CASE CHAIRS IN HER OFFICE. MADE IN GRAND RAPIDS, THE CHAIRS IMMEDIATELY CATCH YOUR EYE AND BRING A JOLT OF COLOR AND PERSONALITY TO THE ROOM.

"The homeowners very much loved the house with its wood paneling and exposed beams. They absolutely didn't want to touch the house itself; they just wanted help making it look how it was supposed to look."

REIMAGINING SPACES

Prior to Elin's arrival, the home was functional but was missing that special something to bring it all together. While many great pieces were in place and the home itself boasts effortless charm, some things weren't quite living up to their full potential. For each room, Elin worked with the homeowners to clearly define its purpose and use. From there, she rearranged furniture and brought in complementary pieces to ensure each space would be equal parts functional and stylish.

"The homeowners pretty much gave me free rein," says Elin. "She has really good taste, so she was really fun to work with because I felt like I could present pieces to her that maybe your average person wouldn't embrace, and she loved them."

One example of this can be found in the master bedroom, where Elin paired a periwinkle Roche Bobois bubble sofa and ottoman with the homeowners' existing marshmallow couch. The luxurious and boundary-pushing piece was instrumental in anchoring the room without taking away from its counterpart's iconic design.

PUZZLE PIECES

It was during this process that something about the wall unit, besides its midcentury charm, stood out to Elin. It just didn't feel like it was in the right place. When she first visited the house, it was in the family room, with the top portion somewhat blocked by the exposed beams. As Elin began to work on the master bedroom, the unit felt like a natural fit for the wall across from the bed, so she trusted her gut and relocated the unit. It fit perfectly and suited her plans for a seating area. Later, Elin saw older listing photos of the home, and the mysterious unit had indeed been in the master bedroom to begin with.



(TOP) BY DIVIDING THE MASTER BEDROOM INTO LOUNGING AND SLEEPING QUARTERS, ELIN WAS ABLE TO RECAPTURE PREVIOUSLY UNDERUTILIZED SPACE AND BRING IN ICONIC MIDCENTURY FURNISHINGS.

(ABOVE LEFT) AN ACRYLIC END TABLE WITH A WOODGRAIN PATTERN PULLS TOGETHER THE NURSERY'S NATURAL ELEMENTS WITHOUT TAKING UP VISUAL SPACE. THE ROOM NEEDED TO HAVE A DAYBED FOR THE NANNY, SO THE END TABLE OFFERS FUNCTION WITHOUT ADDING VISUAL CLUTTER.

(ABOVE RIGHT) "THOSE CABINETS ARE ACTUALLY 24 INCHES DEEP AND LIFT FROM THE BOTTOM UP SO HER DAUGHTER HAS EASY ACCESS," SAYS ELIN. THIS PROVIDES AMPLE STORAGE FOR MORE THAN JUST TOYS, WHILE OPEN SHELVES AROUND THE TV KEEP BOOKS AND FAMILY FAVORITES WITHIN EASY REACH. WOOD PANELING TIES THE UNIT INTO THE REST OF THE HOME'S DESIGN.

BEDROOM TURNED OASIS

"The building block for the bedroom, I have to say, was the marshmallow couch." Upon her arrival, the room felt cavernous with only the couch and the bed. With the end goal in mind of creating a cozy but mod space, Elin got to work dividing the expansive room into lounging and sleeping quarters by creating a welcoming lounge space ideal for winding down at the end of a long day. With the wall unit in place, the couches were given the necessary context and now could provide the perfect spot for taking in views of the trees just outside the original sliding glass door. Since the couple has a baby, a nursing space was necessary, which Elin created beside the bed. With artwork and neutral bedding layered in, the room now exudes warmth and character.



(OPPOSITE TOP)
THE BOOK-HOLDING
TREE AND SWEET
PLUSH TOYS ADD
WHIMSY TO THE
NURSERY, WHILE THE
COCOON-SHAPED
CRIB PROVIDES A
NOD TO MOD.

(OPPOSITE BOTTOM)
THE HOMEOWNERS
NEEDED A SPACE
TO PLAY MUSIC AND
WATCH TV AND
THEY WANTED A
KIDS' PLAY AREA
WHERE THE TOYS
COULD BE EASILY
PUT AWAY, SO ELIN
HAD TO FIT A LOT
OF FUNCTION INTO
THE DEN. CONTRARY
TO POPULAR
BELIEF, A LARGE
SECTIONAL WAS THE
PERFECT FIT. WITH
THE INSTRUMENTS
ON THE WALL AS
FUNCTIONAL ART,
A CUSTOM-BUILT
CABINET TOOK CARE
OF THE REST.

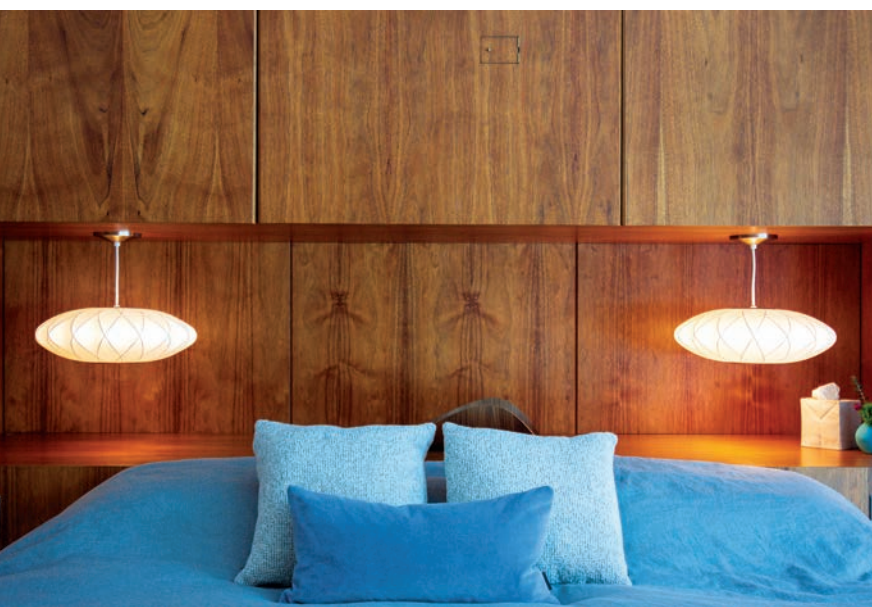




“They very much loved the house with its wood paneling and exposed beams. They absolutely didn’t want to touch the house itself; they just wanted help making it look how it was supposed to look.”



(BOTTOM) CAN YOU SPOT THE HIDDEN DOOR? THAT TINY DOOR OPENS TO REVEAL A PROJECTOR.



NURSERY GONE MOD

Designing children’s spaces to be anything but childish is no small task. To accomplish this, Elin turned to quality furnishings that offer all the necessary functionality with clean-lined designs. Case in point: the rocker. A nursery necessity, this design by Modern Nursery nods to mod and features a built-in bassinet, which can also be used for keeping baby basics in easy reach.

“I tried to choose elements that felt a little bit playful, but still simple,” she says. Just as in the rest of the house, art plays a big role in the room’s design. From the playful book-holding tree to the pieces pulled from the homeowner’s collection, art rounds out the room’s warm design.

“Projects like this come along once in a lifetime,” says Elin. “I certainly hope I get to work on another house like this, but to get to work on a property with this much detail and to be given so much trust—it was pretty incredible.”

(ABOVE RIGHT)

NIGHTCAP, ANYONE?

THIS BUILT-IN BAR

FEATURES STORAGE

AND EVERYTHING

NECESSARY FOR

WINDING DOWN AT

THE END OF THE DAY

IN TRUE DON DRAPER

STYLE. THE ARTWORK

CONCEALS THE

ENTRANCE TO THE

WALK-IN CLOSET.

