

Getting its groove back

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Homes tucked into landscapes framed by pines and streams, yet close enough to bike to work are one of the delights of our community.

As often as they can, Brian Kreps and Dale Guenter ride a bike path from their Dundas home to their jobs in Hamilton — Kreps in social services, Guenter as a family physician.

They bought their 1955 California style bungalow, with views of Ancaster Creek and nibbling deer in 2006 with the intent of restoring its Mid-Century Modern design.

"It had been countrified," Kreps says as we stand in the airy entranceway. A slamming screen door here, a knotty pine detail there were at odds with the clean lines and organic philosophy of Mid-Century.

The floor plan started out simple enough, but changes and additions over the years had created five different floor styles, awkward steps and closed in the original open design.

In their enthusiasm to renovate, Kreps and Guenter nearly succumbed to sledge hammer disease. "We were ready to take down whole walls," Guenter confesses.

A chance meeting with Hamilton architect Bill Curran of Thier + Curran Architects saved them from rash decisions.

Curran's advice was to "give yourself over to the idea of a nice big entranceway."

Now the front door opens onto an entranceway painted in Pale Avocado by Benjamin Moore. Bold art defines the space, and two interesting hanging fixtures evoking clouds cast a warm light.

The walls of the entrance would have been torn down, but Curran advised against it.

The open design of the living and dining area returned the house to its angular self. Sloped ceilings, characteristic of Mid-Century Modern, define the space which is airy, filled with light and uncluttered.

One wall is anchored by a fireplace, which Kreps says had to be placed in a corner due to budget constraints.

Faithful to Mid-Century, the dining and living room are combined. A Scandinavian style table and chairs, a lucky find at the Millionaire's Daughter, reinforce the design aesthetic, and pendant lights over the table add '50s-style confidence. The pendants and cloud lights are from Home Lighting on Nebo Road.



Entrance. The front door opens to a large entrance that the owners originally wanted to open up.

The living/dining space painted in Hazy Skies by Benjamin Moore provides a neutral backdrop for the art collected locally by Kreps and Guenter.

It also shows off two delightful Lucite lamps in jewel tones, discovered at Critelli's in St. Catharines. In keeping with simplicity, baseboards and window moulding are MDF board, and devoid of ornamentation.

The dining area is defined by a stone veneer wall that acts as a frame for the kitchen. The wall is bisected dramatically by a horizontal shelf for Inuit carvings — a line that is repeated higher up.

The modern take on the old transom window was a Bill Curran design suggestion, and is repeated in the sunroom just off the kitchen.

"We were going to take the whole wall out between the kitchen and sunroom, but Bill said 'where are you going to put furniture?'"

Instead, a pass-through allows views through the sunroom to the woods with a half wall for furniture placement.

The cosy and window-filled sunroom looks out onto the creek and path with access to a trail system. With walls painted Montpelier by Benjamin Moore, and a flood of natural light, the room is an inviting place to read.

Renovations by Unique Custom Cabinets and Renovations of Dundas took three months to complete, and gave the Mid-Century Modern home its groove back.

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