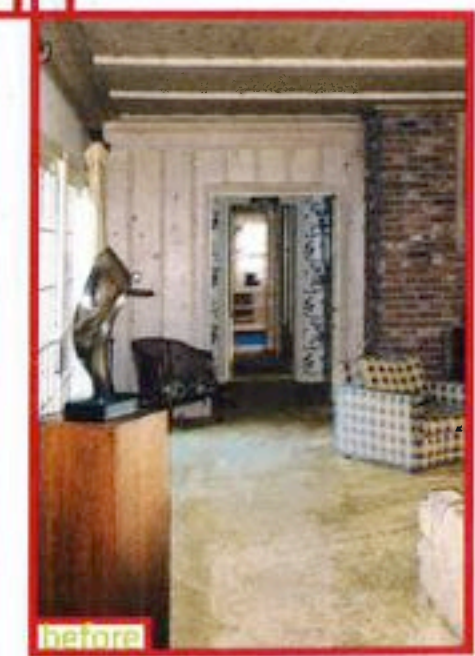


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ranch rebirth

After decades of tired add-ons, a West Coast home recaptures its 1938 roots—with zing!



THEN AND NOW The living room as the owners first saw it in 1998, above, was gloomy. Today, with its somber brick fireplace sleekly covered and its paneled walls and ceilings painted a crisp white, the space, left, is brighter and calmer.



THE COZY WELCOME

of the entrance, above, belies the true size of the house. The highest peak caps an addition atop a onetime entry hall, modified in 2005 to create a fine dining room, opposite. Design subtleties: Irregular angle motifs unite the dining chairs, painting, and lantern.

It's generally assumed that restoration of an older house turns the clock back, and that renovation winds it forward. Well, how about doing both at once? The changes that awakened this rambling one-story home in Pacific Palisades, California, a desirable Los Angeles suburb, prove it's possible to replay a good old theme and riff on it at the same time.

The owners contend that some might have considered the house a tear-down: "It's older and smaller than some others nearby. But we have great views of a canyon out back, and it's ideal for us and our two children," says the husband. Ideal now, that is. But it took two renovations—one in 1999, the second in 2005—to get there. The result is an au courant family home that colorfully romances the 1940s.

From the start, when the couple moved here in 1998, their goal was to update the four-bedroom, 5,000-square-foot ranch for comfortable, contemporary living while backdating it to spotlight its more traditional 1938 detailing. They loved the living room's original



before



FIRST THINGS FIRST

A complete kitchen renovation was done in 1999. Down came a wall, doubling the room's size. To simple cabinetry and black granite counters, the owners recently added a touch of drama—a painted grid, like mock tiles, on the walls flanking the vent hood.

mahogany floors, tongue-and-groove paneled walls, and wood ceilings, and hoped to use these elements as inspiration in remedying such charmless additions as a 1970s office and a dark '80s bathroom. But in 1999 they started with the dated kitchen. And chaos ensued.

"Our first child—he's nine now—had just been born, and there we were, tearing down a wall to create one big, eat-in, kitchen-family room," the wife recalls. "I was heating bottles in the bathtub!" But not the tub in the master bathroom, she hastens to add, because there, two small baths and a closet were being transformed into a single large room. During that first remodel, the couple was also adding sunlight—and boosting the aesthetic impact of the exterior profile—by raising the entry's ceiling by about 4 feet, to almost tower height, and installing clerestory windows. Today that foyer is a charming dining room, courtesy of the second, 2005, renovation.

Though this was a two-stage remodel that was done without an architect, the overall plan of attack was consistent, says the husband. First, rip out anything that did not fit the style of the 1938 house, such as dropped kitchen ceilings, some wallboard, and any floors that weren't hardwood. Next, add wood-paneled walls, for example, in the master bath and new dining room, and cover the old brick living room fireplace with a classic wood surround. Then, paint all woodwork and baths white to give the furnishings a crisper background. And finally, he says, "layer on fun colors!"

The 2005 makeover did not increase the home's square footage—the main goal was to "kick up the vibes," say the owners. Earlier decoration was more somber overall, honoring inherited antiques. Although they're still in evidence, what grabs the eye now are contemporary furnishings dressed in happy, bright fabrics, some with intriguing graphic patterns. What's vintage about that? "Everything!"

BEAUTY AND THE BATH

Adding beadboard walls and subway tiles, plus pedestal sinks and a reglazed cast-iron tub (from a family member's home) gave the restored master bath, below, a vintage air.

