

HOW AN INTERIOR DESIGNER USED BOTH OUTSIDE AND INSIDE ELEMENTS TO MAKE THIS HOME A SOPHISTICATED AND NATURE-FOCUSED ABODE FOR DAILY LIVING.

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Styling by LUCILE GLESSNER

# An Eichler Expressed

AROUND THE YARD, HOMEOWNER AND INTERIOR DESIGNER LUCILE GLESSNER CHOSE PLANTS LIKE CAMELLIAS FOR COLOR DURING THE WINTER MONTHS. THESE CANE LINE CHAIRS ARE A CLASSY ADDITION TO THE BACKYARD, WHERE THEY SURROUND THE FIREPIT, AN ADDITION THAT CAME WITH THE MOST RECENT REMODEL.

## When this Eichler home in Sunnyvale, California,

was purchased in 1991 by Lucile and Dan Glessner, the mid century tract homes lacked the popularity they've found today. "The architectural aspect of the homes is fabulous and that's why people are gravitating towards them and taking the time and the expense to remodel them," she says. An interior designer originally from France, Lucile has remodeled the 1960 home and gardens twice now.

She first updated the house in 1993 after a brief stint of living in Japan, which inspired the Japanese-styled garden in the atrium. The most recent update came last year to create a more sophisticated space for the couple to work from home. "I wanted the house to be very light and airy, but at the same time warm," she says.

Lucile didn't want the home to be entirely gray, which is why she went with lighter tones for the interior. Outside, however, she chose a warm gray exterior paint (Benjamin Moore "Granite") with a red-orange door (Benjamin Moore "Fire Dance").



TO HELP SAVE WATER, LUCILE AND HER HUSBAND CHOSE TO REMOVE THE LAWN FROM BOTH THE FRONT AND BACK YARD. TO FILL THE SPACE, THEY INCORPORATED A DRY RIVERBED DESIGN WITH A VARIETY OF ROCKS AND ADDED SOME DROUGHT-TOLERANT PLANTS LIKE KANGAROO PAWS, SEA-GREEN JUNIPER AND SEDUM ANGELINA.



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## EXTERIOR SPACES

The U-shaped house is built around an open atrium. While some people choose to close their atriums, Lucile wanted the space to be an open garden. “It was important to me to have that feeling that I’m looking outside from everywhere,” she says. With the atrium on one side and a beautifully curated backyard on the other, the main living area is separated from both only by glass, creating a seamless connection.

“Being able to experience the outdoors even when you’re indoors is actually super important for your health,” Lucile says. As someone who works from home and a proponent of biophilic design, Lucile is intentional about the placement of plants and their connection to interior spaces. For example, in the atrium a deciduous tree helps to keep the entire house cool in the summer and allows sunlight to flood the space in the winter.

With the remodel, both the front and back yards were completely redone. Corey Chetcuti of River Birch Design helped with the landscape design implementation and planting. Conscious of preserving water, Lucile and her husband chose to remove both lawns and instead used rocks, concrete pads, ground-covering plants, natural grasses and bamboo to create beautiful and low-maintenance exterior spaces.



(OPPOSITE) FLOOR-TO-CEILING WINDOWS PROVIDE VIEWS OF THE GORGEOUS BACKYARD WHILE THE LIGHT WOOD FLOORS, REMINISCENT OF SCANDINAVIAN DESIGN, BRING THE NATURAL TONES OF THE OUTDOORS INSIDE. THE FURNITURE, AS LUCILE SAYS, “FLOATS,” A PRINCIPLE OF MID CENTURY MODERN DESIGN THAT CAN APPLY TO ANY FURNITURE PIECE.

(ABOVE) THIS JAPANESE-STYLED GARDEN IS IN THE ATRIUM, AT THE HEART OF THE HOME. LUCILE PARTICULARLY LIKES HOW THE JAPANESE MAPLE TREE IS FILLED WITH LEAVES IN THE SUMMER TO SHADE THE HOUSE BUT LOSES ITS LEAVES IN THE WINTER TO LET IN THE SUN. A SMALLER RED LEAF MAPLE ADDS A SPLASH OF COLOR, WHILE CLOSER TO THE GROUND, THE PLANT BABY’S TEARS REPLICATES MOSS.



## FRACTAL DESIGN

While the home's original architecture lends itself well to a sense of indoor-outdoor connection, the organic design elements Lucile chose further connect the spaces. "I used a lot of the fractal forms that you see in nature," Lucile says. "They're very much natural shapes, but they're geometric."

In the kitchen, an encaustic cement tile with a geometric pattern makes a stunning statement as the backsplash, while a hanging Moooi Heracleum light, reminiscent of leaves and branches, hangs from the ceiling. On the wall, decorative details resembling twigs are a simple, subtle nod to the outdoors.



(OPPOSITE) IN THE KITCHEN, FRACTAL, GEOMETRIC DESIGNS LIKE THE BACKSPLASH TILE AND MOOOI HERACLEUM LIGHT FIXTURE ADD AN ORGANIC ELEMENT TO THE CLEAN LINES OF THE MODERN SPACE.

(TOP, RIGHT) THE DINING AREA FEATURES DARKER WOODS AND ANTIQUES THAT CONTRAST WITH THE MID-CENTURY DESIGN OF THE HOME. A GLASS DOOR PROVIDES A PHYSICAL CONNECTION TO THE BACKYARD, WHILE THE ASPARAGUS FERNS PLANTED ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE GLASS ADD LIFE AND COLOR TO THE ROOM.

THIS CALMING VIEW INTO THE OPEN ATRIUM GREETS ANYONE ENTERING THROUGH THE FRONT DOOR. LUCILE SAYS IT'S A PARTICULARLY BEAUTIFUL VIEW WHEN IT RAINS.

(OPPOSITE, BOTTOM) IN THE BACKYARD, SPACED CONCRETE PADS ALLOW RAINWATER TO DRAIN NATURALLY. BETWEEN THE PADS, DIFFERENT GROUND-COVERING PLANTS LIKE THYME IMITATE MOSS AND ALSO ATTRACT BUTTERFLIES AND BEES. ORNAMENTAL GRASSES LIKE BLUE FESCUE AND PURPLE FOUNTAIN GRASS ADD NATURAL GREENS, WHILE KANGAROO PAWS AND A CAMELLIA TREE INCORPORATE SPLASHES OF RED.

FEELING INSPIRED TO START YOUR OWN GARDEN? LUCILE RECOMMENDS TAKING SOME TIME TO CONSIDER YOUR OWN LIMITATIONS AND THE NEEDS OF THE PLANT BEFORE TAKING ANY DRASTIC STEPS. "YOU NEED TO SPEND A LITTLE BIT OF TIME UNDERSTANDING THE PLANT YOU WANT TO HAVE." SHE SAYS. ASKING HOW MUCH CARE A PLANT WILL REQUIRE IS A GREAT PLACE TO START.



(TOP, LEFT) THIS TWIG-LIKE WALL DÉCOR IN THE KITCHEN SHOWS LUCILE'S LOVE OF FRACTAL AND ORGANIC ELEMENTS THAT BRING THE OUTSIDE IN.

(TOP, RIGHT) LUCILE DESIGNED THESE OCTAGON-SHAPED PIECES HERSELF AND HAD THEM BUILT BY BAGICHA. "I LOVE TO USE PRESERVED MOSS AND NATURAL WOOD TO CREATE BIOPHILIC ARTISTIC SHAPES AND DESIGNS FOR MY CLIENTS, AND IN THIS CASE OUR KITCHEN," SHE SAYS. "THE HEXAGON SHAPES COMPLEMENT THE HEXAGONAL CEMENT TILE ON THE BACKSPLASH."



## MID CENTURY MINIMALISM

While Lucile loves mid century design and is incredibly knowledgeable and passionate about Eichler homes, she didn't want everything in her home to be from that time period. "There are rules with mid century design that you can apply to other materials," she says. For instance, everything floats. Couches, chairs and even planters all have legs, creating a lighter sense in the space. "The furniture is off the floor," Lucile says, "the room looks bigger and it makes it less crowded."

In addition to adding her own twists to mid century design practices, Lucile also uses personal antiques to make the space her own. "I kept a lot of old things that mean something to me from my country and from my family," she says of several antiques that originally belonged to her mother in France. Some of these antiques, like the African grain door hanging above the fireplace, have dark woods that contrast nicely with the light tones of the home.

With clean lines, personal touches and a sense of oneness with the outdoors, this Eichler home captures the essence of nature with sophistication and class. 🌿

**(BOTTOM, LEFT)** SOMEWHERE BETWEEN CITRUS AND SAGE, THE GREEN COLOR OF THESE WALLS WAS INSPIRED BY THE PLANTS LUCILE LOVES AND COMPLEMENTS BOTH THE WALNUT DRESSER AND THE WHITE BOOKSHELF PERFECTLY. A FLOOR-TO-CEILING WINDOW OFFERS VIEWS OF THE BACKYARD.

**(BOTTOM, RIGHT)** THE GREEN WALLS, PATTERNED BEDSPREAD AND WALL ART ALL CAPTURE THE ESSENCE OF NATURE IN THIS BEDROOM, WHILE LARGE WINDOWS CONNECT THE ROOM TO THE OUTDOORS. LUCILE AVOIDED PUTTING HOLES IN THE CEILING FOR RECESSED LIGHTING BY GETTING CREATIVE WITH THESE WHIMSICAL BEDSIDE TABLE LAMPS.



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## Bridging the Gap

WHILE LARGE GLASS WINDOWS ARE ONE WAY TO BRING THE OUTDOORS IN, HERE ARE A FEW MORE METHODS TO CREATE A SEAMLESS CONNECTION BETWEEN INSIDE AND OUT.

- **ADD INDOOR PLANTS.** Have designated spaces or planters for natural indoor greenery. Lucile designed custom octagon-shaped, preserved moss-filled boxes for her kitchen as a unique biophilic design touch.
- **INCORPORATE FRACTAL DESIGN.** This method doesn't require any actual plants. Implement fractal pieces, or geometric shapes, that mimic patterns in nature. Some easy options are light fixtures, patterned tiles or other decorative pieces.
- **LIGHT EXTERIOR SPACES.** While large glass windows create picturesque views during daylight hours, at night those same windows can easily become empty black holes. Lucile recommends intentionally adding exterior lights to highlight specific trees or plants for beautiful views at any hour.