

Building a Haven

HOW THIS MID-CENTURY CALIFORNIA
PROPERTY BECAME A BEAUTIFUL AND
NECESSARY HOME AWAY FROM HOME.

By HEATHER CHRISTENSEN

Photography by BRET GUM | Styled by JICKIE TORRES



LORI AND JUSTIN WERE INTENTIONAL WITH THE COLOR DESIGN BOTH IN THE INTERIOR AND EXTERIOR. "MID CENTURY MODERN ARCHITECTURE EMPHASIZES A CONNECTION TO NATURE AND THE OUTDOORS. GREEN AND ORANGE ARE COLORS COMMONLY FOUND IN NATURE, WITH GREEN REPRESENTING FOLIAGE AND ORANGE RESEMBLING WARM HUES IN SUNSETS," LORI SAYS.



"The exterior of the residence was meticulously restored to its authentic beauty, highlighting the iconic cantilevered roof, a strikingly colored door, clerestory windows and the clean, distinctive lines that define Eichler homes."

Many people would jump at the chance to stay at a luxury mid-mod rental or Airbnb. Not only would it be a unique experience, but the spacious layout adds to the relaxed, vacation feel of staying in a rental home. This is exactly the kind of experience that Lori and Justin Pecikonis provided their clients with during the height of the pandemic.

BUILDING THE BEGINNING

Lori and Justin are the owners of JRP Design & Remodel, based in Westlake Village, California. This husband-and-wife duo has been crafting and creating homes together for the past 20 years. Their passion for building started early. "Justin developed a profound passion for the construction process at a young age," says Lori, "which initially took root through his fascination with Legos." Justin adds, "I was consistently enthralled by the act of building and took great pleasure in crafting objects using my hands."

Lori, too, took an interest in building at a young age. She grew up doing on-site jobs with her father, who was a commercial general contractor, and she also worked for a decade in the world of real estate and custom home development.

It is no surprise that, when Justin and Lori met, they decided to build a life together. As a team, they continued building the foundation for other's lives as well.





A SHELTER AMID THE SHUTDOWNS

During the pandemic, Lori and Justin began to realize that their customers could not stay in their homes during renovations, as would have previously been the case. "During the Covid lockdown, we learned that our clients could not work in their homes during a remodel due to the noise pollution," Lori says. "We realized that we needed to create a luxury, furnished rental for our clients to live in while we remodeled their homes."

Although Lori and Justin do not specialize in Mid Century Modern homes, they knew that the Eichler mid-mod style would be the perfect home away from home their clients needed in this challenging time. "We knew the Eichler was a treasure and would be something unique for our clients," Lori explains.

THE RIGHT REMODEL

Lori and Justin found a house in Thousand Oaks, California, that suited their purpose. The famed neighborhood boasts more than a hundred Eichler homes. When the owners of JRP Design & Remodel purchased the house it was in poor condition.



(OPPOSITE) THE FLOOR-TO-CEILING WINDOWS OFFER AN INVITING VIEW OF THE MID-CENTURY ATRIUM WITH A PEEK INTO THE KITCHEN BEYOND. "EVERYONE KNOWS THAT THE HEART OF A TRADITIONAL HOME IS THE KITCHEN, BUT IN AN EICHLER, THE HEART OF THE HOME IS THE ATRIUM, AND WE'RE PROUD TO HAVE CONNECTED THE TWO," LORI SAYS.

Fighting the Foundation

HOW JRP DESIGN & REMODEL FOUND CREATIVE WAYS TO REPAIR STRUCTURAL ISSUES IN THE HOME.

Old houses can have great character, with their historic accents and cozy layouts, but they can also have crooked bones, which poses a problem to any home-remodeling crew. Lori Pecikonis knows this issue well. She is co-owner of JRP Design & Remodel along with her husband, Justin, and their Eichler property in Thousand Oaks, California, had this exact problem. "Dealing with a floor that was two inches off-level posed a significant challenge as our initial priority was to establish a level baseline," Lori explains. Here are some ways the team worked through the building's structural challenges.

1. Assess the Situation. Lori, Justin and their crew started by conducting a laser survey to assess the condition of the house. "This survey revealed that there was a two-inch slope from one side of the house to the other," Lori says. "This slope was likely due to the settling of the house's foundation, which can happen over time, especially with clay-rich soil."

2. Reframe and Reconstruct. The need for repairs allowed the team to restructure the house in a way that would align the doors and windows. "Given the significant settling, dry rot and termite damage, it was necessary to replace a substantial portion of the structure," Lori explains. "This step ensured the structural integrity and also allowed us to ensure all our window and door heights matched, again using the laser-control line through the home during the reconstruction."

3. Level Line of Sight. Another fix that was made to fight against the house's two-inch slope was to adjust the concrete slab. "To level the existing concrete slab, we added a lightweight concrete subfloor," Lori says. "This subfloor likely helped create a more even and stable surface for the subsequent construction and flooring installation."

Once all this was done, it allowed the old house to sit tall once more. "In doing what we did, we were able to create an even sight line through the home and all the glass," Lori says.



"TRADITIONALLY, I HAVE ALWAYS HELD A SPECIAL AFFECTION FOR THE KITCHEN, AS IT IS OFTEN CONSIDERED THE HEART OF A HOME," LORI SAYS. "WE RELOCATED THE KITCHEN AND EXPANDED IT FROM A NARROW GALLEY INTO A SPACIOUS AREA WITH A CENTRAL ISLAND OVERLOOKING THE ATRIUM, WHICH HAS SEAMLESSLY BLENDED THESE SPACES TOGETHER. THIS TRANSFORMATION NOT ONLY BRINGS THE BEAUTY OF THE OUTDOORS INDOORS, BUT ALSO ENHANCES OUR ENTERTAINMENT OPPORTUNITIES."



"Originally built in 1964, this mid-century gem had fallen into despair," Lori says. "The journey of re-viving it began in 2021, when we purchased it with the aspiration of returning it to its former status as a California icon. This was our (and our team's) first mid-century remodel, which presented its own unique set of challenges."

Many of the issues in restoring this home were structural. "We started with needing to replace three-quarters of the framing due to significant structural termite damage," Lori says. "We upgraded the post-and-beam structure with seismic hold-downs and concealed fasteners to meet the current codes. The exterior of the residence was meticulously restored to its authentic beauty, highlighting the iconic cantilevered roof, a strikingly colored door, clerestory windows and the clean, distinctive lines that define Eichler homes."

After the structural work was done, the JRP Design & Remodel team was able bring it back its former glory while also adding some essential modern comforts, including new all-aluminum, dual-glazed windows and doors for better insulation and a new application of spray-foam insulation, enhancing its thermal performance of the flat roof.





THE CUSTOM-BUILT, RUST-COLORED SOFA IS THE LIVING ROOM'S SHOWSTOPPER. THE COFFEE TABLE IS FROM WEST ELM. LORI OPTED FOR FURNITURE AND ACCENTS THAT WERE CASUAL, EASY CARE AND WOULD STAND UP TO WEAR AND TEAR. THE BRASS LIGHT—AN ETSY FIND—ADDS THE PERFECT SPECIAL TOUCH.

They also modernized the outdated heating system of the 1964 home. "We opted to abandon the use of radiant floor heating and, instead, installed state-of-the-art, high-efficiency ductless heating and air units in every room," Lori says. "Each room is now equipped with its individual thermostat and control." It also allowed them to eliminate the need for soffits and ductwork. This enables them to properly display the iconic MCM tongue-and-groove ceiling.

The team also redesigned the layout to better meet their client's needs and they did so without altering the home's original footprint. "The living space

next to the family and dining room was repurposed to relocate the washer and dryer and allowed space to add a third bathroom." Lori mentions. "The primary bathroom was also reconfigured for a larger layout."

RESTFUL REMOTE WORK

After the Eichler home was remodeled and modernized, it was ready for JRP Design & Remodel's clients to enjoy. It allowed homeowners and families to feel like they were in a vacation home during the isolation of the pandemic and created a great open space for those who needed to work from home.

(RIGHT) LORI PROVES IT DOESN'T TAKE MUCH TO ADD IN FUNCTIONALITY IN A STYLISH, MID-MOD WAY. THIS HOME-OFFICE FIT NICELY INTO THE WALKWAY FROM THE SLIDING GLASS DOOR TO THE DINING ROOM. THE SWIVEL CHAIR MATCHES THE ONE ON THE OTHER END OF THE ROOM, WHICH HELPS TIE THE TWO SPACES TOGETHER.

(BELOW) LORI CHOSE TO REFACE THE FIREPLACE IN A FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT-INSPIRED ARTO TILE, WHICH ADDS A LOVELY, RICH CENTRAL FEATURE TO THE ROOM.





THE ORIGINAL GRASSCLOTH SCREENS FOR THE HOME'S HALL CLOSETS WERE LONG GONE. THE COUPLE OPTED FOR WARM-TONED SLIDING DOORS, WHICH BRINGS WOOD INTO THIS MOSTLY WHITE SPACE.

"Clients have been impressed by the impeccable attention to detail evident in every selection," Lori says. "One of their favorite features inside the home is the interior atrium, where people enjoy drinking a cup of coffee as the sun rises or enjoy a cocktail and conversation. They love the size of the island in the kitchen and how many people can participate in the food prep or entertainment around the island."

This MCM dream rental gave Lori and Justin's clients exactly what they needed while their homes were being renovated. And given its rough shape, it's safe to say that the couple might have been the one of the few that were capable and willing to put in the work and investment to restore it properly. It also allowed Lori and Justin to continue to live out their mission: "To oversee remarkable and enjoyable transformations of not just homes, but lives." 🌿

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(TOP) AS A RENTAL, LORI WANTED TO CREATE FAMILY FRIENDLY SPACES. THIS ROOM FEATURES TWIN BEDS AND A RUGGABLE RUG, PERFECT FOR KIDS. (ABOVE) LORI'S OBJECTIVE FOR THE INTERIOR WAS TO MAKE IT FEEL SERENE AND ORGANIC. THE TILE IN THE PRIMARY BATH IS A FUN EXPRESSION OF THE COLOR PALETTE FROM THE REST OF THE HOUSE.