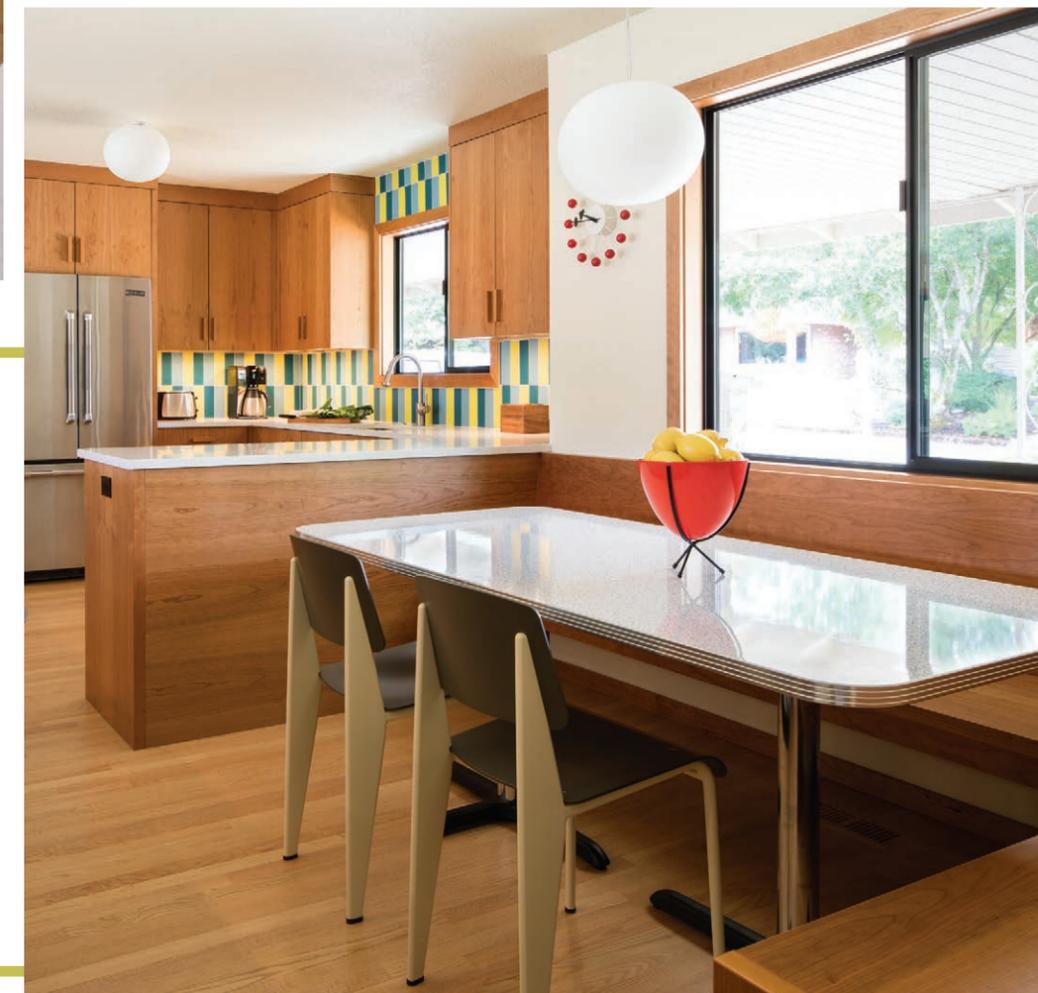




A DIVIDING WALL BETWEEN THE LIVING AND DINING AREAS WAS REMOVED, CREATING AN OPEN FLOOR PLAN. TO HIGHLIGHT THE HOME'S PERIOD STYLE, SLEEK DOUBLE-GLAZED WINDOWS WERE ADDED AS WELL AS JASPER MORRISON GLOBE LIGHT FIXTURES—REMINISCENT OF ITALIAN MIDCENTURY DESIGN.

Nestled in a surprisingly sunny pocket of southeast Portland, Oregon, is a neighborhood with a distinctly southern California vibe. Low-slung 1960s ranch houses lounge at the back of vast swaths of flat, verdant lawn. They're not entirely swoon-worthy properties, but they have a sort of Brady Bunch chic. It was here that a family in the midst of building their own kid-filled household decided to hunker down.

Entrusting Michael Howells of Howells Architecture + Design with free-reign of the renovation, this soon-to-be-family of six had one non-negotiable request—open up the wall between the kitchen and breakfast area to the living and dining spaces. By completely removing the dividing wall between the kitchen, dining and original sunken living room, sunlight can flood through from the expansive picture windows overlooking the lush front yard. Practically, parents can now oversee busy children enjoying the family-friendly living areas and now visible al fresco play space.



By **Emily Zahniser**
Photography by **Laurie Black**

Ranch Kitchen Redesign

THIS PORTLAND REMODEL WENT BEYOND ICONIC MIDCENTURY ITALIAN FURNITURE FOR A FULLY GELATO-HUED AND FAMILY-FRIENDLY KITCHEN REDUX.

"It felt like a romantic conjuring of the Mediterranean world would pair nicely with the native architecture of the house."



The new open kitchen and great room's bold colors and playful geometries are balanced by more understated and organic midcentury elements.

(OPPOSITE, TOP) JEAN PROUVÉ CHAIRS AND A CUSTOM BARS AND BOOTHS TABLE IN THE BUILT-IN BREAKFAST AND DESK AREA ALLOW FOR MULTIPLE WORKSPACES IN THE KITCHEN—PERFECT FOR A GROWING FAMILY. (OPPOSITE, BOTTOM) RETENTION OF THE ORIGINAL ITALIAN MARBLE FIREPLACE ACTED AS THE CATALYST FOR HOWELLS ARCHITECTURE + DESIGN'S APPROACH TO THIS FAMILY-FRIENDLY RENOVATION. THE LIVING AND DINING AREAS ARE ACCESSORIZED WITH FURNISHINGS FROM ROOM AND BOARD, BLUDOT, DESIGN WITHIN REACH AND CHRISTIANE MILLINGER ORIENTAL RUGS.

When Howells does a renovation, his approach is to take cues from the original architecture and stylistic features of the existing home. In this case, the existing conditions in the home were unremarkable, aside from the fireplace and a built-in mahogany sideboard. The fireplace in particular was pristine white Italian marble. Inspired by the original fireplace and a recent trip to Sicily, Howells explored the themes of Italian Midcentury Modern style by balancing design precision with the warmth of natural wood and items reflecting a handmade quality.

The original built-in sideboard in the dining area was refinished and reframed in cherry wood to coordinate with the kitchen cabinetry, including custom, hand-crafted wooden cabinet pulls. White quartz countertops conjure Italian terrazzo while staying true to the inspiration's fascination with form expressed through, what were then, new materials like plastic and Lucite. A Formica-topped and chrome-trimmed table with a vintage vibe takes pride-of-place in the new tailor-made breakfast nook.

The clean lines and minimal fuss of the new space are punctuated with another Italian Midcentury Modern





Design Features

PLAY WITH THESE ITALIAN-FLAVORED MIDCENTURY DESIGN INSPIRATIONS:

- Handcrafted items that balance form and function
- Uncluttered, clean lines—both organic and geometric
- A mix of contrasting materials, including traditional and retro mediums
- Understated and uncluttered styling
- Bold colors, including black and white
- Luxe finishes and terrazzo floors and countertops
- Blending Midcentury Modern minimalism with Old World elegance

By completely removing the dividing wall between the kitchen, dining and original sunken living room, sunlight can flood through from the expansive picture windows overlooking the lush front yard.

trait—color. “It’s certainly an antidote to an overabundance of neutral- palette modern home remodels,” says Michael. The colors are a nod to Mediterranean blues, punctuated with citrus. “There is a wonderful Brice Marden painting called *Summer Table*. It’s two blues and a yellow, and to me it says sea, sky and a bowl of lemons. I showed it to my clients, and their reaction was immediately positive,” he says.

The new open kitchen and great room’s bold colors and playful geometries are balanced

by more understated and organic midcentury elements including luxe gray wool carpet, natural wood trim and kid-approved, durable furnishings from BluDot, Design Within Reach and Room and Board.

“Summer in Portland is incredible, but (for me) the six months of gloom necessitate radical measures,” says Michael. “In this case, it felt like a romantic conjuring of the Mediterranean world would pair nicely with the native architecture of the house.” ☼