

Bankord added dimension to the front of the residence with the addition of a surface select boulder grouping and a pair of offset rectilinear walkways. *Stipa tenuissima* grasses and *agave parryi* punctuate the boulders.



RESTORATION YARDWARE

Designer Troy Bankord sets a new standard in an earthy, mid-century Modern makeover



Original Philippine ribbon mahogany cabinetry was revamped and jazzed-up with Black Galaxy granite countertops and stainless steel appliances. The concrete block wall was constructed and sandblasted to create a visual continuation of the outdoors coming inward.

IN A QUIET CUL-DE-SAC SURROUNDED BY SMALL URBAN FARMS IN NORTH PHOENIX, THIS unassuming ranch home was slowly stripped of five decades of wear then chiseled and reshaped into a contemporary earth angel by one of the most discriminating tastemakers of our time, environmental designer Troy Bankord.

Featuring a typical floorplan found in many Ralph Haver-designed homes in Phoenix, AZ, the Glenn House possesses the rare distinction of being the product of not one but two master designers – each working half a century apart but engaged in the same dialogue about the essential relationship between indoor and outdoor space. Haver, the architect who designed hundreds of popular and accessible postwar homes in Phoenix, Tempe, and Scottsdale, provided the blueprint for this flexible ranch home design. Bankord, a 2006 recipient of a prestigious Master of the Southwest distinction by *Phoenix Home & Garden* magazine, is the designer behind this dramatic contemporary transformation.

Haver likely couldn't have predicted how wildly popular his modest and timeless ranch homes would become today. Coveted for their clean, uncluttered lines and malleable interior spaces, Haver Home renovations are a favorite project for design professionals and do-it-yourselfers alike. But Bankord had much more than a typical renovation in mind. The result is a transfiguration of familiar forms into something much more potent than the original.

Fresh from the exhilarating experience of renovating his first mid-century modern Al Beadle-designed home in Paradise Gardens, Bankord chose the Haver in Starlite Vista for his next project because the home and the surrounding neighborhood were virtually untouched. Unlike several Haverhoods that have topped the charts in both price and popularity, Starlite Vista remained under the radar due to its small size and low-key location off the

Photography by Richard Maack

By Alison King

An orphaned floating fireplace was rescued from another Haver home in Sunnyslope. Original elements like track lighting and angled, signature Haver windows are just as contemporary today as they were in 1956 when the home was built. The furnishings and art are part of Bankord's collection of one of a kind finds from both Palm Springs and Phoenix.



tree-lined corridor of 15th Avenue. Bankord felt it was his calling to purchase the home with its oozing mortar and dead landscape. "I really didn't want a common fix-n-flip to happen to this place. I needed to save it," he said. "The way the home was sited on the lot, it lacked dimension. Actually, it looked like a mobile home. I knew I could solve that by punching up the front landscaping."

To say that Bankord punches up landscaping is an understatement. He grounded the house by sandblasting the exterior paint and returning the block construction back to raw, gray aggregate. "The house had been painted baby blue ... creating a separation of the home from its site. Now there's more of a connection between the two ... almost 'back to the earth' in a primitive sense. When you throw in stainless steel or galvanized aluminum, there's a contrast between natural textures."

The home's new ground-hugging look was enhanced by rectangular hedges framed by a low diagonal wall designed with characteristic cube-shaped voids that reference an original block wall that penetrates the home's axis. In case the subtlety of all the masonry, textured granite, and other stone elements are missed, a tumble of large boulders sets the tone as the dominant

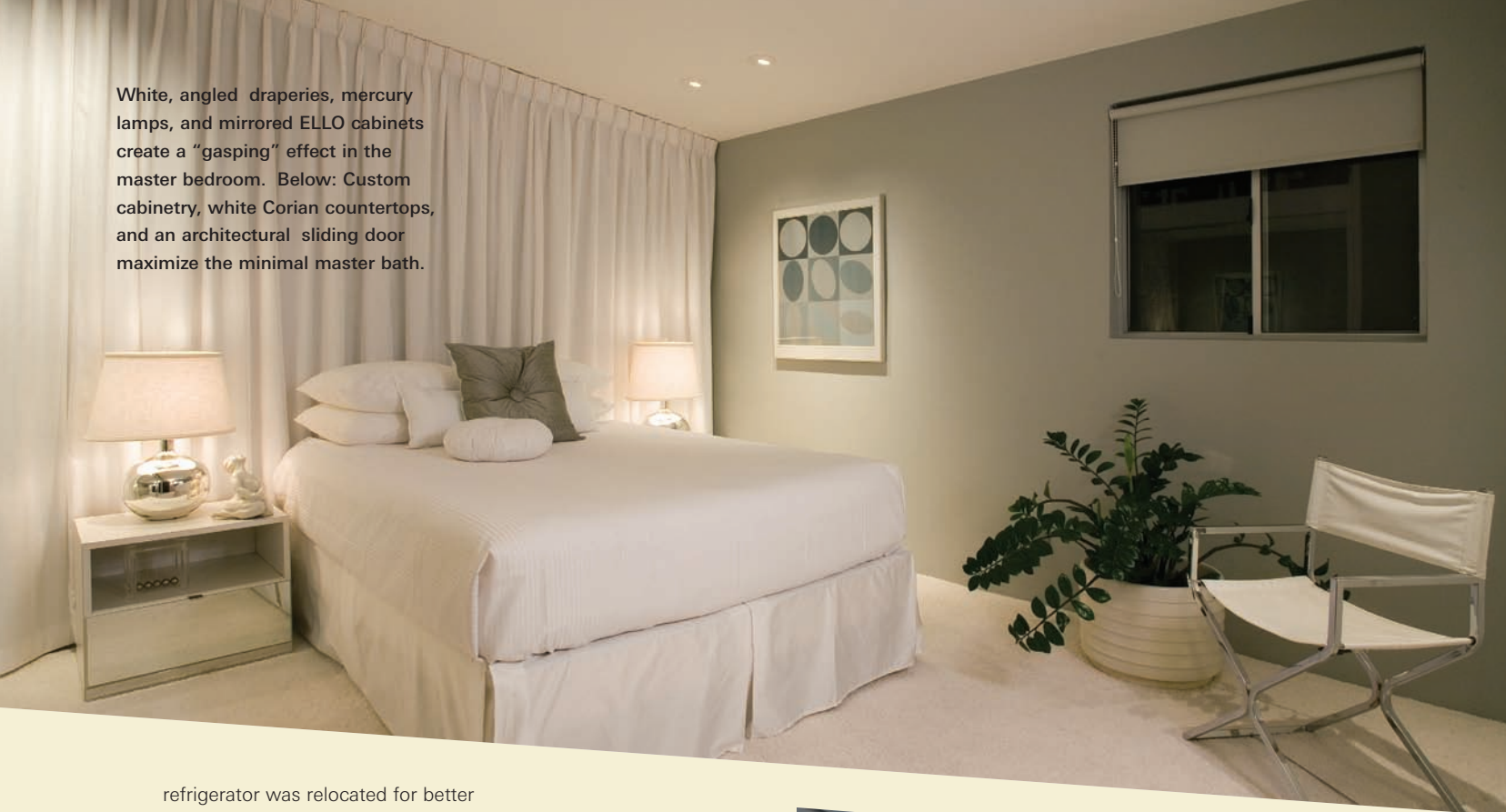
mass of the front landscape.

The total effect from curbside is inviting, but the texturally-rich view from the inside illustrates a zen-like sense of order. Balanced use of brick, stone, aggregate, pebbles, and tile can be seen while a sense of movement bubbles from a custom water feature fashioned out of a galvanized aluminum drainage culvert. Air manifests as it drifts through bowing grasses and is squarely framed by the orderly hedge screens in the backyard. A fire may be tended in the elegantly suspended steel gas stove.

The impressive collection of mid-century antiques and contemporary furnishings inside represents a short course through the last 50 years of design, but impeccable quality and careful curation binds it all together. Again, texture and contrast play a significant role. "I love texture and the juxtaposition of chrome and glass with primitive woods," says Bankord, who then cites the fireplace area that appears to extend through a bank of floor-to-ceiling glass windows. "The black pebbles and aggregate subliminally pull the outside in and create a connection."

Though Bankord also pushed and pulled a few walls to create spaces more adaptable to contemporary living, several original furnishings and finishes were salvaged and restored. Since the kitchen is the heart of the floorplan (as in most Havers), Bankord felt it was important to keep it relatively intact; although the

White, angled draperies, mercury lamps, and mirrored ELLO cabinets create a “gasp” effect in the master bedroom. Below: Custom cabinetry, white Corian countertops, and an architectural sliding door maximize the minimal master bath.



refrigerator was relocated for better accessibility. The standard stock cabinetry made of Philippine mahogany was refinished and stained, then dressed up with new hardware. Rather than seeking a new solution, a built-in bathroom cabinet was also cut out and resized to more contemporary proportions. Charming original elements such as the wooden box for the door chime in the hallway, a telephone niche, and the ingenious overhead storage cupboards playfully refitted with oversized hardware all recall the breezy optimism of the mid-'50s.

In contrast to the orderly International Style rectangles and softer edges of Organic Modernism that frequently characterize mid-century Modern design in Phoenix, Bankord exploited another playful design element that Haver used sparingly but with excellent effect—razor-straight oblique angles. These forms are typically found in Haver's supporting carport posts or along clerestory windows following the gently sloped roofline. In the Glenn House, new diagonal sightlines greet viewers at the front curb and carry the interest clear through the back of the lot. Staggered concrete pads guide the initial approaches from the street to the front door, sighting both the low-angled walls and the new angled porch support posts that punctuate the elevation with three playful hits of yellow. Inside, Bankord worked around an unsightly block wall by building a new wall that bumps out into the living space and lifts the eye to the angled clerestory windows and ample display ledge. The *pièce de résistance*, however, is a custom treatment in the bedroom where translucent white draperies are expertly pleated and hung at the same angle on a rod that follows the sloping roofline. Like so many other details in the house, the effect elicits both surprise and delight.

Time will only tell if Bankord's designs will stand unaltered or be manipulated and adapted by future generations just as much as Haver's work has been. He speculates, “As a purist, my intention is always to stay pure and appropriate to the original concept and design. If it's effective, my intent will always be timeless.” ■

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