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# *Traditional Twist*

Strategic interventions, layers of classical details, and the right trappings turn a bland modern ranch into a beautiful traditional home.

WRITTEN AND PRODUCED BY LISA SKOLNIK PHOTOGRAPHY BY WERNER STRAUBE





### *Personal Style*

A mix of textures gives the foyer a rich patina. Grass cloth sheathes the walls; a leather console sports metallic trim; and ottomans are covered in antique reed mats from Indonesia.

**This Photo** A lamp with a copper glaze ties the earthy hues of the ottomans, table, and mirror together in the home's entry. A monogrammed lampshade gives a hint of the traditional touches throughout the house. **Opposite Left** A view of the glass-enclosed atrium and its majestic birch tree is enjoyed just inside the front door. **Opposite Right** A herringbone pattern in the entry's wood floor sets the space apart.






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Can a pair of quintessential traditionalists be happy in a boxy, plain-face, modernist ranch with bare walls, nary a molding, low ceilings, quarry-tile floors, recessed lighting, and a dinky, gas-fed firebox? With the right design team, the answer is a resounding *yes*.

For young newlyweds relocating from a classic, 100-year-old bungalow in Menlo Park, California, the real estate requisites centered on weather, logistics, and aesthetics. The couple wanted a place that suited their classic style and love of the outdoors. That meant it had to have substantial al fresco living space, traditional log-burning hearths, and an attached garage because they weren't used to winter, says interior designer Cindy Galvin of Bardes Interiors in Winnetka, whom the couple hired to conduct their long-distance house hunt and orchestrate work the new place would require.





*"A fireplace should anchor a room and give it both warmth and utility. This one does thanks to its ledge, which is multifunctional with log storage underneath."*

INTERIOR DESIGNER CINDY GALVIN

#### *Personal Style*

Classic wing chairs covered in faux bois (false wood) cut velvet are clever visual references to the birch logs nearby, and they keep the living room from being too serious.

**This Photo** A new hearth gets a double dose of architectural significance from its physical design and the drama of the Golden Lightning granite used to craft it. **Opposite Top** Custom-made chairs upholstered in a classic red Chinese print provide a pop of color in the living room. **Opposite Bottom** The carved flourishes in a coffee table echo the pattern in a woven rug.





### *Personal Style*

In lieu of a butler's pantry, interior designer Cindy Galvin fabricated a cabinet that blends design elements from a Welsh dresser and a neoclassic armoire.





**This Photo** To forge an elegant setting that's not too stuffy, interior designer Cindy Galvin mixed furnishings with various periods and provenance. The dining room table is simply a wood board covered with a custom tablecloth crafted from vintage fabric.





Galvin scouted dozens of properties and recognized potential in an untouched 1979 Evanston, Illinois, ranch with more than 4,000 square feet of living space. Its double front doors opened onto a large, glass-enclosed center atrium that was open to the sky and harbored a tall, majestic birch encircled by a handsome wood deck. Most of the home's rooms were edged with floor-to-ceiling glass panels and opened onto the courtyard, flooding them with light and forging a connection to the outdoors. A large deck added significant outdoor living space to the property.

At first glance, the young man was hesitant to even enter

**Above** The revamped kitchen features new cabinets topped with brushed Absolute Black granite and a center island topped with Calacatta Gold marble.

**Right** The area between the kitchen and family room, where a wall once stood, became an informal eating area. **Opposite** A new fireplace looks original to the house thanks to its classic design and craggy stone face.





### Personal Style

A basic Shaker-style coffee table is sturdy enough for feet and "blends with every period, so it unifies British, Asian, and Early American pieces," Galvin says.








the house, but once he saw the atrium beyond the front doors, he was captivated. Galvin's game plan to tear down walls, raise the ceilings, restore symmetry, and add architectural details throughout—such as gracefully layered moldings, patrician ceiling coves, handsome and much-needed cabinetry, and two majestic hearths—sealed the deal.

Galvin says her secret weapon in the renovation plan was contractor Rutledge Smith of Gibbes Construction Group in Chicago. "I come up with these crazy ideas," she says, "and he always says the same thing: 'No problem.'" In this case, Smith was lucky—moving walls really was no problem. "Because of the way the house was designed, there were no interior load-bearing walls, so we could do what we wanted," Smith says. Galvin added architect Michael Hershenson, who heads a

**Above** Outdoor furniture topped with weatherproof cushions is arranged to create areas for outdoor living and entertaining. **Right** The home's center atrium harbors a majestic birch tree surrounded by a deck. **Opposite** Unlike the home's custom interior furnishings, the outdoor pieces are from a furniture store. Pillows with colorful texture and a faux zebra rug bring the set to life.







### *Personal Style*

To turn the home's large, modern windows traditional, Galvin trimmed them with architectural details on the interior and covered almost all of them with shutters.

*"We went for the most basic yet elegant outdoor furniture but have a whole assortment of pillows and rugs to change the look of this space."*

INTERIOR DESIGNER CINDY GALVIN





namesake firm in Evanston, Illinois, to the team to perfect plans to tear down walls and raise the ceilings. The team also eliminated a full bathroom to create a larger master suite bath.

Galvin got another lucky break with the house's hipped roof. "We could pull in a bit from the rooms' perimeters and go straight up to make vaults," Hershenson says. With ceiling heights pushed 2 feet up, the team added beams in the living room and kitchen, put coffers in the dining room, and created a tray ceiling in the master bedroom. All were trimmed with crown and picture moldings to create traditional neoclassic symmetry.

Once the structural changes were completed, "everything was really about keeping the owners warm and cozy," Galvin says. To that end, the new master bathroom features radiant heating under the marble floor, a steam shower, an oversize whirlpool tub, and towel warmers. Then she filled the home with cozy furnishings, warm colors, and lots of throws.

Galvin's game plan was so successful that the couple, who are now moving to New York City, hope she can work her magic again on their new Tribeca-neighborhood loft. "They want me to make that traditional, too," she says with a laugh.

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## Voice of Experience

*Nothing does more to define the style of a home than its architectural trims. Designer Cindy Galvin and architect Michael Hershenson added clean-lined, but decidedly neoclassic, casings and plinths to every window and door, and moldings to every ceiling and floor. Windowsills—underlined with skirt casings—turned the modern windows traditional, Hershenson says. Newly vaulted and tray ceilings in almost every room were trimmed with crown and picture moldings for a traditional feel.*

**Above Left** Galvin calls the large, spa-like master bathroom the "thaw room" because it is loaded with every warming device she could think of, including radiant heating under the marble floor, a steam shower, and a heated towel bar. **Above Right** Galvin designed an upholstered headboard for comfort and visual interest. An antique Moorish inlaid-wood table adds just the right hit of quirky wit to the serene setting.



# The Plans, *Before & After*

This single-story residence is basically a box inside a box, with one small wing that holds bedrooms. In the rooms within the square, the joists go from one load-bearing outside wall to another, which made it possible to eliminate some interior walls.



4,000 square feet

ARCHITECTURE MICHAEL HERSHENSON  
INTERIOR DESIGN CINDY GALVIN  
GENERAL CONTRACTOR RUTLEDGE SMITH



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