

Sister Act

An interior designer turns a rare Denver midcentury modern abode into a comfortable haven for her sibling.

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Architecture: Katrina Eckelhoff, StudioHoff Architecture **Interior Design:** Amy Casey, Casey & Company Interior Design
Home Builder: Christine Regis, Domani Homes, Inc. **Landscape Architecture:** Dave Johnson, Dave Johnson Landscape Architect

Carrie Hudak's home wouldn't look out of place in Palm Springs, California, which makes it an anomaly considering its location: central Denver. The just-over-5,000-square-foot midcentury modern dwelling is tucked amid dozens of traditional 1920s and '30s residences more typical of historic Cheesman Park. With a front façade punctuated by just a few slender floor-to-ceiling windows and a vine-covered wall concealing much of the house and yard from the street—thus furthering its mystique—this is an abode that invites curiosity.

Carrie herself had long been intrigued by it. So when the property came on the market, she snapped it up. She picked up on its potential at first sight, but also noted plenty of spaces ripe for improvement, including an oddly laid-out kitchen with an island set at a diagonal, dated bathrooms and a sea of mismatched concrete-and-brick pavers in the courtyard. A renovation challenge was far from daunting, however, thanks to a bona fide ace up Carrie's sleeve: her sister, interior designer Amy Casey.

To tackle the renovation, they called on architect Katrina Eckelhoff and builder Christine Regis, both of whom had worked on Carrie's previous residence. Eckelhoff noticed the home's charms right away. "It just had a good feeling when you walked in," she recalls. Built as a small two-bedroom in 1959, the property was expanded in the '60s into its current U-shaped layout. Studying the house's subsequent renovations, the architect could see where previous owners had attempted to fix some of its awkward corners. It helped her identify new ways to improve the dwelling's flow without altering its floor plan. "She had all these subtle ideas that turned out to be game changers," comments Carrie.

Together, Eckelhoff, Casey and Regis envisioned how to transform this abode into the best version of itself. To retain some of its midcentury character, they opted to keep the original parquet floors and floor-to-ceiling glass windows, but the bathrooms and kitchen were stripped down to the studs and some partitions between the rooms removed. For the interiors, Casey also drew

inspiration from an unlikely place: Carrie's career as a geologist. Her knowledge of rocks and stones is highlighted throughout the home, from varying surfaces on countertops to decorative accents here and there, including a huge statement slab behind the primary bathroom's freestanding tub. Individual stones are also displayed around the house. ("When you're a geologist, people can't resist gifting you rocks," Carrie jokes.) The owner's taste in art hints at her interest in Earth's history, too, with photographs of the sea and several landscapes adorning the walls. A nature-inspired palette complements the scene, with, for instance, forest-green accents in the primary bedroom and botanical wallpapers in the children's bathrooms creating an organic, resort-inspired vibe.

A walnut paneled wall in the lounge area off the main living room caused one of the few moments of disagreement between the sisters. The interior designer was initially inclined to take it out, but Carrie felt she'd miss the warmth of the original wood. Casey found a compromise by working it into her design scheme: She eventually loved it paired with the room's blacks, whites and grays, and sourced similar-toned woods for the built-in breakfast table and to panel the kitchen island.

Outside, the team worked with landscape architect Dave Johnson to refresh the walled yard without moving any major elements. Casey's idea of an outdoor seating area around a fireplace just beyond the interior living room created a stronger indoor-outdoor connection, all the while providing a better view than the garage wall. The existing pool received a face-lift complete with a new hot tub. And after a lot of jackhammering, the dated pavers were replaced with flagstone stepping-stones for a modern, streamlined look. Ensconced in what now feels like a private oasis, Carrie's children, aged 10 and 12, and her husband, Charley, never feel cooped up.

But what makes the home truly special is the comfortable collaboration that went into it. "It was me, my sister and a female architect and builder too—a real 'woman power' team and pleasant experience," Carrie recalls with a smile. "Ultimately, Amy took my concepts and amped them up in a good way. I'm glad I followed her advice, because this is now such a pleasant place to live." ■



Removing an interior door in the entryway allowed more light to pour in from existing clerestory windows. The vignette features a Tulip table by Eero Saarinen for Knoll underneath a Cerno oversize contemporary fixture, plus antique seating.

Crisp white furnishings, including a custom couch by Tom's Upholstery in a Schumacher striped velvet, brighten the original parquet flooring of the living room and the lounge space's walnut paneling. Another Schumacher fabric, Chiang Mai Dragon in Alabaster, covers pillows atop bespoke armchairs. The Moroccan-style rug is from Serena & Lily.





Above: In a corner of the dining room, a vintage bar cart and cocktail accessories evoke the house's midcentury roots alongside a green velvet HW Home chair. The framed landscape photo is of designer Amy Casey and homeowner Carrie Hudak's parents' farm in Kentucky.

Opposite: Casey paired a dining table from the childhood home she and Carrie shared with Interlude Home chairs. The brass Arrow chandelier is from Apparatus. On the wall hangs abstract artwork by Carol Browning.



Above: A former office off the kitchen became a cozy breakfast nook with a custom walnut table and benches that match the home's wood accents. The cushions are clad in a durable indoor-outdoor Zinc Textile fabric. A reproduction image of a stone slab under plexiglass decorates the wall.

Opposite: After a complete redesign, the kitchen now features Dolomite stone countertops extending onto the backsplash, while walnut paneling on the island nods to both the breakfast nook and the living area's wood-paneled lounge. Under-cabinet windows original to the 1959 home offer glimpses of the courtyard.



Central to the backyard's new layout by landscape architect Dave Johnson, the pool is a relaxing haven for the family, including golden retriever Sophie. A full overhaul of the dated '60s hardscape and a hot tub modernize the area. The rattan chairs and striped umbrella are from Crate & Barrel.