

REFINING THE FLIP



10 WAYS TO FINESSE YOUR FLIP AND
TAKE IT OVER THE FINISH LINE.

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Scroll through the MLS and you'll see plenty of homes that have been freshened up and made presentable, though certainly not personal. House flippers aim to catch eyes and cast the widest net, but once you're in, there are plenty of easy enhancements that can make it feel like your very own.

This home with views of the 13th fairway of Thunderbird Golf Course was a flip, purchased by a couple as their "forever home" after owning four previous desert residences. They liked the house from the moment they peeked in, but they wanted to fall head over heels.

Designer Sean Gaston toured the house with

them and pinpointed a number of customizations and upgrades that would take it to the next level.

"We completely renovated our last two homes with Sean's help, but because of the issues with materials and labor, we didn't want to start from scratch," says one of the owners. "Finding this was perfect because they had done some of the basics and some remodeling, but we knew that Sean could elevate it to our taste for us."

Fine-tuning your flip can move along swiftly if you make fast decisions and chosen materials are available. As a bonus, the owner notes, "the house was livable because we didn't do massive demo and construction." Here, Gaston's top tips for your flip.

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1

INVEST IN GREAT RUGS & FURNISHINGS.

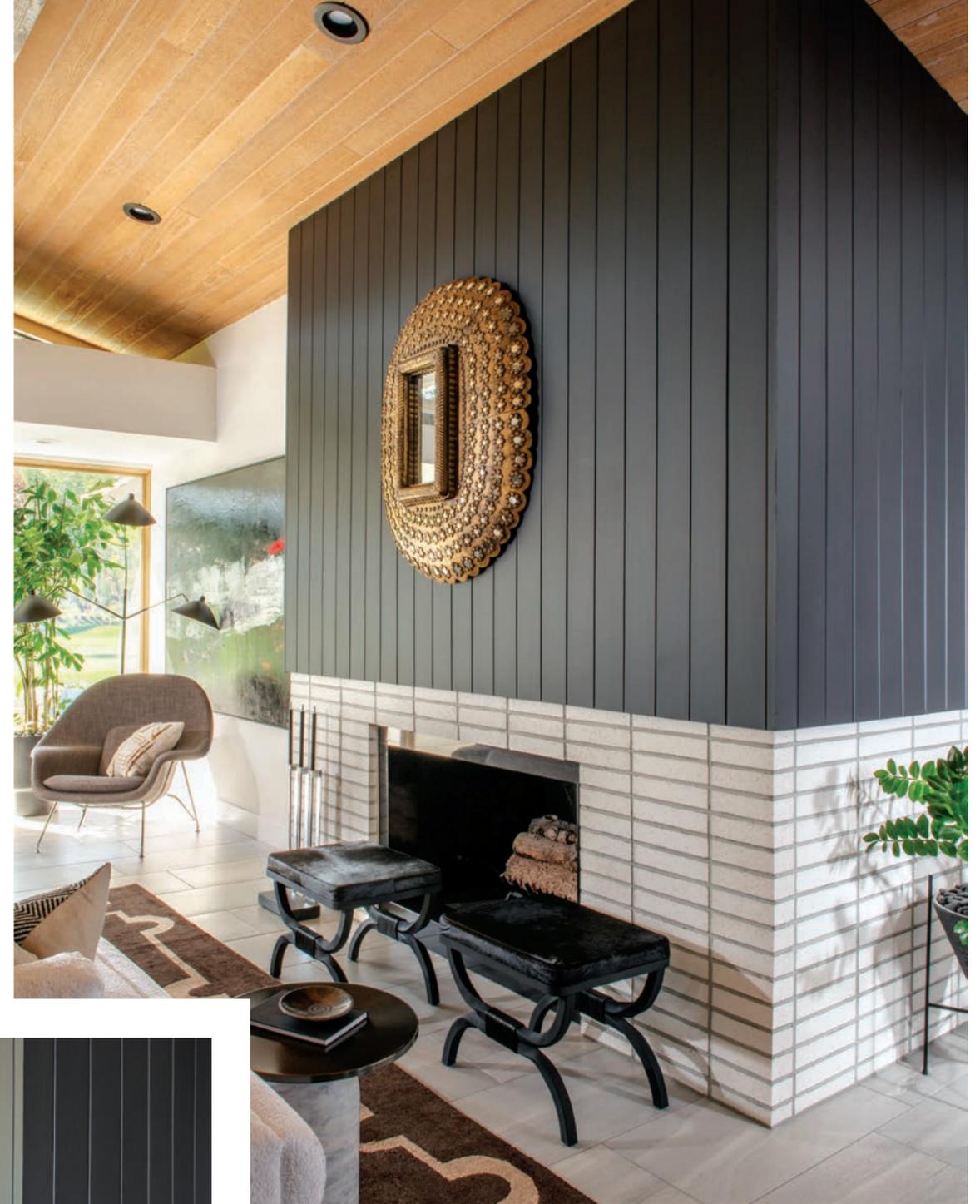
The new owners loved the bones of the light-filled house but were surprised to learn the structure was built in 1965 as a flat-roofed, ranch-style house. In 1988, the former owners completely renovated the center of the house, raised and pitched the roof, and inserted triangular clerestory windows above the great room. "It's sort of a cross between being midcentury and modern but with the warmth of the wood ceilings," the owner says. Gaston chose furnishings that speak to all three facets. To cushion the expansive tile floors and contour the living and dining areas, Gaston turned to Prestige Rug Gallery in Palm Springs. "I know the clients well, so I push them on certain things. These Tufenkian artisan carpets were investments," he says, crafted to transcend trends and endure for generations.



2

BRING IN THE ARTWORK.

Familiar with the clients' art collection, Gaston made room for current pieces to shine while bringing in others, both new and vintage, that were acquired for this home. The owners favor vintage art, which they have purchased at the Modernism Show and Sale and local galleries. "When we look at all of our favorite pieces that we've taken with us from house to house, they're all from Hedge," the owner says. "Even our favorite lamps and some of our furniture is from them too. They just have a really good eye. Everything you get from their store is forever pieces." Womb Chair and Ottoman by Eero Saarinen for Knoll. Artwork by Suliyat Buamar from Hedge.



3

ENHANCE AN ARCHITECTURAL FEATURE.

The home retains its original brown rock from 1965 on the front façade, the same rock that originally covered the fireplace. Though the owners would have enjoyed seeing it there today, the rock had been replaced with commonplace contemporary tile. "Sean had redesigned a fireplace for us in our last house, so we knew he could redesign this one to look much more midcentury," the owner says. By pairing planks of charred wood with a white brick veneer, he replenished the late '60s ambiance of this functional focal point.



4

DARE TO REMOVE A CHANDELIER.

A chandelier that hung above the dining table when the home was purchased would have competed with the two Gaston envisioned adding in the living room, which is open to the dining area. The large light fixture also would have blocked the art wall he designed. Purchased from various local dealers (Flow Modern, Hedge, Misty's Consignments, and The Shops at 1345), the works are "a curated and cohesive collection of vintage abstracts in neutral tones to complement the design palette." Removing the existing chandelier and adding a pair of massive capiz shell globes over the living area let the two areas unify as one space visually, rather than appearing as a living area with a dining room in it.



5

SPLURGE ON HAND-CRAFTED HARDWARE.

Some say hardware is the jewelry of the home, jutting from cabinet doors to deliver a distinct message of style. Handles, pulls, and knobs are also an aspect of flipped home refinement that can be delayed until you move in and get better acquainted with the spaces. A set of these decorative custom handles by ceramicist Jim Abele and woodworker Chris Faiss will add dimension to the dining buffet.

6

ADD A FEATURE WALL.

A stretch of drywall became a gallery when Gaston employed the same material he sourced for the top half of the fireplace. "It's red cedar that has been stained black, so it has a real deep depth to it," he says. The process of ordering it and having it milled paid off, especially once the brass picture lights completed this space for art. (Gaston also painted the interior doors throughout the home in black to strengthen the thread.) Two large abstracts by Balinese artist Toni AL from Hedge. Four hand-carved Indian Naga Door Panels from RH.





7 CREATE A SEXY POWDER ROOM.
 Gaston can't resist "a sexy powder room." Almost every home he designs has one. "You can spend less yet make a huge impact for you and your guests in a smaller room like this because you're using less materials," he notes. Here, he replaced three huge can lights with two small spotlights. A spherical vintage mirror looms where a generic one hung, flanked by a pair of Kelly Wearstler sconces. The existing countertop and sink made a solid foundation. He simply overlaid the existing vanity front and had holes cut to accommodate the back-lit brass discs. "I had the discs in my head and then boom, I found this dramatic wallpaper," he says.

8

LOOK FOR A TILE MOMENT.

"We're really happy they left the original sunken bar, which we love" the owner says. To infuse more personality, Gaston presented a linear backsplash of handmade tile. "When you have a smaller material space, you can really do something more bespoke," he says. Tile by Lunada Bay Tile. Balinese stone head sculpture from Hedge.



CUSTOMIZATIONS AND UPGRADES TAKE IT TO THE NEXT LEVEL.



9

CUSTOMIZE YOUR LIGHTING.

Two special fixtures illuminate the kitchen, one custom and one a sentimental vintage piece. Dangling above the kitchen island, from a grid Gaston had fabricated, are three ceramic pendant lamps by local artist Jim Abele. Each is comprised of separate ceramic components that Gaston and Abele worked together to stack and rotate to achieve the three sculptural lamps. "At night, it gives the greatest light. It's art," Gaston says.

Gleaming from beneath its patina like midcentury rays of sunshine over the breakfast nook is the owners' beloved vintage sputnik chandelier. Gaston had an electrician install an electric box to give it a place of prominence. "It was in the very first house that we purchased in



Palm Springs, and we have excluded it from every sale and put it in every house," the owner says. "I couldn't think about getting a brand-new shiny one to replace it. That's our chandelier. It comes with us like a pet."

10

UPGRADE THAT FAUCET.

"Simple, smart additions," says Gaston, elegantly finish what the flippers started. A new matte black kitchen faucet complements three new matte black light fixtures above the sink, which Gaston added another electrical box to install. The plain, flat-panel cabinet doors will soon receive Brutalist-style pulls, also in matte black, by Du Verre Hardware.

