



"Rustic modern" set the remodeling tone for Myron and Gabi Chadowitz's mid-century modern house. The bigleaf maple dining-room table contrasts with red chairs, glossy maple floors and white walls.

Classic home turnaround

Reversing floor plans just one surprise in couple's all-out remodel of notable mid-century modern home.

By Kelly Fenley
Photos by Collin Andrew
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One look and they just knew: This mid-century modern house had been a pretty cool cat back in its day, and with meticulous remodeling could regain its contemporary swank and then some.

So began an almost epic recreation of a classic south Eugene home designed by the late Dick Chambers of Chambers Construction legacy and built in 1961.

Myron and Gabi Chadowitz bought the two-level, 2,672-square-foot house in 2008, then rented it out for a couple of years while organizing their family's move to Eugene from New Jersey.

Soon enough they hired Eugene architect Richard Shugar, principal of 2FORM Architecture, to help them revive the two-level home's outmoded modish spirit.

But there was a big downside to the project, as in, basically the whole downstairs.

All of the home's main living areas command-

ed the lower level: kitchen, dining room, living room, main bath and master bedroom, which, in a previous remodel, had been converted from the home's original carport.

Walls secluded one downstairs space from the next, leaving the realm feeling cold, dark and isolated to the Chadowitzes.

At the very least, they wanted their kitchen moved upstairs into an existing bedroom space, mainly to take advantage of a center vault running all the way through the upper level.

But why stop there?

Or so asked architect Shugar, who suggested flipping the whole layout: downstairs areas to up, and upstairs areas to down.

"Richard's idea was reversing the house, which is basically what we did," Myron Chadowitz says.

At Shugar's suggestion, the Chadowitzes hired



Far left: Master bathroom's new "cushy" elements includes a deep, egg-shaped soaking tub made of synthetic resin within a brownish stall of silver metallic glazed porcelain tile. Left: New family room downstairs occupies space that had been the original kitchen. At their architect's suggestion, the Chadowitzes completely reversed the home's layout, relocating kitchen and other primary living spaces to the more spacious, vaulted second level.



Home's mid-century modern design shines like a lantern when seen at night from the street.

Eugene homebuilder Mica McOmber and his crew for the renovation work. "There was a lot of really good interplay (on design) back and forth between all of us, where we were able to really radically change the house," Chadowitz says.

The seismic shift left little but the home's original framing in place, but that was cool, because the couple simply loved the home's overall form.

"It had the bones we wanted," says Chadowitz, who works from home in helping to run his family's robe and towel business based in New Jersey.

Gabi Chadowitz, who's studying landscape architecture at the University of Oregon, had her eyes on the vaulted upper level from the start.

"I love mid-century architecture: The lines are very simple," she says. "When I walked in (for the first time), I could see the potential for making a very open space."

Contemporary twist

So far so good with flipping layouts. But what happened next caught architect Shugar a bit off guard.

Gabi insisted on a rustic edge to the contemporary makeover, something



Rustic finishes in kitchen include elm-faced cabinets and two solid elm countertops, including one for the bar beneath blown-glass pendant lights.

outside of Shugar's comfort zone as an architect known for his sleek designs with modernist materials.

Shugar handled most design details, but the home's overall "rustic modern" accents of wood were all Gabi.

Salvaged elm wood, splotted with tight little knots and streaks of darker grain, rouses a wild side to the kitchen. All the cabinet doors and drawers have elm fronts, and solid slabs of elm —

milled for crisp, squared edges and heavily eco-glossed for a reflective sheen — constitute two countertops.

The natural elements contrast with starker modish materials, such as the stainless-steel appliances and prominent range hood, shiny metal bar stools, plain white walls and darker cabinet boxes made of high-pressure laminate.

"Gabi had the idea of having this rustic wood going through with a

very big contrast on it, going with the modern," says husband Myron, who, as a former chef, saved his creative energy for the kitchen's functional design.

Gabi had a collaborator in cabinet-maker Robin Olofson, owner of Yankee Built in Eugene. Both are "Dwellheads," which is Myron's term for devoted readers of Dwell magazine's ultramodern

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Myron and Gabi Chadowitz with son Cally, 10. Their pets include Dax, left, and Tallulah.

home design concepts.

"You know how they say, 'Dwell out a house?' That is kind of the idea (they were after)."

Shugar added even more contrast to the wood elements with heavy-duty white lacquer on the kitchen island's pedestal, and sharpened the modern motif with squared rather than curved edges on the cabinet boxes.

But he gives Gabi her due for the rustic modern look.

"She pulled it off," Shugar reflects. "I

never would have gone down the path of what I consider rustic finish wood that is meshed with a finished (cabinet) box in a very modern way."

Snowball effect

With a new kitchen in place, the remodel advanced full steam ahead. "We never realized, when we got into this, the extent of the remodel we would do," Myron says.

All new electrical and mechanical systems, including ductless heaters. All new walls — smooth-wall sheetrock painted white for displaying high-end art and photography by friends.

New maple floors upstairs; cork downstairs. Cushy new bathrooms, including a true "Dwelled out" master bath with oversize, egg-shaped, synthetic-resin soaking tub and adjacent shower, all against a brownish background of silver metallic glazed porcelain tile in an open stall.

They had fun, too, such as installing a hatch door in their new upstairs master bedroom with a ladder to the downstairs bedroom of their 10-year-old son, Cally.

Outside, the remodel became a precision exercise in fine woodworking.

Shugar suggested tight-knot cedar in a dark stain for the exterior siding, which he complemented with accents of lighter cedar in a deep-honey stain for

artistic contrast. But the siding was so detailed, builder McOmber, whom the Chadowitzes refer to as a perfectionist, wanted detailed plans before starting in. Siding the house took two and a half months, but by this point, nobody was cutting corners.

"We said, 'Well, if we're going to do this (remodel), let's do it right,' Myron says. "That became the rule of thumb for the house."

With the new siding came two new decks, one with a hot tub, that extend living areas off the living room.

Virtual rebuild

When the dust finally cleared after more than a year of remodeling, the Chadowitzes basically had a new home. In fact architect Shugar guesses it would have been cheaper for them to have bought a lot and built from scratch, which the couple had considered at one point.

But they simply had to have this house.

"If I think about how much it cost as an investment? Worst investment. If I think of what I'm getting out of it as an investment, phenomenal. It's an investment in quality of life and not in financial reward."

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New master bedroom upstairs takes advantage of center vault for nice morning light through the existing triangulated windows. The addition of other windows stoked brightness and new views.