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modern love

FASHIONING AN INVITING SPACE IN WHICH TO RELAX AND ENTERTAIN,
A DESIGN COUPLE RENOVATES THEIR PHOENIX ABODE WHILE STAYING
TRUE TO ITS ORIGINAL MIDCENTURY STYLE.

WRITTEN BY LINDA HAYES PHOTOGRAPHY BY MICHAEL BAXTER



ARCHITECTURE Kristjan Sigurdsson, K&I Homes, LLC
INTERIOR DESIGN Inga Vals, K&I Homes, LLC
HOME BUILDER Brad Bryant, Bryant Contracting & Development
BEDROOMS 3 | **BATHROOMS** 4 | **SQUARE FEET** 4,100



In the living room, artwork by Jennifer Hollack, purchased through Phoenix Art Group, decorates a wall above the fireplace. A sofa from Crate & Barrel pairs with white leather chairs from Thingz. Walnut and chrome side tables from Copenhagen Imports complete the setting. *Right:* A Chinese terra-cotta warrior statue welcomes guests at the entry under a custom-stained tongue-and-groove wood overhang; Arcadia's pivot door offers a peek at the view.



From the moment they moved from Iceland to Arizona to study architecture and interior design at Arizona State University, Kristjan Sigurdsson and Inga Vals have succeeded at marrying both their personal and professional lives. Along the way, the husband-and-wife design duo discovered that in addition to creating functional, high-end living spaces for their clients, they enjoyed fashioning homes for themselves as well. “Over the years, we’ve built or remodeled five houses for ourselves alone,” says Sigurdsson. “We just really love the process; it’s our work and our hobby.”

The couple’s most recent efforts have resulted in the revitalization of a period home in Lincoln Hills, a hillside subdivision of about 50 houses overlooking downtown Phoenix that had been developed in the late 1960s and early ’70s. “It was a rare find, with great bones, sunrise to sunset views and an open layout that we could work



Interior designer and homeowner Inga Vals fashioned the dining room with a Calligaris table from AllModern and leather chairs from Copenhagen Imports. A bronze sculpture of Hindu goddess Parvati poses in the corner on a custom walnut pedestal.

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with without having to totally tear it down,” Sigurdsson relates. The caveat? The home hadn’t been remodeled or upgraded since it was originally built—in 1971.

Undaunted, the couple dug in. With the help of general contractor Brad Bryant, someone whom Sigurdsson describes as “a great craftsman” and now a personal friend, deconstruction began of pretty much all but the home’s exterior lines and roofline. Flooring, fixtures, cabinetry and some interior walls were removed; window and door openings were expanded and replaced; siding was re-stuccoed and the roof re-clad with custom panels; and the pool and patio areas were redone and finished with porcelain tile. “The goal was to remodel



A miniature art gallery, the dining room showcases a large-scale custom oil reproduction of *The Kiss* by Gustav Klimt and a Plexiglas grouping by Hollack. A light fixture from Thingz provides a sculptural element above the setting while a graphic area rug centers the space over American walnut flooring from Galleria of Floors.



The dramatic view from the kitchen expands to the patio via sliding wood-clad doors from Sierra Pacific Windows. Just outside, a dining set from Crate & Barrel provides al fresco seating. The center island and stainless-steel hood are part of a custom cabinet system by Poliform.



Another Plexiglas art piece by Hollack adds a pop of color to the mostly white kitchen. White leather barstools from Thingz pull up to an island topped with a quartz counter from Caesarstone.

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the house, staying true to its original midcentury-modern style, but make it current, warm and inviting, and very livable, with all of the amenities of today,” Sigurdsson says.

With the main living spaces oriented toward the side of the house with the striking views, Vals created a white-on-white color scheme to accentuate the home’s clean lines. The neutral palette also serves as a backdrop for the couple’s vast collection of modern art and the designer’s knack for adding interest with accents of color and texture. Grounded by highly polished walnut floors, the open living and dining rooms offer comfortable and relaxing spaces clad in mostly white and wood furnishings. In the living room, a grouping of white leather chairs



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and a dark brown sectional sofa were organized around the purposefully redesigned hearth. “The fireplace makes a big statement,” Vals explains, “designed with bold black-and-white detailing for contrast.” In the dining room, art on the walls generate a more colorful expression against a walnut table paired with white leather chairs.

Surfaces change in the kitchen, where porcelain tile floors set the base for a white Poliform cabinet system. Cabinetry is topped with Caesarstone quartz and includes custom panels that disguise the Sub-Zero refrigerator. “It has a really clean flow,” notes Vals. Doors opening to the adjacent patio and pool area extend that sense of rhythm. “It feels like we’re cooking and dining outside,” she adds. “And the outdoor space makes for a great place to entertain.”

Architect and homeowner Kristjan Sigurdsson incorporated both a steam shower and a soaking tub into the master bath. The tub surround and shower room flooring are made of Cebu Aqua porcelain tiles from Arizona Tile. Quartz countertops from Silestone are set over white cabinetry.



The master bedroom’s soft green color scheme provides a connection with the home’s exterior landscape, as does the floral artwork the owners purchased in Taiwan. The bed and nightstands create a simple silhouette.



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SUNRISE TO SUNSET VIEWS AND AN OPEN LAYOUT."*

Sigurdsson and Vals designed the home's peaceful landscaping, hand-selecting all greenery. Plantings were installed by Whitfill Nursery while Urban Cityscapes was responsible for the irrigation and lighting. Furnishings from Inside/Out, clad in green cushions, surround the fire pit.

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Private areas include a generous master suite, softened by walls painted in a muted green hue and adorned with a striking four-poster bed brought from the couple's previous house. The adjoining bathroom is sleek yet soothing, with a separate vanity space for Vals and a walk-in closet for Sigurdsson. "Sometimes when you remodel a house you have to compromise a little," says Vals. "My husband's closet is in the bath so it had to be a little smaller."

Remarkably, the entire project came together in just four months, versus two years for their last house. "It was a full-time job and quite a process," says Sigurdsson. "But we were organized and had the bonus of being able to run everything by one another. If we disagreed about something, we'd just talk it out and move forward. Sometimes, for this reason, when you're your own client, you're your best client." **L**