



ABOVE: Doug Wells with his sheepdog/poodle mix, Tiago. **RIGHT:** A darker stain on the ceiling beams and wood floors contrasts with a fluffy flokati rug and crisp, white walls. Flower arrangements by Studio Dan Meiners.

OPEN HOUSE

Designer Doug Wells returns a classic ranch to its midcentury modern roots

Every now and then, something good just comes. Perhaps we've been aware, admired from afar, known there might be something in common. In short, had a crush. Recently, this happened to designer Doug Wells with a jazzy midcentury modern on a well-traveled route.

"I used to drive by this house and I always thought it was interesting," says



*By contributing writer Patricia O'Dell
Photographed by Aaron Leimkuehler*



LEFT, TOP TO BOTTOM: The iconic entrance. A '50s vintage sunburst clock tops the Bernhardt mahogany chest of drawers. New custom metal railings frame the refurbished Buddha and fountain. **ABOVE:** A quartet of Karl Blossfeldt prints pop against the deep blue wall in the club room. **OPPOSITE:** Art, books and accessories all displayed on the brass and walnut bookcase/console from Mitchell Gold + Bob Williams.

Wells. "I wasn't even looking for something new, but I was out and about and I noticed there was an open house. So, I decided to stop and take a look." With no intention to buy, Wells wandered in to what would become his next project.

The space was appealing, though much of the original design and finishes had been updated a while ago. While he had expected to appreciate the interiors and maybe take away some inspiration, his focus changed. "All of a sudden, I felt like the house needed me."

The designer began by taking out updates that no longer made sense. He removed ceramic tile, wall-to-wall carpeting and laminated flooring and had wood floors installed throughout.

Wells paid special attention to the living room. He liked the wood paneling and the beams on the ceiling, but the stain had taken

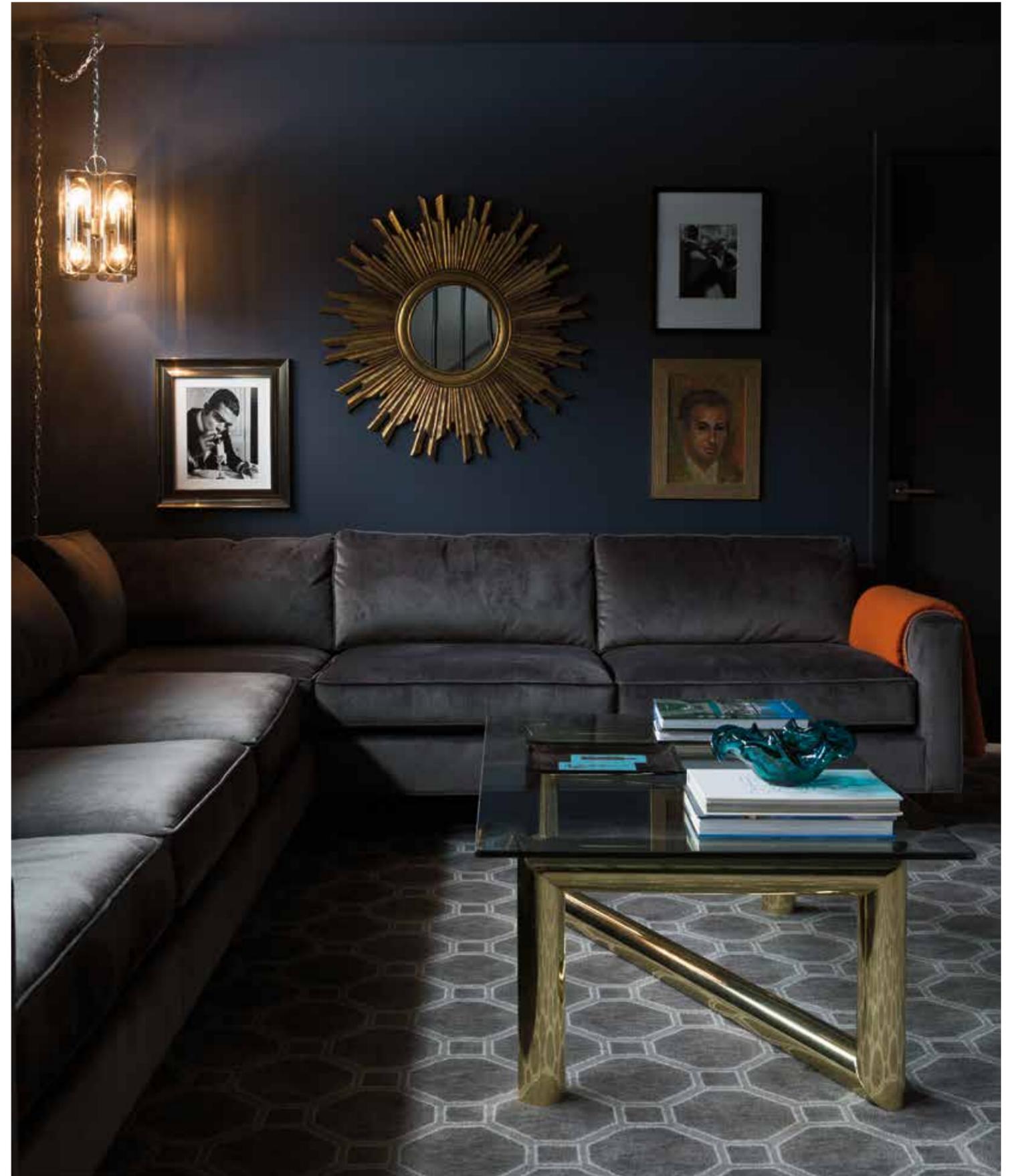




ABOVE: The media room bar is flanked by walls papered in Romo wallcovering from KDR Designer Showrooms. **LEFT:** Jonathan Adler light pendants reflect the midcentury-modern vibe of the house. **OPPOSITE:** In the media room, the gray suede sectional from Mitchell Gold + Bob Williams wraps around a '70s brass and glass coffee table from Mission Road Antique Mall.

on an orange glow. He had them stripped and re-stained a rich, chocolate brown.

In addition, he felt the room could use a strong architectural element. "The living room didn't have a fireplace originally and I thought it could use one, so I started researching." He eventually came up with a cantilevered design that spoke to the era. Long stones were custom cut ("It was more expensive, but, you know...") to complete his vision. Even with the modifi-





LEFT: The breakfast area’s wood-topped Saarinen table is surrounded by Saarinen executive chairs upholstered in a wool bouclé. **ABOVE:** Wells designed the pattern for the custom-made Ann Sacks metallic ceramic tiles used for the kitchen backsplash.

cations, or perhaps because of them, the vintage Eames lounge chair is right at home.

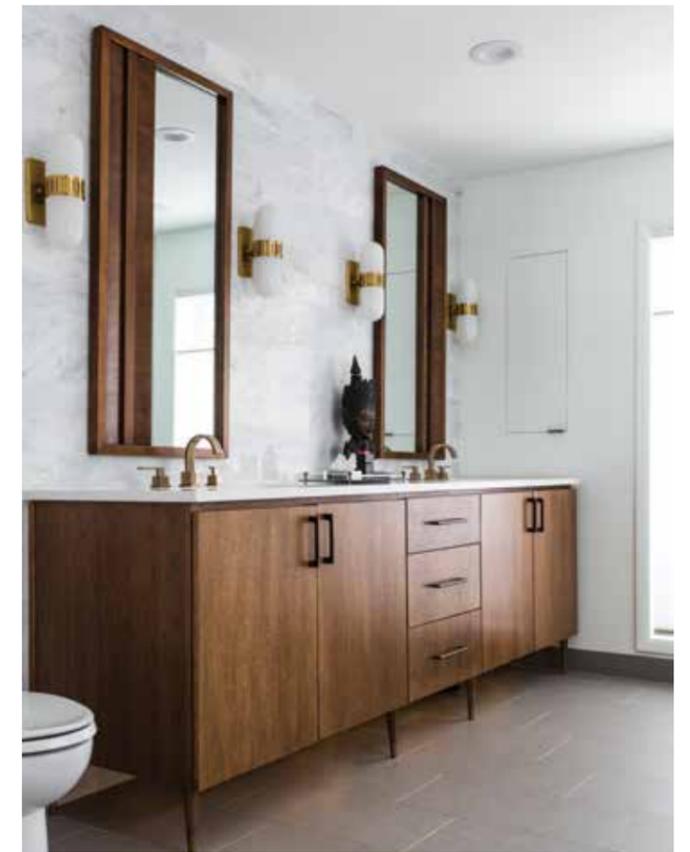
The kitchen, as older kitchens often do, needed complete renovation. Wells opted for sleek, white custom cabinets from Designer Woods, stainless-steel appliances and punctuated the room with bits of black. A stunning Feldman Lotus light with six pendants draws the eye from both the living room and the more casual club room. “It was an amazing find,” remembers Wells. “It’s more common to find them with three pendants. They’re often on 1st Dibs with huge price tags. I stumbled on this one in Dallas for a song.”

The club room provides a more casual spot to hang out and watch TV. While Wells relied on white walls

through much of the house to provide a clean and modern backdrop, he treated the sitting room a little differently. “That blue wall that leads downstairs to the family room is really the only color blocking I did.”

Downstairs that blue creates a rich cocoon for relaxing and rejuvenating. Still, Wells could not resist jazzing up the space with wallpaper that looks a bit like agate on acid. “I’d seen this paper a couple of years ago and I loved the scale of it. I had to have it,” he says. Wells also added windows here, alleviating a “finished basement” feel.

One of Wells’s particular strengths is his surgeon’s eye for space design. Without adding any square footage, he carefully began to optimize the space at the back of the house. Wells carefully straightened out a jog in the hallway,



LEFT: In the master bedroom, the bed is dressed in linens from Terrasi Living and Scandia Home. Wells reconfigured vintage '60s ebony and walnut servers to serve as nightstands by removing the wheels. **ABOVE:** The roomy Kohler Stargazer tub is from Ferguson. **ABOVE RIGHT:** Wells found the master bath mirrors at a thrift store for \$19 (they were originally mirrors on a 1960s dresser), and had the custom cabinetry stained to match.

closed off the Jack and Jill bath in the master, borrowed two feet here and three feet there to pull everything into proportion. The result is a simple-but-chic powder room where there was once none, a more generous master closet and a simply stunning master bath, outfitted with state of the art features and nod to its midcentury roots.

The same could be said of the striking entry. “A lot of people will remember the mosaic that was on this wall,” says Wells of the tile that was so visible from the street. “I liked it, actually, but it wasn’t in good shape. I considered replacing it, but suddenly it seemed too much. Instead, the designer raised the height of the old doors and copied the old one exactly. After researching the original plans, he installed custom metal railings. “It’s such a cool look from the ‘60s,” says Wells. “The plans didn’t identify the material—it could have been wood— but for some reason, it never happened.”

Wells also cleaned up the Buddha and repaired the fountain where he rests, which hadn’t been working. This calm, peaceful space, met at both entering and leaving, echoes the right effort, indeed. ♦

Sources

CONSTRUCTION

Dadon Construction
913-226-8007

FLOWERS

Studio Dan Meiners
danmeiners.com

INTERIOR DESIGN

Wells Design Studio
wellsdesignstudio.com

WALLCOVERING

KDR Designer Showrooms
kdrshowrooms.com