

# ranchdressing

House parts ...  
midcentury collectibles ...  
the inside scoop on  
what's what  
and where to get it



**Q:** I purchased these two pieces at an estate sale (when they were peacock blue!), and the elderly owners told me they were purchased in Copenhagen in 1965. I paid \$5 for the couch and \$2.50 for the chair, then reupholstered them for a total of \$1,300. Any ideas on the company who built them would be appreciated.

**Karin Koller Webb**

**A:** Val Ibardolasa from Retro@Home in Emeryville, Calif., weighs in: "Wow! Where does she live? I wanna buy stuff for \$2.50 to \$5.00 too! I've had a few of these in the store and, based on the legs and the arms, I think these pieces may be manufactured by Dux of Sweden. They're ultra comfortable!"

**Q:** I have enclosed a picture of a nightstand, part of a Heywood-Wakefield bedroom set we bought several years ago. We are trying to find another one and have had no success. We can't find it in any Hey-Wake books, dealers have never seen one like it, and online inquiries go unanswered. Since you cover so many aspects of mid-century style, I am hoping you can help us.

**Elaine & Rich Barrick**

**A:** Heywood-Wakefield produced many lines, as was evident when we consulted two dealers who specialize in the maker and neither was immediately able to



Identify your nightstand. In Heywood-Wakefield Blond: Depression to '50s, available at [atomic-ranch.com](http://atomic-ranch.com), it sure looks like a Tempo M738, which dates from 1955 and measures 21" x 16". The pull appears to be original and the value in 2005 was estimated at \$250 to \$300.

**Q:** Page 18 of the Winter 2008 issue features a white chair in two of the photos. I have that same chair, which I picked up at a local thrift store. It's a great piece:



the seat and back sit between the wooden side frames and it's able to recline or can even be used as a rocking chair. The tags are long gone and I can't seem to find any info about it. I was hoping that you would be able to shed some light on its origin.

**Taylor Forrestal**

**A:** Peter Maunu replies: "Your Danish Modern recliner is reminiscent of the designs of American Ed Wormley for Dunbar, or the Swedish firm Dux, but more than likely it is from a brand like Selig Furniture that imported pieces from Denmark. I was unable to find an exact designer, but assuming that the reclining function works properly and, with its exposed solid wood frame, (walnut or rosewood perhaps?), the chair is a nice practical midcentury modern piece. Though not a heart stopping design, it appears to be comfortable and well made and should last forever."

**Q:** I own a 1950s raised ranch in Chicago. Most of the ranches in the neighborhood are very similar in design except mine; the fact that it's unusual was part of its appeal when I bought it three years ago. However, the orientation of the house is a bit awkward:

there is no front door facing the street—I have two side entrances, one off the living room and the other off the kitchen.

It currently has metal casement windows original to the house. They are in fairly good shape and each has the original storm and screen. I am wondering if it is



best to keep the windows to preserve the original design or to replace them. If I were to replace the windows, what might you recommend? And what would help boost the curb appeal? My hope is to relocate the AC unit to the side of the house later this year. I have thought about staining the concrete decorative pieces on the chimney a dark brown. I am not a fan of the current awnings over the windows, but feel as if the house would look "naked" without them! Any suggestions would be much appreciated.

**Connie Mixon**

**A:** Your '50s ranch has similar details to the Chicago Bungalow Belt 1920s homes: the cement windowsills and chimney details, the brick construction and perhaps other elements not seen in this view. It would have appealed to postwar buyers who liked traditional

# more ranch dressing

Chicago bungalows, while capitalizing on a simpler shape with less ornamentation that was cheaper and quicker to build—a link between Arts & Crafts and the horizontal modernist ranches of the '60s if you will.

Your home is very charming, albeit quietly so, in our opinion. I'd urge you to never paint the original cement and to retain the windows, particularly if they still function well. Painted or stained cement always, always eventually peels. Those details lend authenticity that can't be replicated.

If you feel your facade is too blah, think about the windows and fascia boards painted a more sprightly color and new awnings (perhaps they have a valuable sun-blocking function?) that tie in with that color. For instance, gray-green trim and alternating green & putty-colored ribs on the awnings that would coordi-

nate with the trim and the cement details. You could also remove the awnings and have a more starkly modern look.

From the shadow on the house it looks like there is a sizable street tree; a couple of layers of landscaping might really make the facade shine and boost the curb appeal. It would be easy enough to camouflaged your air conditioner with several shrubs, which would be simpler than moving it.

*Need a renovation resource or wondering if that flea market find is anything? Send your questions and photos to [editor@atomic-ranch.com](mailto:editor@atomic-ranch.com) and we'll run them past our experts.*

## croutons

✦ I have some information for David Allen and Frank Steele regarding their Tap-Lite switches featured in Spring 2009. In 1957 Henry Dreyfuss designed them "in the round" to keep step with the famous round thermostat he did for Honeywell. The push button is an integral part of the switch and is not removable. Homeowners could use their elbows to push the button on or off if their hands were full.

Ask your neighbors if they have any of these switches or covers they would like to sell or get rid of. I've had great luck in my Houston neighborhood, as most of the houses had these switches.

### Don Emmite

✦ Bill Shields also wrote in to say that the Tap-Lites in his mother's Minneapolis ranch are still going strong after 53 years, and John Huggins reports that,



in his home, they are only found in the bathrooms, where they have matching wallpaper swatches behind the clear switch plates. He recommends a saved eBay search for 'Honeywell Tap-Lite' as the best bet.