

An Eileen Gray E.1027 side table sits at the end of the daybed, and a Frank Lloyd Wright garden sprite and a framed Charley Harper print are displayed on the fireplace wall. The bench is a decommissioned planter that needs a new galvanized liner, one of several projects on the to-do list. Cats George (pictured) and Gracie found the cork flooring to be a prime scratching post.

"Fasten your seatbelts,
it's going to be a bumpy night!"
-Margo Channing in 'All About Eve'

M Butterfly

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When Jim Kelly and Rick Kay bought their Cincinnati ranch, the seller dropped the tantalizing tidbit that the kitchen was in “All About Eve.” They of course went out and bought a DVD of the 1950 film classic about the triumph of personality and a sharp tongue over con-ning youth and beauty. Paused on the TV screen was a veritable twin of their own midcentury kitchen.

“There is George Sanders and Bette Davis as Margo Channing standing in our kitchen,” says Kelly, a store designer for Macy’s. “When that film was made, these kitchen cabinets were certainly available—and maybe even a popular choice.”

The largely original kitchen was just one of the selling points for the couple when they toured the house in a pastoral area known as Amberley Village. Ranches there are slab on grade, mostly of brick construction and ranging from roughly 2,500 to 4,000 square feet. “The neighborhood was developed by influential Jewish community leaders, and their children have inherited the homes,” Kelly, 51, says. “There was always a respect for nature, fine art and good architecture. We have seven temples here.”

The pair had renovated a 900-square-foot bungalow and were looking for more room. Several months before finding their current house, they’d found a Spanish Revival-style home, but the inspection process revealed significant problems and they backed out of the deal. Ranches weren’t particularly their focus, since most had oak-trimmed white laminate or raised-panel kitchen cabinetry and other dubious upgrades they’d have to redo. The fact that this butterfly roofed custom home sat on an acre lot actually gave them pause—who would have time for all that yard maintenance?

“When we stepped into the living/dining area, the first thing Jim said was, ‘This one’s not screwed up!’ I couldn’t see what he could see, but I could tell it was a special house,” recounts Kay, 44. The 1953-built residence has three bedrooms and two baths in 2,400 square feet.

Previous spread: In the open plan living/dining room, the green daybed and chocolate upholstered chairs are Modernica’s Split Rail line, while the couch is from Room & Board. The coffee table and the rugs are Baker, and the pear-shaped Nelson bubble lamps over the dining table are from Modernica as well. A ‘60s Bally’s poster by Bernard Villemot injects additional color into the dining area.