

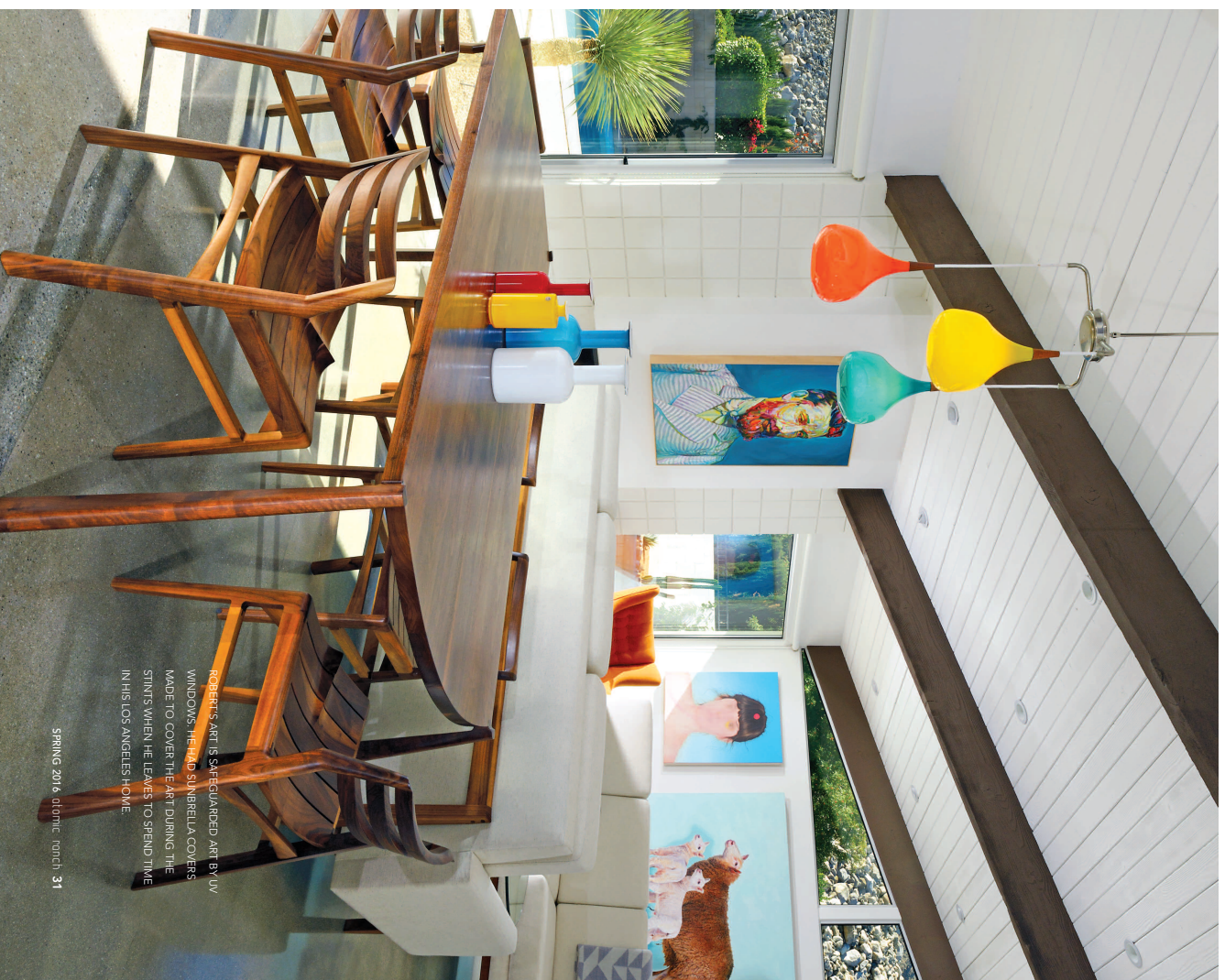
Just Add Art

A well-planned remodel, vibrant color and an incredible art collection brought this home back to its original glory.

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Located in the Vista Las Palmas neighborhood of Palm Springs, Robert Shiell describes his home as a classic, quintessential Alexander home.

The house was originally completed by Kiesel and Palmer architects in 1959 and was built by the Alexander Company. After purchasing the home, Robert restored it back to its original footprint with the help of Architect Lance C. O'Donnell, AIA, Principal of o2 Architecture, and Craig M. Hammond, Assoc. AIA, Design Director of Hammond Habitat Design Studio. In his desire to honor the intended floor plan, he actually reduced the house from a 300-square-foot addition completed by a previous owner. This addition had extended the living room, but caused the breezeway to be lost. Robert reestablished the breezeway and converted the garage back to a carport. "The house originally had two bedrooms and two baths, but someone added a third bath," he said.



ROBERT'S ART IS SAFEGUARDED ART BY UV WINDOWS. HE HAD SUNBRELLA COVERS MADE TO COVER THE ART DURING THE STINTS WHEN HE LEAVES TO SPEND TIME IN HIS LOS ANGELES HOME.



“I have a killer view—it was one of the draw-ins along with the bones—I couldn’t top this.”

After 27 years as an attorney working in children’s law and representing social workers for the City of Los Angeles, Robert retired. He now manages properties and focuses on his passion for collecting art. “I caught the art collecting bug in early college years,” Robert says. In renovating the Palm Springs home, Robert paid special attention to the walls—ensuring that he would be able to display art on every wall and specifically arranging lighting to showcase his collection.

FINDING “THE ONE”

“My house in LA is from 1926 and is English storybook-like, but I’ve always had a bug for and interest in midcentury style.” With a piquing interest in midcentury architecture, Robert went on a Palm Springs home tour that profiled mid-century homes and attended Modernism Week.

“I had been looking for a while and wanted a home by a noted architect. In my neighborhood the primary architect was Krisel and Palmer—there are also a few by Charles Dubois.” Robert was drawn to the neighborhood due to its high concentration of midcentury homes. “I didn’t want a home that was too damaged—I definitely wanted good bones.” In April 2013, just two weeks after retiring, Robert was the first person to see the house, and he made an offer within a few hours. In December 2013, the demolition and renovation began.

THE TASK LIST

Among the most pressing items on Robert’s renovation list was that fact that the home needed insulation and that the plumbing and piping was in need of repair and updating. Despite this being Robert’s first time taking on the renovation of a residence, he was determined to do everything right. “In projects like these things are often underestimated. I wanted to do the most quality work with the long-term of the home in mind,” he said.

Despite the reduction of the home’s square footage, some areas inside were updated to offer more breathing room. “The once-claustrophobic master bathroom was renovated to feel far more spacious by raising the ceiling, inserting a clerestory window, and creating an outdoor shower, thereby renewing the home’s indoor/outdoor connection,” architect Craig M. Hammond says.



ROBERT HAS JOINED THE PALM SPRINGS ART MUSEUM, AND IN MARCH THE COUNCIL WILL VISIT HIS HOME TO SEE THE ART.