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A 1950S NORMAN JAFFE-DESIGNED RESIDENCE IS  
PERSONALIZED FOR 21ST-CENTURY LIVING

# MASTERPIECE

BY MINDY PANTIEL | PHOTOGRAPHS BY BRITTANY AMBRIDGE/OTTO



**Party Central** The kitchen is designed with cooking and large gatherings in mind. Leicht cabinetry provides ample storage, and Viso pendants light the sumptuous island topped with Neolith. The walnut counter stools are from Soho Concepts. See Resources.





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AMPERING WITH THE WORK OF another designer or architect—especially one as famous as Norman Jaffe, whose sculptural beach houses made him the darling of the Hamptons in the last century—mandates a measured hand. Charged with renovating a 1950s Jaffe residence in Greenwich, interior

designer Anelle Gandelman took that notion to heart. “We weren’t doing a restoration but knowing where to draw the line on what to keep and what to update was a little intimidating,” admits the designer, noting a previous remodel done in the late ’80s included a regrettable black sunken tub and gold fixtures in the master bathroom. “We wanted to be sure we didn’t ignore the architectural vision while still respecting the lifestyle needs of our clients.”

According to Gandelman, the homeowners, a couple with two daughters, fell hard for the modern structure. “They were living in a traditional center hall Colonial, so their enthusiasm for this style of architecture was a little unexpected,” says the designer, who worked on their previous residence. But the bones and proportions proved irresistible, as did the tennis court, and indoor and outdoor pools. “They love to entertain and it really was a party house,” she adds.

The thoughtful renovation began with restructuring some of the existing spaces to create a more contemporary open concept. “In the original house, the living room and kitchen were separated by the formal dining room,” explains Gandelman, who flipped the kitchen and dining room so that the kitchen would open to the living room. She also swapped the existing stone floors for rift-cut white oak. “The original woodwork on the ceilings is a much warmer tone, so we went with a lighter gray on the floor so it didn’t feel like too much wood.”

**Contemporary Countenance** The home’s main entrance (ABOVE) highlights architect Norman Jaffe’s Midcentury Modern design. In the dining room (RIGHT), a brushed-aluminum Archilume chandelier illuminates a 12-foot-long custom table. The chairs wear durable Kravet vinyl on the seat side and Rubelli fabric from Donghia on the back. The wallcovering is by Phillip Jeffries. See *Resources*.





**Straight And Curvy**

In the foyer (THIS PAGE), Jonathan Adler benches tucked under a custom console contrast with the rounded wall and ceiling that define the original architecture; the abstract framed artwork is from Natural Curiosities. In the living room (OPPOSITE PAGE), the bow window encircles a sectional dressed in Castel Maison velvet, and chairs from Mitchell Gold + Bob Williams. The concrete-topped coffee table is from Trueform, and the rug is through S&H Rugs. See Resources.

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**Down Time** (THIS PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM RIGHT) Tile in a herringbone pattern from Marble America defines the master bathroom, where the stained oak cabinets are by Modern Classics; the steam shower includes aromatherapy and adjustable light colors for a spa experience. The Barclay tub sports a Graff filler. In the master bedroom, textural elements like the Sahco wallpaper and Fabrica carpet soften the edges, and the chandelier is from Hudson Valley Lighting. See Resources.



**Fifty Shades** Gray tones dominate the bar/entertainment room (TOP), where Phillip Jeffries wallcovering provides the backdrop, while Visual Comfort lamps flank a steel-toned sofa wearing Holland & Sherry fabric, and the Mitchell Gold + Bob Williams chairs sport S. Harris fabric. Guests can belly up to the bar (THIS PHOTO) on light gray leatherette stools from Soho Concepts. See Resources.



Curved ceilings in the foyer and living room were among the preserved signature elements. In the latter, the clean lines of the sectional counter the swoop of the bow window, and the crisp edges of a concrete coffee table contrast with the performance velvet on the sofa and a plush silk rug. A similar textural juxtaposition occurs in the dining room where chairs touting decorative fabric backs and vinyl seats that mimic buttery leather soften the 12-foot-long wood table stained ebony. "Even though the design is contemporary, we made sure to incorporate lots of interesting textures and luxurious fabrics to prevent the interiors from feeling sterile," says Gandelman.

Because the wife enjoys showing off her considerable culinary skills, a show-case kitchen with adequate food prep and serving areas, and ample storage was a must. Warm gray-toned cabinetry that mimics wood by Leicht—a German company known for its good looks and custom bells and whistles—established the hard-working baseline. Among the amenities are two full-height cabinets on the fridge/freezer wall that house a coffee station and all manner of small appliances. The durable Neolith counters take a hot pot, and the expansive island does double duty as a buffer station. "She loves a clean aesthetic and here you can stow everything away and transition from cooking to entertaining with ease," says Gandelman, who introduced a bit of shimmer with polished mirror pendants over the island. "Lighting is a way to bring more materials into a space and provide a sculptural element."

Throughout the house, shades of gray dominate the neutral palette. "They came from a traditional house with lots of color and sought the complete opposite of that here," Gandelman says. In the bar room, for example, the color fade goes from dove tones on the swivel chairs to a deep charcoal on the sofa, and in the master suite, the stark outline of the dark four poster bed is like a punctuation mark in a sea of pale ash hues on the walls and floor.

The use of neutral tones along with the combination of textures and materials attained the goal of the remodel. As the designer notes, "It's a decidedly contemporary house that respects the original architecture but is updated and personalized for the family who lives there today. It's contemporary with a twist." ✨

