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How Krys Melo Is Bringing Midcentury Design Into the Future

WRITTEN BY: **JORDAN NISHKIAN** • PHOTOGRAPHY PROVIDED BY: **KRYS MELO**

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"During the time I was growing up, a lot of the TV shows and movies were starting to be based on the '50s and '60s, like *Dirty Dancing* and *Cry-Baby*, and I just fell in love with that whole style," interior stylist and design consultant Krys Melo says. "I don't know what it was about it, but it really resonated with me."

Midcentury modern design resonated so much with Melo that she and her husband decided to integrate the style into their daily lives—but their biggest project by far is renovating and restoring a 1958 Kresel in Rancho Mirage's Tamarisk Ranchos Community.



Rancho Mirage

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—Krys Melo





Expert: Krys Melo
Credentials: Interior Stylist and Design Consultant

The events leading up to the purchasing of this home can only amount to chance. “When we went house shopping, we were just looking for something that had potential,” she explains. “We weren’t looking for a notable architect or a notable house or neighborhood.” After looking for about six months with no luck, she decided to finally scope out an open house for a listing that, no matter how many times she had scrolled past it online, kept popping up on her search results. That listing, with a confusing picture of a backyard facing the street, turned out to be exactly what she and her husband wanted.

“As soon as we pulled up, we got it. We fell in love with it,” she says. “The whole neighborhood is designated historic... and it’s a hidden gem! There are 16 houses and a courtyard, co-op style. The Marx Brothers lived here, the Sinatras lived here, famous producers all bought homes here, but we didn’t know that when we first came to see it!”

The home still had some of its original character, but other than that, it had been stripped down and gone through a heavy ‘90s remodel. “So now we’re trying to peel all of those layers back and add more of the late-‘50s character back into it,” Melo explains.

While the remodels and restorations are still ongoing, Melo remains optimistic and passionate. Her big project this summer is the kitchen. “We are teaming up with a local cabinet-maker and our contractor to create our own spin on a traditional Krisel kitchen,” she notes. “So we’re pulling ideas from custom Krisel kitchens like the Elvis Honeymoon Hideaway and other houses in the area. We’re trying to make it look really cool and cutting edge—what ‘cutting edge’ would have looked like [in the ‘50s].”

“We keep joking that we’re bringing it back to ‘58, what ‘houses of the future’ looked like in ‘58,” Melo laughs. “But now, it’s accessible because we have smart homes and robotic vacuums and all these ideas that they had back then! So, we’re pulling all those ideas and bringing them into reality—it’s not just a concept anymore.”



YOUR RESTORATION FEEL LIKE YOU

Krys Melo’s Tips for Balancing Old and New

Finding the balance between old and new ultimately comes down to personal preference. Some homeowners may want to get rid of everything and start fresh, but this runs the risk of tearing down bits of history. Others may not touch anything at all, but this will make it difficult to keep the home technologically, ecologically and economically updated. While Melo is well aware that living in a “time capsule home” is not for everyone, there’s beauty to be found in the original foundations. “This is how you really live,” Melo explains. “You can still keep that midcentury style and all of [the] flair and the vintage touches, but still very much live in the now.” Here are Melo’s tips on how to restore a vintage home while keeping it fit for 2020:

- Step 1:**
 - “Decide what’s important for you to keep, that way you know what to upgrade and what original features you want to restore a little better.”
- Step 2:**
 - “Figure out how to work around [the features you want to keep]. We have a yellow vanity in one of our bathrooms—it’s not something I would’ve chosen, but I like that it’s original—so now I’m decorating around that to make it look intentional.”
- Step 3:**
 - “We went around saying, ‘We don’t necessarily like this tile even though it’s original. Let’s start looking for era-appropriate tile to replace the old one so it doesn’t look out of place.’”
- Step 4:**
 - “We’re sourcing a lot of fixtures, tile and wallpaper that are new. We don’t have to try to find things that are vintage, but they still have that vintage flair. People get overwhelmed when they think they have to go to estate sales to find vintage styles, but there are a lot of companies that are bringing those styles back.”



- Step 5:**
 - “Windows in the ‘50s are cute, but they’re horrible for energy efficiency! We’re trying to make the home’s windows and doors look original while keeping energy efficiency and sustainability in mind.”
- Step 6:**
 - “We’re trying to make the house as earth-friendly as possible. We’re also not throwing anything out—we’re donating and making sure nothing goes to waste.”
- Step 7:**
 - “We’re doing little cosmetic DIY projects, like painting tile with epoxy paint or using car wrap on cabinetry, just to make everything fresh until the later stages of the remodel.” ■



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