

Dynamic Design

For clients with a richly modernist house overlooking the Potomac River, designers José Solís Betancourt and Paul Sherrill create interiors featuring icons of midcentury design.

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For a hillside home with stunning river views, designers José Solís Betancourt and Paul Sherrill worked to create an interior that complemented the house's modern style. Anthony Barnes of Barnes Vanze Architects designed the residence to evoke midcentury architectural master Frank Lloyd Wright. "We wanted a strikingly modern structure with a warm interior," says Barnes. "Glass and steel set the tone. The warmth came from woods, including rift-sawn white oak on the floors, Douglas fir lining the stairwell, and Western cedar on ceilings." Solís Betancourt and Sherrill dressed the rooms to relate to the textures and tones of the wood while also lending their signature style to the home's environment. "The house has sophisticated, clean lines, and we added softness and fun elements for a family with young children," says Solís Betancourt.

The main living room, which overlooks the river, is separated from the outdoor dining area by glass doors, and matching fireplaces center each space. Thoughtful design decisions blur the lines between the indoor and outdoor areas. A sofa with a cutout back permits views of the scenery from its opposite, deep within the room, and sheer draperies disappear in the sunlight. "You feel like you are inside and outside at the same time," says Solís Betancourt. Venetian plaster walls lend luminous softness to the room and beautifully contrast with the floor-to-ceiling stone fireplace.

In the dining room, a paneled ceiling sets off a chandelier reminiscent of a Calder mobile. The designers added the detail to give the warm but clean room movement and an extra touch of fun. The duo also took cues from the wood tones overhead and selected a table and chairs that complement without overpowering the space. The

Previous pages: Stacked stone fireplaces indoors and out unite the living areas. Architect Anthony Barnes mixed white oak floors and Douglas fir paneling with metal railings in the stairwell to create a striking effect. Above and right: A cutout in the sofa allows views of the Potomac River from the living room. Glass doors merge indoor and outdoor spaces. Designers José Solís Betancourt and Paul Sherrill wallpapered the back of the bookshelves for added texture. Soft rugs contrast with the rough fieldstone fireplace.



Artist Gobi Trinkaus created the nighttime cityscape from cut-up magazines. The coffee table incorporates four atomium-inspired seats for versatile seating. Chairs by mid-century icon Hans Wegner bring sculptural curves to the living room.



Opposite: In the dining room, a *Mona Lisa* by Chinese artist Lui Bolin presides over the table. A Hellman-Chang table and Holly Hunt chairs sit under a chandelier by Stefan Gulassa that resembles a Calder mobile. Left: In the sitting room, a shaggy rug and loopy coffee table add fun for a family with small children. Below: The kitchen barstools are by Lisa Taylor, and the chair is by iconic designer Vladimir Kagan.

lighting fixtures throughout the rest of the house provide even more exciting nods to midcentury style. A brass chandelier by Billy Cotton drifts lazily over a neutral seating area, while another made out of bulbous glass pendants dangles in a different room.

Another element prominently featured in the home, as well as the family's daily life, is their collection of books. From built-ins to freestanding, shelves abound throughout the home and are filled with colorful, beloved texts. A cozy library, complete with a red sectional perfect for curling up with a favorite read, is wallpapered in coordinating rich red and adorned with patterned throw pillows and other interesting textures. "It's very Frank Lloyd Wright," says Solis Betancourt of the corner window and fitting sofa.

Artwork by the designers' favorite artists adds sizzle to every room. In the living room, a nighttime cityscape by Gabi Trinkhaus is composed entirely of cut-up magazines. A pigment print of *Mona Lisa* by Lui Bolin presides over the dining room. In the upstairs sitting room, charcoal pastels by Timothy Makepeace hang over the sofa. Innovative artistry embellishes the modern house with just the right balance of abstract and figurative imagery. The many dynamics at work in the house—wood and metal, urban and natural, curvy and linear—give the family a home with boundless interest and energy.





Above: The cozy library centers on a corner sectional and is lit by adjustable sconces high on the walls. Below: The designers paneled the bedroom walls to conceal closets and papered them for texture. Bathroom tile contrasts with the wood grain of the vanity. Opposite page: In the upstairs sitting room, a Pick Up Sticks chandelier drifts in the air above a vintage midcentury coffee table.

