

stylish Lowcountry living from charleston magazine

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A 1970s Riverland Terrace house is revamped with chic, **mid-century modern** style

Inside: Tasty brunch recipes + budget-friendly shopping tips + growing daylilies

and the 2009 Symphony Designer Showhouse



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WRITTEN BY MELISSA BIGNER • PHOTOGRAPHS BY BRIE WILLIAMS

mid-century
GLAMOUR

NATIONAL DESIGN DARLING ANGIE HRANOWSKY FALLS
HARD FOR A 1974 MODERN HOUSE HIDDEN AWAY IN
RIVERLAND TERRACE



BOX GOODS Built by Charleston architect Elliott Constantine, the Hranowskys' one-story dwelling boasts ultra-modern design principles that began emerging around the 1930s.



WE ALL HAVE OUR OBSESSIONS—

take Angie Hranowsky, for one. Google the Lowcountry designer and her name pops up all over the mag world (she's appeared in *House Beautiful*, *Metropolitan Home*, *Domino*, *HOME*, and *Real Simple*) and virtually all over the Web world (she's the darling of the "hottest" style blogs). But success via her impeccably colorful mid-century-modern-meets-relaxed-comfort aesthetic didn't save her from her latest fixation: a small, flat-roofed 1970s box-shaped house overlooking a tidal creek in Charleston's Riverland Terrace neighborhood.

Here's how it went down. After relocating to the Lowcountry following stints in Atlanta (where she graduated from the Portfolio Center) and Miami (where she worked at a slick graphic design firm), Angie and her husband, Victor, a personal chef, settled into a cozy cottage in Avondale. While Angie developed her graphic design business—netting clients like stationer Perla Anne, gourmet deli Ted's Butcherblock, Stumphouse Architecture, and more—she dressed her homestead into something fierce, offsetting its traditional 1950s architecture with fab patterns,



SHORT ORDER

Low-slung seating in the living room preserves outdoor views; the vintage sofa has been re-covered with pink velvet and stripped of its back cushions to show off its long, clean lines.

sublime color pairings, mid-century art, and one-of-a-kind furniture finds. The “hobby” was nothing new for her. As a child she’d spent more time dolling up her Barbie house than playing with its dolls, and every apartment she’d had was filled with ambitious decor eked out on a single gal’s budget. When she reached a finishing point with the Avondale house in 2005, friends-in-the-know coaxed her to shoot and submit it

to local and national titles, and the rest just fell into place.

Around that time, Angie and Victor (whose family had been growing since buying that first house) started thinking about moving to a location more kid-friendly than one a mere two houses off Highway 61. Angie’s mom was ready to relocate to Charleston as well, and thus Angie scouted out new digs for her mother while keeping an eye out for herself.

“I’d never been on this street before,” says Angie of Lakeshore Drive, an obscure stretch of the maze that is Riverland Terrace. Curled up barefoot on a low-slung sofa, she launches into the love story like a breathless teenager. “I came around the back way and suddenly saw this place and was like, ‘Holy cow!’ I stopped immediately, saw there was a “for

WELL-ROUNDED

A Saarinen "Tulip" pedestal table centers the open dining room. John Stuart chairs hail from the 1960s and rest on a horse-hide rug with zebra pattern.





REFLECTIVE QUALITY

A 1970s mirrored console table in the dining room supports a pair of shell lamps. Angie found the vintage chandelier at the Urban Electric Co.

sale" sign, and thought, "I am going to buy this house right now. Right now, I am going to buy this house. Surely no one else wants it—everyone else in Charleston wants piazzas and cottages and this is just too modern." So I called right then, but the realtor said they were closing on it the next day. I almost started to cry."

At this point, perhaps it would be wise to explain a little of Angie's passion. Ask her why a modern look undoes her, and she's almost speechless. "I just love it," she says, "the clean lines... the finishes..." And as for this house, dubbed "The Constantine House" by locals after its original architect-builder-owner, Elliott Constantine: "I wanted

HOT SEAT Solid doors outfitted with chrome hardware lead into the master bedroom; the white vinyl chair is a find from the Paris Market in Savannah.



THE GREAT DIVIDE

Angle opted for a fretwork "screen" to separate foyer from den, which she furnished with a Milo Baughman chair and sofa, coffee table from Oly, and vintage lamp.



COOKING LIGHT A newly revamped kitchen boasts a glass tile backsplash, open shelving, and an island topped with Calcutta gold marble.



PURCHASE ORDER

Designer Angie Hranowsky balances pricey must-haves with lucky, budget-friendly finds

SPLURGE

1. Chrome four-poster bed
2. 1970s lamp
3. Vintage Suzani
4. 1950s nude watercolor
5. Carter Kustera silhouettes of children, Loulou and Sasha

STEAL

1. Sharony Green painting
2. 1960s starburst chandelier
3. Vintage turquoise Italian vase
4. 1940s Asian painting in original bamboo frame

SEE PAGE 128 IN RESOURCES for more of Angie's budget-friendly tips!

it because I love anything mid-century: furniture, art, architecture. And I can count on one hand the number of modern houses here in Charleston. And this one is just my taste. It may have been built in 1974, but it's got much more of a 1950s Mies van der Rohe look."

So maybe it's understandable what Angie did next. "I started doing drive-bys," she says. "After a few weeks I saw moving boxes out on the front porch and I just went and knocked on the door. The new owner answered, and I told her, 'I know you are going to think I am totally crazy, and I realize you have just moved in and haven't even unpacked, but I want to buy your house.'"

"She invited me in and showed me around," says Angie in disbelief, "and even though it needed a lot of work, I couldn't believe how great it

was. The view! From the front you looked out onto the tidal creek—not houses—and out back there were palms, bamboo, and a small pool. I gave her my card and told her to call me if things didn't work out. By the time I got home, I had redesigned the whole place in my head.

"That was February and after that visit, I started doing weekly drive-bys," Angie says. "I wouldn't stop and stare exactly," she explains. "I was more just checking to see if workmen were out there, because if they were, that'd be a bad sign—for me at least. By summer, the homeowner had told me to call that fall. I waited, though, because I didn't want to hound her too much. But by Thanksgiving, she said she was ready to sell. We closed on a Monday in March 2006 and by 8 a.m. the next morning, I was there with subcontractors tearing out walls."



"I WANTED THIS HOUSE BECAUSE I LOVE ANYTHING MID-CENTURY; FURNITURE, ART, ARCHITECTURE..."

As the Hranowskys put their Avondale home on the market, Angie barreled through four and a half months of renovations on the Constantine house, new baby boy in tow. First up was deleting some of the details a former homeowner had installed: a low wall between the den and dining area punctuated by a working fish tank; a dividing wall between the entry and the den with a hole big enough to walk through carved in its center; a hot tub that took over the back porch; and bumped-out walls that took over deck space in the fore and aft of the house. In the end, Angie, who oversaw all the day-to-day work herself, took the house from a

LEISURE SUITE The back patio is fitted with glass railings and overlooks a slim swimming pool.

2,500-square-foot space closer to its original floor plan and settled on 2,350 square feet. She had subcontractors tear up the flagstone and carpet throughout and replace them with wood flooring and divided the copious second bedroom into two smaller rooms for her daughter and newborn son. She also removed an extra bath and converted a jigsaw-puzzled master bath into a spa-like space.

As for aesthetic alterations, streamlined is a good word for the makeover. Angie, who adores a seamless look, installed glass panels on the back porch for a railing; took out overhead cabinets in the kitchen and hung open shelves; removed the eight-foot louvered doors throughout and replaced them with solid doors; and stained all the floors a uniform ebony. Plus, she made sure tradesmen didn't add a lip to the fireplace hearth nor clips to the master shower's immense glass wall; there's also a fretwork screen she

STRIKE IT RICH This vintage Suzani that Angie found at a New York flea market gave rise to the color palette in the master bedroom. "Everything fell into step behind it," says Angie. "The grass cloth walls, the seating area, everything."






OLD IS NEW

Angie found this old Drexel dresser locally and had it lacquered white. The lamp is vintage and the mirror is a find from local design shop ESD.

designed and added in place of an old wall between foyer and den.

Though there were a few bumps along the way, the house is now camera-ready a mere two and a half years later. Of course magazines and websites are clamoring for a peek

and from the sound of it, Angie plans on staying put. "We'll be here for a really, really long time," she says. "I imagine my son being 17 and folding himself up to fit in the same room he's in now," she laughs. "There's just no place like it here in Charleston." 

MORE BRIGHT IDEAS

Check out Angie's interiors in person at the *Coastal Living* Jefferson Canal Idea Home in f'On. She's dressing the whole place in her signature style, and proceeds will go to local charities. 94 Latitude Ln.; mid-August to mid-October, 2009; \$10 in advance at f'On Realty, or sold at the door. (843) 884-3080, www.longroup.com/blog