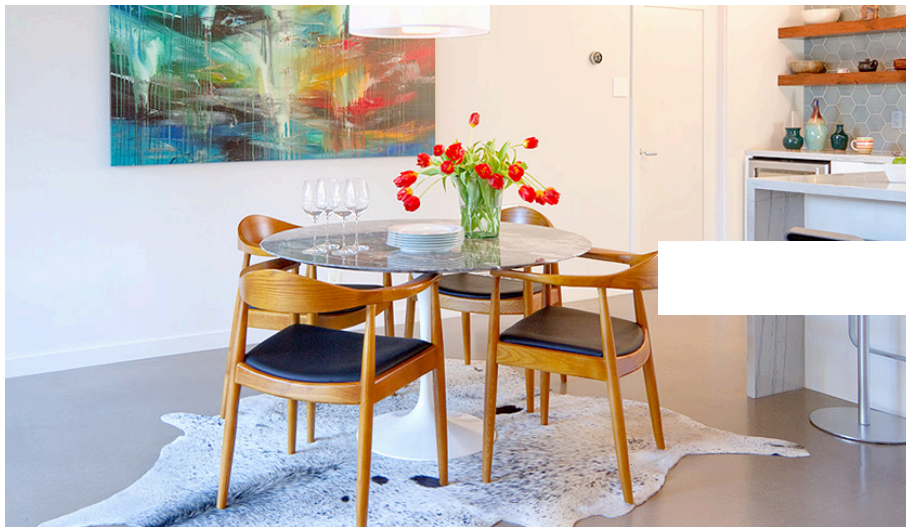


## AN EICHLER IN WALNUT CREEK



Written by **Kelli Lamb**

Photography by **Brian Ashby**

Interior Design by **Denise Maloney**

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THUMBNAIL VIEW

In the early 1950s, Joseph Eichler – a renowned real estate developer – began building distinctive residential homes. Over the course of his career, he and his team designed and built over 11,000 mid-century modern homes in California. These homes would soon be known as simply, Eichlers. Today, these iconic homes are being purchased by the next generation, and the result is pure eye-candy for design lovers. Take **Denise Maloney** – a Bay Area designer with a playful aesthetic. She and her husband purchased an Eichler in Walnut Creek in 2010, and she immediately saw the potential. Over time, life changed – welcoming a dog and a their first son – and the design followed suit. Denise takes us through the process:

### What renovations were required?

We love to entertain, so opening up the dark and closed off galley kitchen was a must. In addition to a complete kitchen remodel, we installed new radiant heat in the floors throughout, and selected seamless polished concrete floors to create an easy flow between rooms. By adding new clerestory windows in the kitchen and lightening up the paint colors, I was able to bring a lot of added light to the living space. The bathrooms, interior and exterior doors and hardware were given a modern update that is still respectful of the house's original aesthetic.

### How did the Eichler design impact your design process?

We wanted to honor the home's original design intent while also modernizing the space for our growing family to make it our own. It was important to me that the modern design didn't get in the way of the home feeling warm and inviting. I chose an eclectic mix of modern classics and one-of-a-kind furnishings, highlighting pieces that had history and a personal connection. I loved taking a timeless architectural style and infusing it with color and personality. We managed to locate the home's original construction drawings through the UCLA architectural archives, which helped inspire the style of the new windows and the restoration of the trim work throughout. Luckily the original light fixtures in the kitchen were still there and in great shape, so we were able to maintain them.

### We love that sort of research! Color plays a huge part in the final design. How did you select the bold blue hue in the bedroom?

I wanted the master bedroom to feel really cozy so I chose a dark, peacock blue that envelops you in the space. It's basically a navy with just a faint hint of green. I love water and this hue makes me feel like I am floating on a peaceful lake.



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**Any noteworthy pieces of furniture or artwork that you love?**

The floating wood console in the entryway was a five-year anniversary gift to my husband. I designed this piece in reclaimed walnut that highlights my husband's penchant for reclaimed wood materials with a refined, modern style that reflects my personal aesthetic. My husband adores the wood console, and it contains the perfect storage components to fit our family's needs.

One of our big splurges was the Knoll Saarinen table in a beautiful gray marble. I have used many a Saarinen table in my design projects, but this was my opportunity to infuse a modern classic with a unique stone to create a really special piece. I discovered Tracey Sylvester Harris' work at an art show in San Francisco years ago and immediately fell in love with her vision of water and leisurely summer vacations. I knew I had to have one of her pieces for our Master Bedroom and every time I look at it, I immediately feel calmer and more relaxed.

**What is your favorite feature or room in the finished house?**

I love to cook, so of course the kitchen is my favorite room in the house. By knocking down the walls that once closed the kitchen off from the rest of the house, I created ample space for guests and a natural flow between the living and dining room spaces. The kitchen shelves are actually reclaimed wood beams that I found and had my husband cut down with a chainsaw so I could bring them home! They were really rough and everyone thought I was crazy, but now they're one of the highlights of the project.

**How did you first get started in interior design?**

After earning my bachelor's degree in Economics, I was working in finance when I realized that it was not the career for me. I had always loved drawing, especially technical drawing such as drafting, so I decided to make a career change and go back to school for Interior Design & Interior Architecture at University of California at Berkeley. I took a big pay cut to do so, but I have never regretted it, and have been designing for the past 11 years.

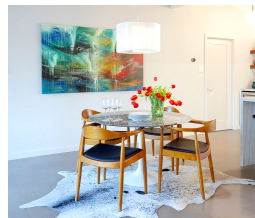
**When it comes to design, what is your motto or mantra?**

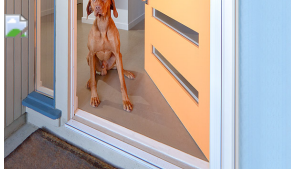
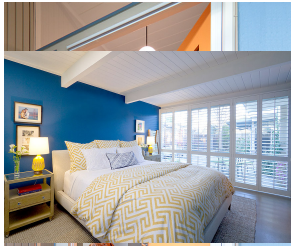
Good design is not about how much money you throw at it — the design should reflect the client's lifestyle and personality. You have to have a little sense of humor with design — if it's taken too seriously, the space will feel stiff and unusable.

**What do you have planned next?**

For the past 2 years, I have been working on a custom home for a lovely, young family and they will be moving in before the holidays so that's really exciting! We are also working on a really vibrant design (think lots of pattern and color) for a house in San Francisco. For my own home, I am currently collaborating with a landscape designer on additional outdoor entertaining spaces and to create a more drought-tolerant landscape plan.

**THUMBNAIL VIEW**





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