

# MAKING MIDCENTURY MODERN

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CHRISTOPHER KENNEDY

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Hardcover  
8.5 x 11 in, 208 Pages  
Color photographs throughout  
Pub Date: February 2017

\$35.00 U.S.

# MAKING MIDCENTURY MODERN CHRISTOPHER KENNEDY

The **PAST** is our  
**muse** and the **FUTURE**  
is our **canvas**.

The celebrated midcentury designers were decidedly forward-thinking. They were using the new technology of the time (plastic, fiberglass, bent wood) and creating shapes that had never been seen before. They were dreamers and futurists that, if alive today, would be creating “what’s new,” and not resting on their sixty-year-old laurels.

MAKING MIDCENTURY MODERN is created to help you make midcentury modern by offering one hundred foolproof ways to introduce modernist design into a contemporary home. The principles in this book are fresh, relevant, and current. What better way to honor the legacy of the midcentury masters than to incorporate their pieces into designs that are distinctly *this* century?



# 51 DOWN TO THE WIRE

If you don't live in sunshine year-round, midcentury metal furniture will withstand the colder months. No need to find a complete set—it is more fun to mix and match a variety of outdoor metal styles. A coat of white outdoor spray paint, available off the shelf at your local hardware store, will bring it all together.



# 99 SLEEP SOFTLY

It is relatively easy to find midcentury bedroom sets online, at your local flea market, or at a vintage store. Though I rarely want a matched set, the pieces are normally sold together and even less expensive when bought this way.

I will incorporate the nightstands and dresser into my bedroom designs (sometimes in different rooms), but the vintage beds are inevitably too small for our modern mattresses and sleeping habits. This is why so many of my bedroom designs incorporate fabric beds and headboards—they are easy to make and then there is no worry about matching the vintage wood finish, and really, isn't it so much cozier? And much less matchy-matchy.





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## EERO WON'T STEER YOU WRONG

As an interior designer, I spend much of my time selecting furniture. Dining tables, in general, are an item that I frequently agonize over. How many people do my clients need to seat for dinner? Will the finish be durable? Is the scale right for the room?

I really shouldn't fret. Eero Saarinen (who also designed the St. Louis Gateway Arch) created the perfect table several decades ago.

His marble table works in almost every setting. Place this table in a traditional home, and like a fresh breeze on a warm day, it instantly lightens the air. The table easily seats eight, which is almost always plenty. Done in marble, the table is durable and timeless. Its oval shape allows for easy conversation amongst all diners. Bravo, Mr. Saarinen!



### CK SECRET:

*Don't have the budget for the marble table? The fiberglass version is equally versatile. Even IKEA makes a very good option that captures the essence of Eero's original intent.*

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## RUB-A-DUB-TUB

When updating a bathroom, I favor sleek new fiberglass bathtubs. They save space, and in my mind, are the direct descendants of Eames and Jacobsen fiberglass furniture... with just a hint of Mork's spaceship thrown in for good measure.



"A golden state of mind" describes Christopher Kennedy's philosophy toward design and life. With a belief that surroundings should inspire and that good design impacts our lives for the better, Christopher creates interiors and products that are refreshingly exuberant. Combining jet-set nostalgia with California modernism, Christopher's work has been featured in *Dwell*, *Luxe*, *California Homes + Design*, *Traditional Home*, *Coastal Living*, and the *Los Angeles Times*.

Each year, in conjunction with Modernism Week, Christopher organizes and produces a decorator show house in Palm Springs, featuring rooms by today's biggest names in design. The Christopher Kennedy Compound attracts more than 5,000 guests in ten days, and grosses nearly \$100,000 for Modernism Week's education and preservation efforts.

From his base in Palm Springs, this prolific designer has created an eponymous furniture line, candles, bedding, pottery, and design books.

Born in San Francisco and raised on California's Central Coast, Christopher brings a synthesis of big-city style and relaxed resort living to his work. He received Bachelor of Architecture and MBA degrees from Drury University.



# 91 BOTTLE LOGIC

I don't believe in accessories for accessories' sake. I have never been accused of over-accessorizing. That said, I do believe that "it's the small things," and that details give a room its soul.

So where to begin? Do you rush out to your nearest discount store and buy a bunch of cheap junk? I say no. Don't contribute to our disposable society.

Vintage bottles are one of my favorite accessories. They are easy to source online, at an antique store, or an estate sale. They can be used alone, but in multiples they create a major statement. Try grouping numerous bottles of various shapes in your preferred accent color to add instant retro flair and a foolproof focal point.

# 11 GO FOR THE GOLD

Silver, chrome, and brushed nickel are all the rage in today's contemporary interiors. Why not add some vintage glamour with the king of all metals?

