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Mod, Mod World

From ghost chairs to womb chairs to ball chairs, mid-century modern is taking a front seat in local design

BY ROWENA KELLEY

"Mid-century design is a quest for clean lines, honest construction, interesting use of materials and economy of materials," says David Skelley, owner of Boomerang for Modern, which carries an inspiring collection of reissued mid-century classics by Herman Miller, Vitra and more. Like other showroom managers throughout town, Skelley is busy helping consumers navigate the resurgence of a design aesthetic born in the middle of the 20th century. From Ikea and other mainstream shops to showrooms like

Mission Valley. "As it relates to furniture, mid-century design is very relevant to designers such as Eames, Le Corbusier and Saarinen."

Luckily for fans of this design aesthetic, San Diego has its share of resources for the classics. Design Within Reach in East Village, for instance, carries Charles and Ray Eames; My Own Space in La Jolla features Eero Aarnio's ball chair; and DNA European Design in Little Italy carries works by Erik Jorgensen and Fritz Hansen. And that's just a sampling. Emerging designers are



Boomerang, the refurbished and reproduced pieces are widely available and booming in popularity.

But how do you define "mid-century style"? Do you have to own an Eames or a womb chair to be a true follower? How can you incorporate this period into an existing palette without breaking the bank?

"Mid-century can be anything from product design and furniture to architecture," says Michael McAllister, owner of Hold It Contemporary Home in

also making an imprint with inspired furnishings and accessories.

"Many new designs are inspired by the clean lines and organic design of the mid-century," says McAllister, with a nod to popular lines such as GUS* and Blu Dot. Other new names can also be found at boutiques such as Mixture in Little Italy and My Own Space.

The appeal of mid-century design is especially strong for urban dwellers. According to Skelley, the style "works very well in small spaces because it's fully

LEFT: PHOTOS COURTESY OF DNA EUROPEAN DESIGN. RIGHT: PHOTO COURTESY OF BOOMERANG FOR MODERN.

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functional, and yet it takes up minimal space.

"Usually the pieces are up off the ground and you can see underneath them, which makes the room feel larger," he says. "Certain color palettes are indicative of the time period—you've got the turquoises and pinks and then the more traditional earth tones and mossy greens and grays."

It is also a far-reaching design, in that it can incorporate nicely into many aesthetics. Those with existing palettes don't have to start from scratch and instead can use mid-century pieces to elevate their existing look. "If, for example, you take some '30s-inspired pieces and mix them with some mid-century items, you have a true Hollywood glam look," McAllister says. "And rustic Spanish always mixes well with items such as the Barcelona chair by Ludwig Mies van der Rohe or the Eames lounge and ottoman."

The trick is to think organic.

"Choose pieces that best go with the interior," says Cathi Pedersen of DNA European Design in Little Italy. "We often suggest one or two pieces, and then we'll suggest bringing in some organic pieces such as a sculpture or a table. Organic pieces go really well with mid-century design."

As with any endeavor, education is key—not to mention an honest approach to your own likes and dislikes.

"Customers need to know what they want," Skelley says. "Do they relate to an American or a Scandinavian design aesthetic? Do they want cool metals and glass, or woods? It's also important to match quality with quality—they should carry the same quality in their home to the mid-century goods they purchase. A few well-chosen pieces work very well in mixed aesthetics." ■

A Sampling of Mid-Century Design

BoConcept

1550 Front Street, downtown
619-398-0745 • boconcept.us.com

Boomerang for Modern

2475 Kettner Boulevard, Little Italy
619-239-2040 • boomerangformodern.com

Design Within Reach

393 Seventh Avenue, East Village
619-744-9900 • dwr.com

DNA European Design

1990 Columbia Street, Little Italy
619-235-6882 • dnaeuropeandesign.com

Hold It Contemporary Home

1570 Camino de la Reina, Mission Valley
619-295-6660 • holdithome.com

Mixture

2210 Kettner Blvd., Little Italy
619-239-4788 • mixturehome.com

My Own Space

7840 Girard Avenue, La Jolla
858-459-0099 • mosmyownspace.com



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