

# AN OASIS IN THE DESERT



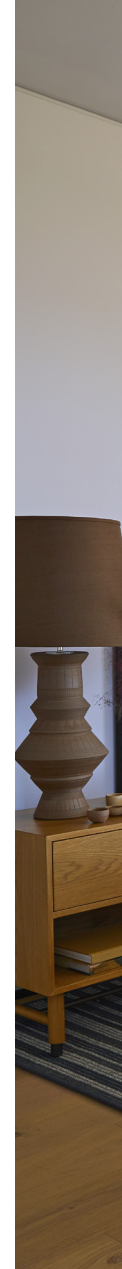
The pool area of a house in Rancho Mirage, California, connects directly to the primary bedroom. The Mesa chaises are by RH Modern. *Right:* Interior designer Josh Greene. The chair and pedestal are from his collection for Dowel, the Shang extra-fine sisal wallpaper is by Thibaut, and the vase is by Heather Rosenman Ceramics from Lawson-Fenning.

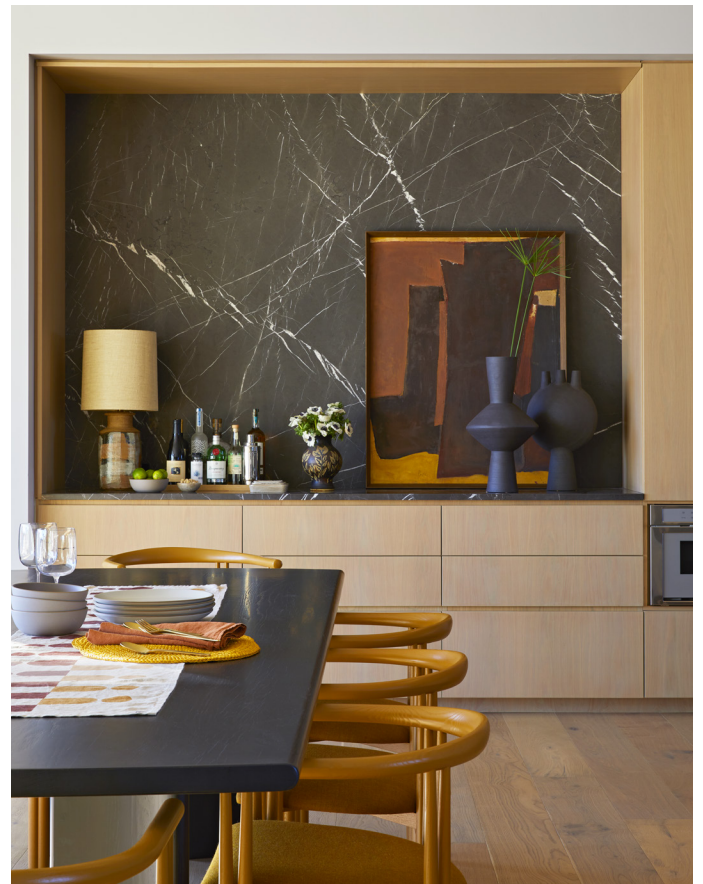
For a family retreat, designer Josh Greene channeled 1970s nostalgia to create inviting, color-soaked warmth. *by Maura Egan. Photographs by Yoshihiro Makino*



**“ I WAS** looking for a midcentury diamond in the rough,” says Michal Davis of her search last spring for a second home in the Palm Springs area. “But with all the pandemic purchases, the market was wild.” Not only was there a lack of inventory, but Davis wasn’t so sure of the quality of the properties she was being shown. So she turned to her childhood friend, the New York–based designer Josh Greene, whose parents have owned a house nearby for many years. The two had worked together a few years earlier on the Santa Monica house she shares with her husband and two kids and their dog, Archie. “I would just text Josh listings and let him vet them for me,” she says.

When she came across the 4,100-square-foot property with a guest casita, a pool, and a proper yard, one of nine residential new builds in a development within the town of Rancho Mirage, she sensed she had unearthed a gem. “I have a design background,” says Davis, who worked with Greene at Michael Smith’s firm in Los Angeles. “So I’m





From far left: In the living room, the custom sofa is covered in Daloa fabric by Larsen, the vintage armchairs are upholstered in woven leather by Dedar, and the Litchfield table lamps are by Dumais Made; the entry to the house; in the primary bedroom, the Canyon bed is by Josh Greene for Dowel, and the acrylic painting is by Mike Greene, the designer's brother; the Crest table is by Sun at Six, and the Elliot dining chairs are by De La Espada from the Future Perfect.

pretty particular about finishes and hardware. Everything at this place was perfect. I didn't want to change a thing." When she sent the images to Greene, he agreed: "It was beautiful and a modernist design and had that midcentury feel, but it was very updated."

Greene has always appreciated the "architectural DNA and heritage" of Palm Springs, but he wanted to steer away from the marble-and-terrazzo vernacular that dominates the area. Since starting his own firm in 2018, after working at established design firms like MR Architecture + Decor and Sawyer Berson, Greene has become known for working with rich textures and colors but in a refined way. His penchant for luxurious materials could be attributed to his early

career as a textiles editor for *Women's Wear Daily* as well as his time as a store designer for Ralph Lauren. "It was such an exciting place to learn, and I traveled the world," Greene says. "But once I found myself working at the Rugby store in the Short Hills mall in New Jersey, I knew it was probably time to go."

With the house's mix of flagstone, black steel, and wood, Greene believed he could create an interior that matched the exterior's warmth. "If it had just been myself, I would have made it desert-plain," says Davis. "But Josh elevated it to desert-groovy. He added that extra layer."

"There's a warmth in the desert," says Greene, 41. "There are a lot of colors here—ochers, teals, pinks, mountain browns. White actually clashes with the sand." So instead of a minimalist, space-age look, the designer leaned in to a groovy 1970s palette. For the den, that meant swathing the entire room—the sectional sofa, the carpet, the walls—in



In the den, the sofa is covered in Outdoor Moderne fabric in Terracotta by Glant Textiles. The Valley Brook carpet is from Sacco. *Left:* The bathroom features a Brizo tub filler and one of Greene's Tamarisk chairs. *Right:* In the casita near the pool, the Ojai bed from Lawson-Fenning is covered in Cowtan & Tout fabric.

a rosy-mauve color. “I wanted to create that childhood vibe of watching cartoons and eating cereal on Saturday mornings in the family room,” says Greene. He designed the custom sofa to include two sections that can be made up as twin-sized beds for last-minute sleepovers. He finished off the playroom look with whimsical ball-shaped cushions and a chevron painting by his brother, Mike Greene, who lives in the Palm Springs area.

Childhood memories figured again when it came to the more formal living room. The two custom nine-foot sofas were inspired by the shape of the sofa in Davis’s home when she was growing up. Greene persuaded her to upholster them in a bold diamond-patterned fabric. “He definitely wanted to take me out of my comfort zone,” she says. (“It’s a vacation home,” Greene kept reminding her.) The designer piled on the texture by adding a black-and-tan striped Beni rug, an ebonized-oak coffee table, and a pair of Jean-Michel

Frank armchairs re-covered in woven leather. “Josh wanted to stay away from hard edges,” says Davis. To that end, he brought in a lot of handcrafted objects, including glazed Moroccan tiles in the bathroom, ceramic lamps in the bedrooms, and plenty of wood, basketry, and textiles throughout.

Greene furnished the primary bedroom with a bed from his new furniture collection, which he collaborated on with Dowel Furniture and finished during the pandemic. The 25 sculptural pieces include armchairs, side tables, and pedestals, some of which were inspired by Ettore Sottsass’s totems. (“I was always looking for pedestals in my work and never could find them,” he says.) In fact, several pieces are named after Greene’s design heroes—Charlotte



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Perriand, Frank Lloyd Wright, and Wallace Neff. Above the bed, Greene placed another graphic painting by his brother, this one inspired by a mural by Rinaldo Paluzzi in their parents’ home nearby. He finished off the room with a pair of ceramic lamps by Cary Lockwood, a Los Angeles-based designer; a vintage wooden screen covered with a painted canvas; and a striped rug. There is a layering but there is also an orderliness.

This is evident in the guest casita, which Greene designed in a palette of bright oranges and rusts. He added a pair of over-the-top cactus-shaped lamps—courtesy of the 1980s Palm Springs design star Steve Chase—but there’s no hint of kitsch.

“Josh has an amazing eye,” says Davis. “He knows color and saturation.” Even outside, Greene was thinking about these things and how the desert landscape would play off the house. He points to the firepit by the pool. “At night, when it’s lit, it gives a lot of mood.” ☞