

homes & design renovations

# OUT OF TIME

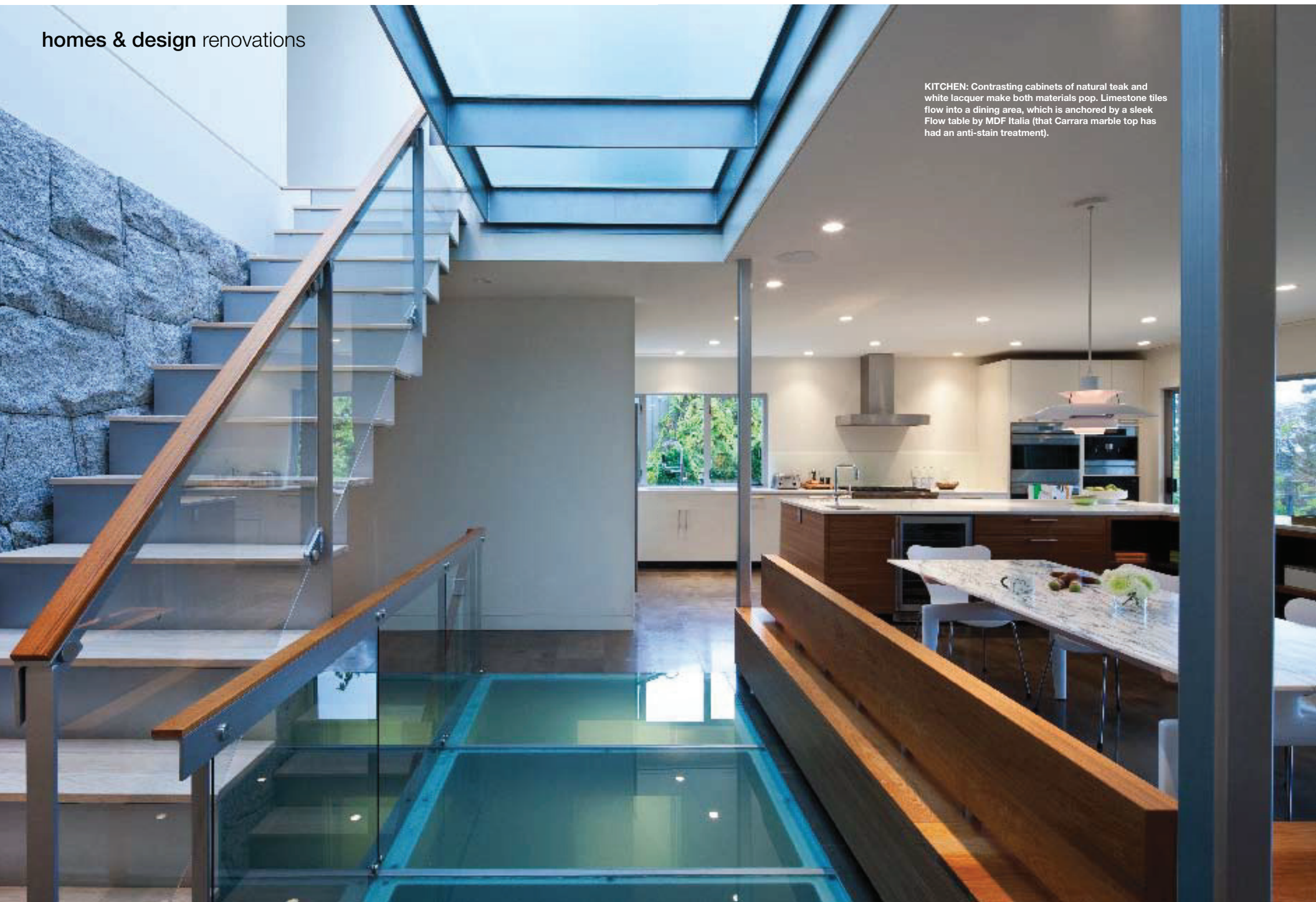
Can a pink stucco monster be refashioned into a West Coast modern gem? Measured Architecture's Clinton Cuddington and interior designer Nancy Riesco did the heavy lifting—with a light touch.



BY MICHAEL HARRIS  
PHOTOGRAPHS BY MICHAEL BOLAND

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KITCHEN: Contrasting cabinets of natural teak and white lacquer make both materials pop. Limestone tiles flow into a dining area, which is anchored by a sleek Flow table by MDF Italia (that Carrara marble top has had an anti-stain treatment).



## Reno 911

Clinton Cuddington's tips for smart renovating.

### TO RENO OR NOT TO RENO?

There's often a false economy with renovations. Work with a surveyor independent of the architect to ascertain whether a reno will actually be cheaper than a new build.

### LOOK INSIDE

Consider opening up the building's envelope during renos—it's a great opportunity to take care of mould and other problems.

### REDUCE, REUSE, RECYCLE

Search your home for materials that can be repurposed. For example, old-growth fir studs can be re-milled and made into beautiful soffits. Hiring a contractor who provides full-service deconstruction, instead of just demolition, can lower your costs.

**HALLWAY:** A rock wall moves from the front yard, through the house's main floor, and out into the back yard, uniting the interior and the environment with a single, muscular element. **OPPOSITE, LIVING ROOM:** A tufted Baker "Wren" sofa by Barbara Barry delineates the stone hearth in an otherwise open plan. Riesco eschews the merely decorative here, with the exception of a lone cast-iron kingfisher (produced by Saikai) standing sentry on the sideboard.

**OFFICE:** Things look bright from a mesh Rolling Frame chair by Alias, thanks to small touches like a Marimekko mouse pad, wooden candle holders, and childish artwork on the wall.



Measured Architecture's lead architect, Clinton Cuddington, shares how he took a home ravaged by poor renovations and gave it new life.

**WESTERN LIVING:** This home was built in 1940 but heavily renovated in the mid 1980s. The place was, to be kind, out of step by the time you took on the job. Blockish extra walls and wrong-headed furniture.

**CLINTON CUDDINGTON:** When I was doing my master's thesis, I went to Cairo and was shocked at the place, at the detritus everywhere. And then an Egyptologist took me aside and told me to just look at the lines of Cairo. Suddenly it was beautiful. It's the same here. You have to stop critiquing the choices of individuals who lived here and really diagnose the space. The actual bones of the place.

**WL:** In this case was there anything other than the bones that was salvageable?

**CC:** Ha! I was pretty much at peace with the fact we were stripping it to the rafters. But downstairs, in the man den, there was a '50s-style fireplace that the dad really loved; we kept that. It wasn't fighting with anything we were putting in.

**WL:** How have changes in our lives over the past 30 years led to changes in home design?

**CC:** There's been a huge typological shift. Thirty years ago the fireplace and the living room were still the heart of the home. But the kitchen is the heart today, the primary hub. It's where most of life takes place. We're still seeing that democratic shift away from the time when food preparation was done by servants and women while men smoked cigars in the spacious parlour.

**WL:** There are other hangovers from yesteryear in this house—



**MASTER BATHROOM:** A wall of uninterrupted millwork (sans handles) delivers spa-level serenity. Meanwhile, glass mosaic tiles from Daltile cover the floor and vanity area, a rich Calacatta Paonazzo marble caps the counter, and a red Ribbon stool spins in the corner.

**BEFORE**

Designers walked into a world of garish colours. The trick, as ever, was to see the house for its bones and not be distracted by window dressing.



like a very prominent carport.

**CC:** Luckily the homeowner is a car nut—that's a '68 Charger in the driveway. We repurposed the studs from all the walls we took out to open up the interior, and built a three-piece wooden garage door that slides up like a rolltop desk.

**WL:** How do the kids fit into the picture?

**CC:** The boys are all jocks, so it was important to have spaces that can hide a mess of equipment. There are two major boot rooms, almost locker-style, so you can maintain the dignity of the house without having it interrupted by skates and dirty shin pads. And a big part of this move was about creating private spaces for teenagers, too.

**WL:** The renovation did away with so many walls and opened the space up so much. What kind of balance was struck between that and keeping the more private areas?

**CC:** We have this goal of great spaces accompanied by ancillary spaces, where you can peel off and be remote from the action yet close to it. We delivered two home offices for them and those, like the boot rooms, had to be places you could close off when you wanted to. Otherwise you become a slave to your home.

**WL:** Between those offices, the kids and the kitchen-centric layout, the design is tied to a particular family and a particular era. Do you find yourself working toward timelessness or do you expect everything to get renovated again in 30 years?

**CC:** If we can create a minimalist space that works as a backdrop for individual signatures, then that home has a greater chance of lasting in the future.

**WL:** And how much do you borrow from the past?

**CC:** Nostalgia is the enemy. We mustn't simply pick from some tree of design. But we'll use approaches from the past to push us toward an elegant new solution. **w** See SOURCES