

Full Circle

On Long Island, a designer rounds out her boxy, midcentury ranch with all things curvy, sensuous and fun.

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Interior Design: Cara Woodhouse, Cara Woodhouse Interiors

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hen it comes to bringing work home, Cara Woodhouse is having a ball. Designing for clients certainly taps her creativity, but a full renovation of the

modernist Long Island ranch that she and her young family call home gave the New York-based designer leeway to throw whatever curves she wanted—and there were lots. From the get-go, the front door's Swiss-cheese cutouts hint at a circle-fest within, then a voluptuously oversized entryway ottoman in elevated, pearly lavender tones creates a sense of Old Hollywood colliding with the Space Age.

Circles, orbs and arcs of every sort bounce around the home, from kitchen cabinet pulls to throw pillows to mirrors and bed frames. "My eye is just drawn to that shape," says Woodhouse, who likes to place what she calls "eye candy" in every room to provide "an unexpected, surprise moment—not something shocking, but something soothing and cool. For me, that's often the visual softness of curves." The former Los Angeles resident also loves midcentury modern architecture, but never imagined she'd find a home so purely in that vein on Long Island. "This style of house in New York, especially an original one, is rare," Woodhouse notes. When she happened upon the 1961, split-level abode tucked into a hillside in a wooded neighborhood, the designer knew she'd found a gem.

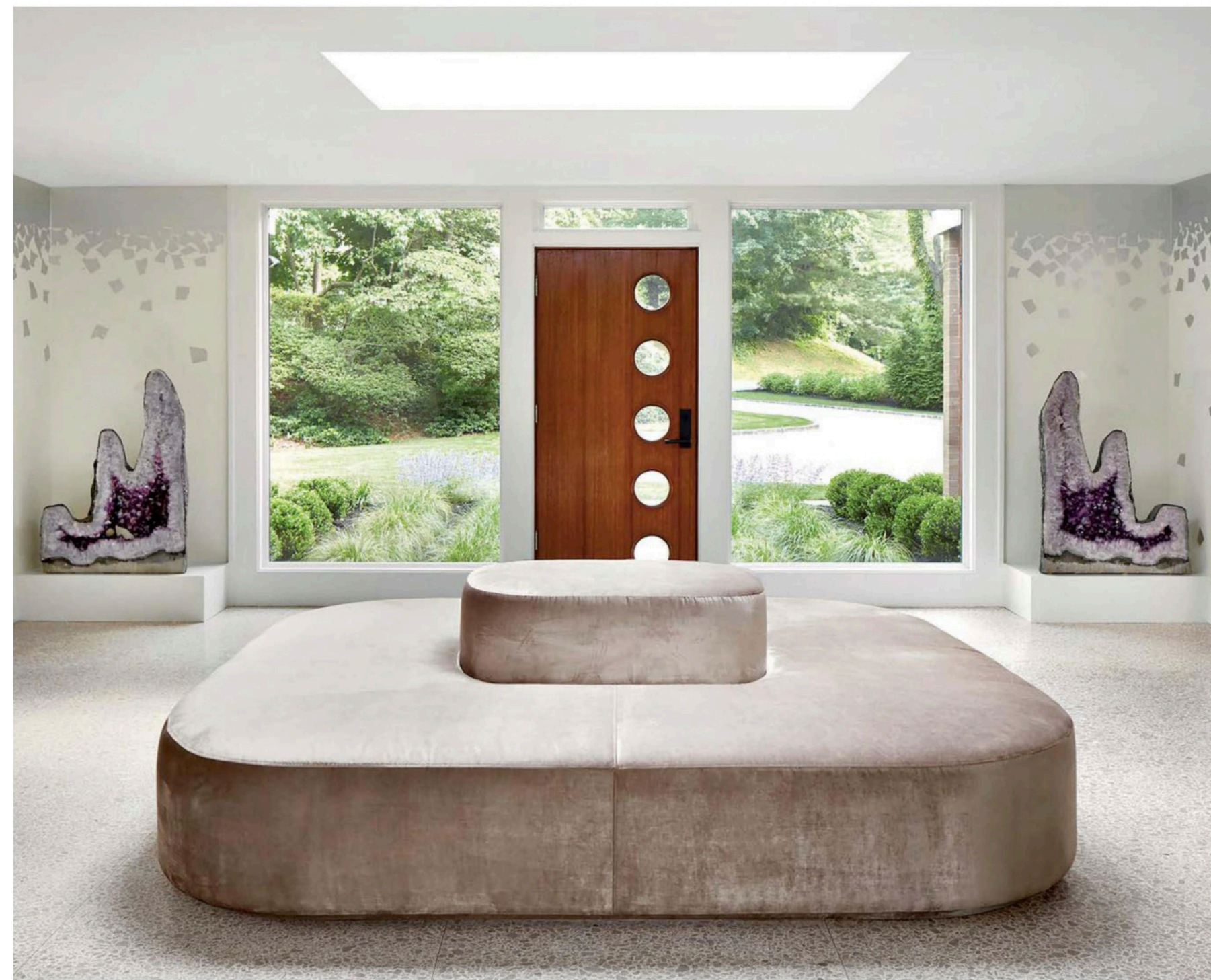
"I walked in and immediately told my real estate agent 'this is it, this is my home,'" says Woodhouse, who, undaunted by the work needed, saw potential in the living-slash-dining room's 11-foot ceilings and the house's smooth entertaining flow, with living spaces on one side and bedrooms secluded on the other. Plus, the location is right across the street from Roslyn Harbor, with water views visible from the upstairs balcony in the winter. "Even in such a state, I loved the vibe and all the big windows and original skylights. It was like a tree house with such a presence of nature, and there was so much architectural character throughout."

That character revealed itself more fully after Woodhouse and her husband Dean set about

banishing the dated balloon shades that obscured every window, the "reddish-orange" Formica countertops and dark paneling, and the shag carpet that was hiding elegant herringbone planks in the main spaces. Meanwhile, a deep cleaning of the foyer revealed glamorous terrazzo floors complete with inset divides that, once polished, proved to be real brass. "That was one of those 'OMG' magic moments," she says. The home's overhaul, however, did not entail changing the footprint or even significantly altering the floor plan (except for a slight reconfiguration of the children's bedrooms to add a shared bath). "People really knew how to entertain back then," says Woodhouse, who embraced how the vintage layout offered numerous gathering spaces, including a super-1960s bar room and groovy outdoor terraces.

While the couple saw eye-to-eye on the gut renovation, the home's far-out funkiness is all Woodhouse. "My husband appreciates contemporary design, but he's a Brit—if he had a choice, it'd be English antiques everywhere," she laughs. Instead, her spirited custom designs, like the pair of curvilinear consoles in the entryway with resin tops commissioned by Canadian artist Martha Sturdy, the rug with a mischievous monkey motif that she designed in the living room and most of the bedroom furnishings, are anything but old school. In fact, the only antiques are the pair of 200-million-year-old, 300-pound each butterfly amethyst geodes gracing the front door. "Ripping out the old radiators left holes that we couldn't repair without more terrazzo and, because I'm obsessed with rock crystals, I thought of adding geodes," Woodhouse says. "They're amazing, plus they add such great energy!"

Indeed, playful energy and whimsy roll from room to room, including the den of creativity downstairs where sons Cash, aged 11, and Lennon, 7, play music, games and do homework amid a plush sectional with art bins at the ready. Imagination is clearly encouraged and prized in this household where shapes, colors and textures overlap in orbits of delight. "I love that all the rooms in this home are so usable and accessible," Woodhouse says. "We hang out in the entrance and even take turns sleeping in the guest room because we love it so much." ■



"I wanted every space to be usable," says designer Cara Woodhouse, who imagined the entry's Nathan Anthony ottoman as a hangout perch. A Surfaces by David Bonk wallpaper "makes it feel like it's snowing." The front door is flanked by geodes from The Phillips Collection.



Above: A curvy console designed by Woodhouse features a resin top by artist Martha Sturdy in the entry. "Macaroni-like" sconces by Andlight frame an RH chrome mirror. The poured-terrazzo floors are original to the home.

Opposite: The dining room's velvet Noom chairs and a custom marble table foster a soothing yet playful atmosphere. The Larose Guyon chandelier and a rug designed by Woodhouse with The Rug Company highlight her love of curves.



"Whimsical, but elevated and chic," was Woodhouse's direction for the sun-drenched living area. A semicircle sectional, pillows and ottoman from Nathan Anthony are neutral in tone but plush in texture. Prints by British artist David Shrigley add pops of color.

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Above: While initial plans to enlarge the kitchen were scratched, the galley-style space was given a breakfast nook including a bespoke banquette, Pablo pendant and Sarah Ellison Studio table and chairs. "I love a contrast of hard and soft textures," Woodhouse says.

Opposite: Sleek cabinets by CS Millwork, Inc. were given custom-designed white oak pulls and topped with a dramatic Calacatta marble from Grupo Arca. New herringbone floors match the home's original planks discovered under shag carpet elsewhere.





Above: The primary bathroom's floating his-and-hers vanity features sculptural Nest Studio pulls. Wall-mounted Kohler faucets disappear against the Arabescato Corchia backsplash. The same stone is used across the counters and floors, all fabricated by Formia Marble & Stone.

Opposite: The primary bedroom is luxurious and serene, with hints of funk in the drip-like Calico Wallpaper wallcovering and curvy shapes of a Woodhouse-designed bed and Pablo table lamp. A contemporary Entier Studio chandelier is softened by the layered textures of Matouk bedding.