

# Sheltering *in Style*



This living-room sitting area near corner windows allows a great view of nature year-round.  
Photo by Shannon Zahnle





With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, Bloomingtonians, like the rest of the world, found themselves spending significantly more time at home—working, home-schooling children, or just staying safe. It made us wonder, of the many homes featured in the magazine over the past 15 years, which would be some of the most stylish, most comfortable places to quarantine.

And since, due to COVID-19 safety concerns, we were unable to photograph new places for this Homes issue, we decided to feature our favorite shelters from the storm.

Pictured within these pages are four homes, whose owners, we feel, possess the creative vision that made their homes sanctuaries, even in these most difficult times.



# A Modern Home with a Sense of History

BY Lee Ann Sandweiss

PHOTOGRAPHY BY Shannon Zahnle

*This home was featured in Bloom's June/July 2013 Homes Issue.*

Their future home had been on the market for just two hours when Sharon and Brad Fugate stepped inside with real estate agent Scott Owens in April 2012.

"We made an offer on the spot," says Sharon, who with Brad is the former proprietor of the Bloomington store Relish. "We are not impulsive people, but this was so right. We were smitten—it was absolute love at first sight."

Built in 1941 for Walton and Adela Bittner, the distinctive white house is nestled in a wooded half-acre lot in the serene, leafy Bittner Woods neighborhood on the city's southeast side. Architect William Strain designed the house in the International Style, which was rare for an Indiana residence in the 1940s. International Style emerged in the United States and Europe in the 1920s and '30s and embraces Bauhaus clean lines and lack of ornamentation. The actual term "International Style" was coined in 1932 by two American architects, Philip Johnson and Henry-Russell Hitchcock. The Fugates' ►



Corner windows throughout the house allow for an abundance of wall space for displaying homeowner Brad Fugate's art.





(clockwise from top, left) Sharon and Brad Fugate say they were “smitten” when they first saw their house; the master bedroom has built-in closets that were added in the 1950s; Sharon and Brad, previous owners of Relish, prefer an eclectic aesthetic for their home’s interior design; architect William Strain designed the Fugates’ 1941 home in the International Style.



home was built of materials classic for the style, including cement blocks and glass bricks.

"This is a modern house with a sense of history," says Sharon. "This house has a wonderful ease about it. There's incredible storage for an old house. The other wonderful aspect is that the layout invites you to use most of the house all of the time."

The Fugates are just the third owners of the 72-year-old house, which has been featured on Indiana Landmarks' Mid-Century Modern Home Tour. At approximately 3,000 square feet, the house has three bedrooms, two bathrooms, and a living room with the original oak parquet flooring. Previous owner John Hartley, who lived there for almost 25 years, contracted Stone Cabin Design ▶

(right) Large porches and a pergola provide outdoor living space for relaxing and entertaining; (below) the lower level of the Fugate home, which includes this TV room, was once a garage.







to make period-appropriate updates that enhanced the house's functionality, including new kitchen cabinets, a remodeled upstairs bathroom, and built-in cabinetry and shelving on the lower level.

"John did the heavy lifting, and we are in the position to enjoy what he did," says Brad. "We made some small changes but mostly just freshened up the interior paint."

The house's white walls offer a gallery-like display of Brad's artwork, including many large mixed-media pieces and paintings. Notes Brad, "The corner windows free up wall space, and the understated trim doesn't compete with the artwork. We previously lived in a Victorian cottage. This is much different."



(clockwise from top, left) In the kitchen, a large antique Chinese cabinet is topped with a pepper mill collection; the Fugates were swept away by the dramatic staircase; the former owner renovated the kitchen in the 1990s to complement the house's International Style.



Originally from Missouri, the Fugates moved to Bloomington from North Carolina in 1987, with Brad planning to pursue an M.F.A. at Indiana University. Several years later, Sharon and a friend opened Grant Street, a home-furnishings store that was the precursor to Relish, which the Fugates operated from 2004–2017.

The Fugates are clearly enamored with their home. Two upholstered chairs from Relish face out from corner windows in the living room, where Sharon says she and Brad like to sit in all seasons and gaze at the landscaping around the house's concrete patios.

"You are always aware of the outdoors when you are in this house and aware of its interior when you are outside," Sharon says. "It's a special place to be at all points of the day."



# Hardware Store Modernism

BY Tracy Zollinger Turner

PHOTOGRAPHY BY Kendall Reeves

*This home was featured in Bloom's June/July 2017 Homes Issue.*

Tucked away on a small side street in an east-side neighborhood, Laura Plummer and Michael Nelson's ultra-contemporary home stands in contrast to everything that surrounds it. Corrugated steel siding plays games with the sunlight, constantly shifting the texture and structure of its boxy, two-story form with shadows. Every window and doorway pops with bright red trim, infusing the factory-made elements with modern-art spirit.

Laura and Michael long envisioned living in a wide-open space with a loft bedroom. In 2013, the chance to buy a ramshackle home offered them the opportunity to build something new and wildly distinctive over an old, somewhat tricky basement foundation. Despite major obstacles like termite damage and dilapidated plumbing, the couple managed to get the majority of the old house demolished and the new one designed and built in about two years.

Architect Sam DeSollar designed a home that met Laura and Michael's desire for an open floor plan with an industrial aesthetic. Michael has referred to it as "hardware store modernism." Built by ▶

After Laura Plummer and Michael Nelson were presented with three possible designs by their architect, choosing the shape of the house and the style of the windows was the first decision.







(top, left) "The space is able to take all of the antiques we have and not feel ponderously traditional," says Laura; (top, right) an old library card catalog index cabinet that Laura picked up from the IU Surplus Stores pays homage to the couple's origins. "We both did our dissertations using these for research," she says. "When I saw it for sale, I bought it sentimentally, not really knowing what we would do with it." Wine bottles turned out to be a perfect fit; (above) the second-story bookshelves are a more recent addition. To fill them, Laura and Michael carried books up the ladder, armload by armload; (left) the view from the loft bedroom. "We liked the idea of the house being industrial in a residential setting," says Michael. The couple worked to find a balance between the use of rougher building components—like metal—and creating a comfortable living space.



Dave Sharp of Sharp Designs, many of the same materials and fixtures are used inside and out. The outdoor balcony, interior stairwell, and bedroom loft are bounded by sturdy goat fencing held in place by speed rail posts.

Closets are closed off with heavy sliding barn doors. Corrugated steel makes an indoor appearance, not only on shower walls but also surrounding the fireplace, which is flanked by impressive, raised bookcases that require a rolling ladder to access.

The demolition process of the old home was painstaking and largely bulldozer-free. While the bulk of the excavated material was donated or given to friends, a few vestiges of the old house—a 1951 Aladdin Pasadena kit home with additions—were preserved. ►



(top) The couple coveted a second-story loft bedroom because they wanted to feel like they were "up in the trees," says Michael. "That's what it feels like," says Laura. "We have a view of the house. The bookcases and paintings feel like they are part of the bedroom."; (right) the couple made consistent fixture and design choices for the bathrooms, including pale blue mosaic floor tile, steel tubing, accent paint colors, and the corrugated metal that was used for the home's exterior. A painting by Laura's uncle hangs in the loft bath; (above) both Laura and Michael work at Indiana University. Michael is the assistant director of content in the Office of Creative Services. Laura is the director of the Scholarly Writing Program. The couple met when they were graduate students in IU's Department of English in 1990.







A wet bar was created from white 1950s-era metal kitchen cabinets (from the home's apartment addition), repainted an orange-red by Bloomington Powder Coating, and topped with old butcher block Laura salvaged years ago. The main kitchen's original wooden cabinets were refashioned into an island, topped by three enormous slabs of Indiana limestone.

The home offers a constant invitation to look up and out, and the couple find their day-to-day living habits have changed. "We move around a lot more here," says Laura. "We've built in places to sit together and read. And it's always interesting to see where people choose to sit when they visit."



(top) The hardware on the heavy barn doors to the closet and bathroom in the master bedroom comes straight from a farm supply store, not some novel design company; (above) the house is decorated with a mix of antiques, several newer furnishings from Relish, and a mulberry paper chandelier called *Anemoi* designed by Jiangmei Wu, an assistant professor of design at IU.



# A Beauty Well-Preserved on 1st Street

BY Elisabeth Andrews

PHOTOGRAPHY BY Kendall Reeves

*This home was featured in Bloom's June/July 2016 Homes Issue.*

Michelle Martin Colman doesn't think of herself as owning the home she shares with her husband, David, on East 1st Street. Nor are they merely caretakers for the striking Spanish Colonial Revival house. A more precise term for the relationship she has to the 1920s' limestone dwelling is that of confidant.

"The house talks about what it likes and dislikes," says Michelle, a former shop owner and etiquette expert who describes herself as a "social entrepreneur." She asserts that the structure welcomes handmade things and shuns mass-produced goods. "I'm careful not to bring in anything too processed," she says.

Accordingly, she and David, a retired attorney, fill the house they have lived in for 35 years with antiques and one-of-a-kind objects. In addition to the home's original rugs and complete set of Harvard Classics (for which the ►







(opposite page and above) The Colman home showcases the skills of its original owner, master limestone carver Harry Donato. The Spanish Colonial façade (opposite page) and the hand-carved fireplace date to 1928.

(left) The back bedroom, a 1940s' addition, overlooks the backyard, providing a private retreat for guests.



built-in dining room bookcase was designed), Michelle has added touches such as a 19th-century mirror her relatives brought over from Hungary and heirloom baby buntings she repurposed as pillow shams. Her kitchen island started life as an obstetric table—she removed the stirrups and added the marble slab that the home's original Italian matriarch, Christina Donato, used for rolling out pasta dough.

The Colmans are only the third owners of the house, which limestone carver Harry Donato designed for his family in 1928. The home features wrought iron-framed ▶





(top) Individual panes of glass fit within each opening of the wrought-iron window frames in David and Michelle Colman's living room, which features the room's original light fixture and rug; (right) the front bathroom retains its 1920s' fixtures and handmade marbled-glass tiles. Visible in the back mirror is the original copper-framed shower door; (above) "The house doesn't really demand much, but it will absorb anything we make available," says David, here with Michelle.





A sunroom, added in the 1940s, looks out over East 1st Street and displays some of Michelle's heirloom fabrics.

arched windows, a hand-carved limestone fireplace, and a vaulted belfry entrance that indeed attracts bats. In between the Donatos and the Colmans, the home belonged to Otto and Alma Henthorn, who ran the eponymous Henthorn Bar in the 1940s and '50s.

Michelle and David have taken great care to maintain the home's historic character, crediting Nashville, Indiana, woodworker Randall O'Donnell, Nasir Jallal of Bloomington's Kashan Rugs, and the experts at Kleindorfer's Hardware and Variety Store with ensuring the home's preservation. The light fixtures are original, aside from the hallway ceiling lights that once hung in a movie theater. Features the Colmans added were chosen to reinforce the sense of history, such as a bathroom sink from the early years of the West Baden Springs Hotel and art deco-style sandblast etchings on the sunroom windows by Nashville artist Timothy Fannin.

Having raised three children in the house (the eldest, Gabriel, runs The Venue Fine Art & Gifts), the Colmans intend to remain in their home as long as possible. In order to make this plan viable in light of the expense and time required to maintain the nearly century-old structure, they have become advocates for changing the zoning laws regarding single-family occupancy.

"I think it would be a great solution for our neighborhood to enable owner-occupiers like us to share their homes with more than one other person," says David. "To age well in place, we're going to need some help."



# An Astounding Adaptation

BY Lee Ann Sandweiss

PHOTOGRAPHY BY Kendall Reeves

*This home was featured in Bloom's June/July 2018 Homes Issue.*

In 1985, when Marsha Herman-Betzen and Keith Betzen told their daughter, Rachel, then 8, they were going to buy a ramshackle, four-story house on 10 wooded acres near Unionville, Indiana, she wept.

Marsha recalls Rachel sobbing, “Why can’t we just live in a normal house?”

From leaky roof to flooded basement, the structure was afflicted with broken windows, unfinished subflooring, frozen pipes, and a tattered tarpaper exterior.

“It didn’t have a kitchen, toilet, ceiling, or walls. But it did have the awful smell of a seven-year party house,” remembers Keith, an inventor and retired veterinarian. “But Marsha and I could see the potential. After 11 months of hard work, with the help of a friend, we were able to make the house livable and financeable.” ▶



The home's floor plan is designed to be accessible, with wide passageways between rooms and seating spaces.





(left) Marsha Herman-Betzen and Keith Betzen radically altered the four-story home they bought and rehabbed in the 1980s so they could age in place; (below) Loren Wood Builders addressed the home's remodel in two phases, the first of which was the kitchen. The wheelchair-accessible space features continuous-grain, quarter-sawn cabinetry by John Stoll of Stoll's Woodworking in Odon, Indiana, cork flooring, and spectacular views of the surrounding woods; (bottom, left) the living room features engineered white oak flooring and a wall of windows, as well as access to the outside deck. Marsha found many of the home's furnishings at Relish before the store closed in October 2017.



Years passed. Rachel grew up in the house and went off to college. Marsha and Keith, now in their late 60s, were still in love with their home's beautiful setting, but they knew the house needed some adaptations if they were going to remain in it.

"Keith grew up in West Texas—the flattest place on earth," says Marsha, who is retired from her position as executive director and CEO of Association of College Unions International, based in Bloomington. "I grew up in a part of New Mexico where the tallest tree was a piñon. We fell in love with the rolling hills and deciduous trees of southern Indiana 32 years ago. Coupled with the quality of life



found in a college town, we knew there was nowhere on earth we would rather be than Bloomington. We discussed moving, but figured, to heck with that. We wanted to figure out a way we could age in our home.”

The couple consulted with Barre Klapper of Springpoint Architects in spring 2016 and drew up a list of priorities for an extensive remodel, including an elevator to access all four floors. Loren Wood Builders took on the project in two phases, the first of which was a reinvention of the kitchen.

Marsha, a passionate cook and baker, is thrilled with her new dream kitchen that features cork flooring and continuous-grain, quarter-sawn white oak cabinets built by John Stoll of Stoll’s Woodworking in Odon, Indiana.

“I wanted the countertops clear and everything hidden, but also maximum efficiency and accessibility,” Marsha explains. “I researched pull-down and pull-up inserts for the cabinet interiors so if, God forbid, I end up in a wheelchair, I can get to everything.” ▶



(top) A bright, welcoming guest room; (right) the renovation’s second phase included removing the home’s roof to create a spacious master suite. A screened-in porch was transformed into a master bathroom with phenomenal views, a heated tile floor, curbless shower, and custom mirrors; (above) Marsha and Keith both have roots in the Southwest and fell in love with the rolling hills and woods of southern Indiana 32 years ago. They were determined to stay on the 10 acres that surrounded their home near Unionville.





In April 2017, with the kitchen complete, the Loren Wood crew began the rest of the home's transformation, a challenging year-long remodel. During the process, part of the roof was torn off to create a stunning master suite with a bathroom that includes a heated tile floor and a curbless shower in a space that had previously been a screened-in porch. Windows were switched out and more were added to enhance the spectacular views. A floor was raised, the elevator installed, and extra-wide doorways built throughout. Whenever possible, the new construction incorporated repurposed materials from the 1980s' version of the home, including original red oak floor joists.

"We couldn't be more delighted," Marsha says. "We wanted to bring the outside in. Barre's design and Loren's crew made that happen." ✨

(top) Loren Wood Builders raised a portion of the floor to make the master bedroom one level and created a walk-in closet and elevator access. Every window on this floor was replaced, and many were added throughout the entire home; (above) the dining area with a spectacular view. One of the goals was to make the surrounding scenery a feature that accentuates the minimalist interior and brings the outside in.