

curb appeal



"THIS IS A CLASSIC—AND ORIGINAL—MID-CENTURY HOME PROFILE," SUSAN SAYS. "WE KEPT THE 1958 FOOTPRINT AND ARCHITECTURAL LINES, RETAINING THE MID-CENTURY EFFECT YOU SEE FROM THE STREET, INCLUDING THE ORIGINAL ENTRY, FIREPLACE AND FRONT AND CLERESTORY WINDOW LAYOUT, THOUGH THE WINDOWS THEMSELVES ARE NEW."

Leaning In

Standout curb appeal is sometimes about blending in.

By **Jickie Torres** | Photo by **Sarah Shields**

Susan's Tips for Creating Curb Appeal

"If the home reflects the people who live there and whatever is beautiful and interesting about them, it will draw you in," Susan says. "A great home, including its curb appeal, has all the things the best humans have: depth, texture, intrigue, light and lightness, color, whimsy and warmth."

1. Landscaping does wonders. Invest in it—including a landscape designer—to frame the home, add interest and whimsy and color, and highlight elements of the exterior you want to showcase.
2. Choose local, low-maintenance siding to support local business and minimize your footprint and your investment of time and money over the long run, maintaining and replacing cheaper materials.
3. Your home is yours, right now in the 21st century—not a museum from 60 or 75 or 150 years ago. Our needs and lifestyles change. It's ok to nod respectfully to the past, but depart mindfully.

Situated just east of Indiana University in Bloomington, Indiana, this 1958 home has only had three owners, and the second one owned it just long enough to paint the dark-red exterior black, build an addition, upgrade some finishes and resell it to the current owner.

"In 2020, the home was purchased from flippers by a Bloomington native who had long lived in New York City, but wanted a landing spot back in her hometown," says Susan Yeley, creative director and owner of the residential design studio Susan Yeley Homes. "She remembered [the home] well from her childhood, when it belonged to her mother's best friend."

Hiring Susan and her team to design and manage the renovation and fill the home with furniture and art, the new owner and steward of this mid-century gem undertook an extensive remodel inside and out, but the team agreed they should keep the original architectural lines.

To highlight the home's mid-mod appeal in a neighborhood full of mid-century-era homes, many of which were being renovated, Susan and her team took cues from the home's positioning on the site and its relationship to the landscape. "The house sits some 30 or 40 yards back from the street and is framed by a couple of beautiful old trees. Insofar as we liked that the house naturally receded, we chose to lean into that effect and finish the exterior in natural and dark materials: thermally modified poplar and black trim complement the original limestone," Susan says. "The iconic mid-century architecture of the structure is the headliner, rather than any element of color or accent. Thanks to the architecture and the receding finishes, the door is hidden from the curb and therefore presents as a bit of an adventure: You have to discover the entry. It draws you in as you progress up the tree-lined drive toward the entry and inside to the more intimate spaces of the home."

Inspired by such MCM greats as Alexander Girard, Susan Yeley Homes has a penchant for color, texture and intrigue. Just an hour from Bloomington is Columbus, Indiana, home to mid-century architecture, design and landscaping by the likes of Eliel and Eero Saarinen, I.M. Pei, Richard Meier, Cesar Pelli and Dan Kiley. Inside this particular home, you'll find pieces by Eero Saarinen, Hans Wegner, Finn Juhl, Paul McCobb and Adrian Pearsall." 🌿