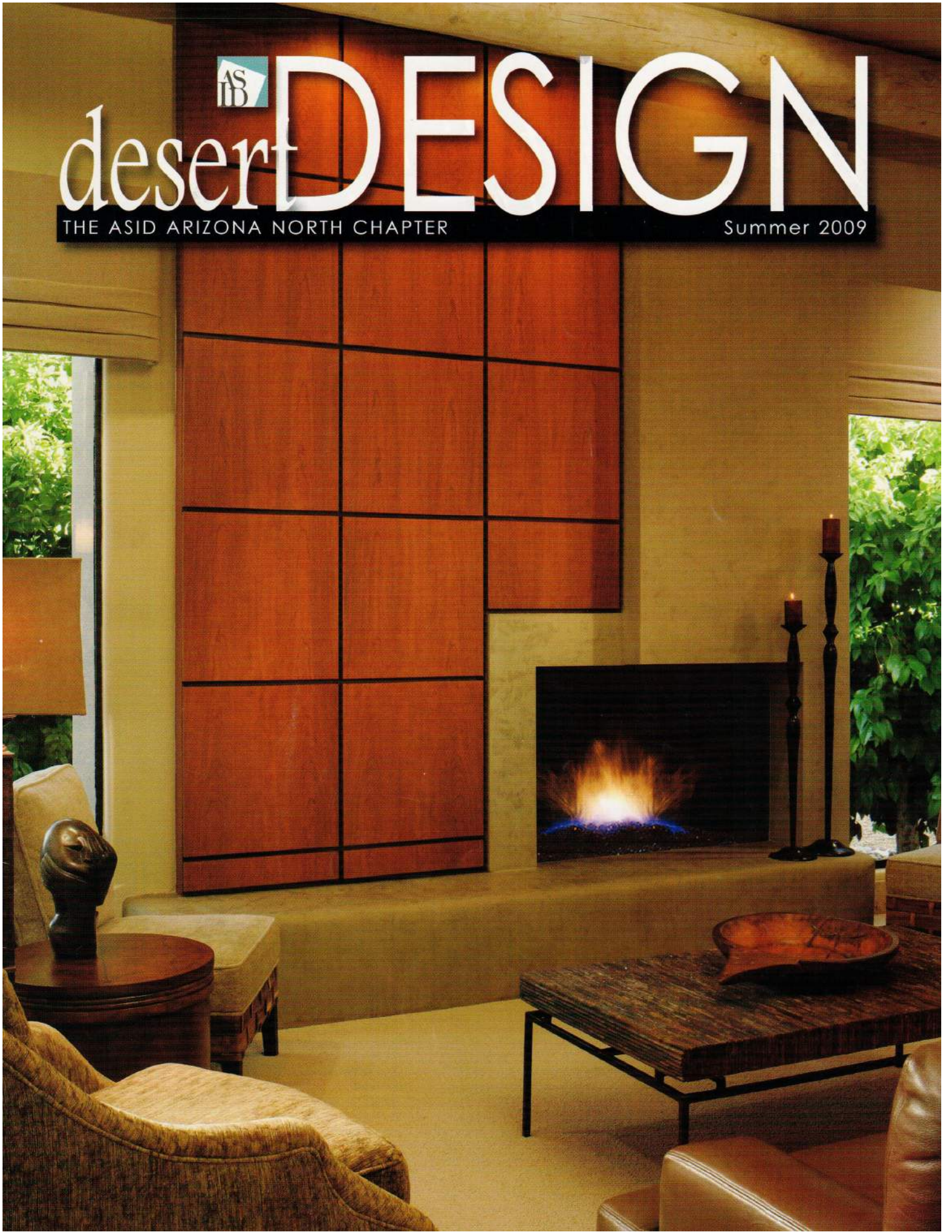


# desert DESIGN

THE ASID ARIZONA NORTH CHAPTER

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# Mid-Century Modern Window Treatments — *Bess* IS **More**

By Karen Barnes, Industry Partner of ASID, CWP, WCAA, WFCP

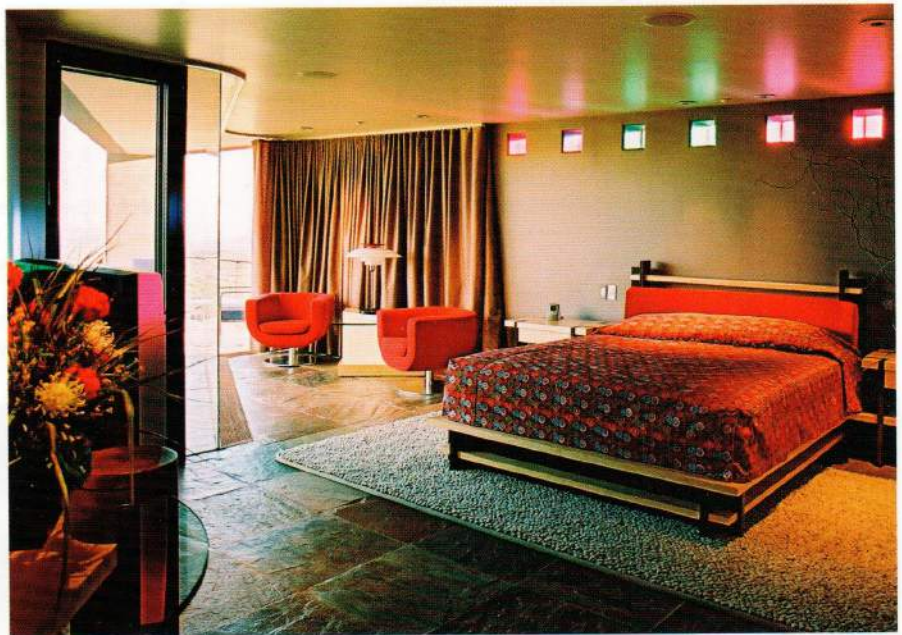


After World War II, the design world dusted off its shoulders and decided that change was necessary. Architects began to abandon the way of the box and add a more organic touch to residential architecture, blending the linear and geometric elements from the Bauhaus and International movements and the organic, natural design theories by Frank Lloyd Wright. This marriage of design ideas gave birth to the style commonly known as Mid-Century Modern.

Technological advances from the war were implemented in the new designs



Roman shades in a Mid Century Modern home designed by Anita Lang of Interior Motives, Inc. Photography by Dino Tonn.



Here is a Ripplefold drapery designed by Eric Bron, ASID. It is on a motorized rod – the rod extends around the triangle shaped room so the drapery can close for privacy. Interior design by Eric Bron, ASID, Bron Design Group, Phoenix, AZ

with molded plywood and plastics, fiberglass, aluminum, and lightweight construction materials. Mass-production abilities used for the war were given new purpose in producing classic furniture pieces for the people using these new materials.

In the residential building arena, California-- most notably Palm Springs-- embraced this new design wave to the point that it is now a popular stopping point for architecture enthusiasts and curious travelers alike with the "Sinatra-esque" feel connected to the style. Entering the stage in Arizona were designers such as Ralph Haver and Charles Schreiber who contributed to the atomic revolution by designing homes in this new style.

These mid-century homes boasted large picture windows, low-pitched

roofs, and open floor plans. The open floor plans accommodated the social atmosphere of the age, integrating several living spaces into one. This idea is still popular today in home design.

The windows allowed the outdoors to become part of the indoors by visually joining the spaces. The post-and-beam construction allowed for entire walls of windows.

While the design style has been admired and appreciated for over half a century, recently it has seen a heralded revitalization. Today, people are looking for the simplicity of the 50's with the conveniences of today. One of the most desired elements of mid-century modern home design are the large windows. Purists of Mid-Century Modern décor will leave the

windows untreated except for window film to help cut down UV rays, heat and glare.

Window treatments for a Mid-Century Modern home are desired when an area of the home requires privacy, such as a bedroom, or to eliminate the feeling of staring into a dark abyss at night. The important thing to remember when choosing window treatments for these homes is that the emphasis remains on the open window, not the dressing of it. Window treatments should be kept simple and discreet in order to allow the architecture of the home and the natural elements of the modern design take the spotlight. So choose simple pinch pleated or Ripplefold draperies, Roman or roller shades, panel tracks or grommet top draperies. A layer of sheers underneath a functioning over-drapery will diffuse the light and soften the feel of the room.

Windows in Mid-Century Modern design are usually very large and often will extend from wall to wall. If they don't, consider putting draperies along the entire wall. This creates a greater sense of space...and the draperies will have plenty of room to stack off the glass. Motorization is a smart choice for these large window treatments.

Clerestory windows are often designed for Mid-Century Modern homes. These windows are placed at ceiling level around the edge of the room. This is a very effective way to bring in natural light into a room without sacrificing

privacy. Clerestory windows should be left untreated, except for window film. If there is a large picture window below it, that window can be treated separately with a functioning drapery.

The fabrics chosen for these window treatments should reflect the organic aspect of the era. Choose natural fibers such as linen, silk and cotton. If a patterned fabric is desired, choose motifs that include nature (branches, leaves, etc.) done in a modern, abstract style or geometric patterns.

**About Karen Barnes:**

Karen Barnes is the owner of The Elegant Window, a custom drapery workroom serving the design trade exclusively. Karen was recently awarded "Workroom of the Year" by Window Fashions Vision magazine.



She has won numerous awards for high quality workmanship and the execution of window fashion designs. Karen is a Certified Workroom Professional and is a Window Fashions Certified Professional, Specialist. She is also proud to be an ASID Industry Partner. For more information, visit [www.elegantwindow.com](http://www.elegantwindow.com)

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