

THE EXTERIOR

In our multipart series, interior designer **Rosa Beltran** takes us through the 10-month complete reno of her 1936 Craftsman bungalow in Los Angeles. We start outside.



When I found this rundown bungalow in the artsy neighborhood of Silver Lake, it was just what I was hoping for: something so ugly that it would scare off everyone but me. As a newly divorced single mom, I needed a deal; as a designer, I could see past its shabby facade. Plus, it had a flat lot with plenty of room for my son, Benicio, to run and play, and that's tough to find in this hilly neighborhood. My vision was to freshen the Craftsman house with a modern farmhouse twist, but I didn't want it to look brand-new even though the place needed an extensive renovation. I decided to live here for two months before starting so I could really understand what to keep and what had to go. I also realized I could save money by becoming my own contractor—a first for me—which meant I had to be the quality control person while also managing the schedule, budget, and crew.



✂ CURB APPEAL Hedges blocked the house and drew attention to an old garden wall. I replaced the hedges with lantana, a plant I saw growing wild on the side of the highway. I figured if it could grow there, it could grow anywhere. White flowers now spill over the wall.



My design business is in town, so I knew I had a network I could count on. I trusted my gut and made the leap. We took the house down to the studs and reworked it to create an open floor plan that feels larger than its 1,400 square feet.

The grounds had been just as neglected, and it was hard to see the house hiding behind overgrown hedges and trees. I kept the cinder block retaining wall and original entry gate, but everything else got the boot. It made me a little sad to take out the redwood tree planted close to the front of the house. (A previous owner had topped it with hopes that it might flourish, but it never did.) But I replaced it with a pair of olive trees, and now we get so much more light. That was my goal for the whole project—to lighten and brighten the house but stay true to the original spirit. I wanted it to look and feel perfectly aged and comfy, like a family home that has known years of love, because that's how we intend to live in it.



my son, Benicio

During the 10 months it took to remake the house, Benicio was in kindergarten. At the start, we drew our names in the concrete foundation.

ROOF

Thick asphalt shingles from GAF resemble more expensive slate or wood shingles at a lower cost.

SIDING

Weather-, rot-, and pest-resistant fiber-cement siding by Nichiha replaced the original wood siding.

WINDOWS

Black aluminum-clad windows with Plaza pattern grilles by Windsor Windows update the look.

PAINT

Benjamin Moore Chantilly Lace (OC-65) looks crisp under blue skies and in lots of sun. I loved it so much that I used it on the interior rooms too.

FRONT DOOR

I chose fir wood for the Simpson 6801 Craftsman door. The clear finish and two-panel design plays off the wood decking.

GET THE LOOK

I chose these pieces for a mix of Craftsman and modern farmhouse style.



WALL SCONCE

Atwell 1110DZ outdoor by Hinkley Lighting in Aged Zinc, \$269; build.com

123

HOUSE NUMBERS

Distinctions by Hillman 5" Floating Mount in black, \$7-\$19; amazon.com



ROCKING CHAIR

Laci in Natural Brown acacia wood, \$157; wayfair.com



DOOR HANDLE

Hanover Solid Bronze Entrance Set with Lever Handle, \$470; signaturehardware.com

Next month
We'll look at the living room and sunroom that bookend Rosa's new open-plan interior.

✂ BACKYARD

The rear of the house had a poorly built addition that wasn't structurally sound, so I had to tear it off and start over. Removing it also gave me a chance to add French doors to my bedroom and the sunroom, changing the way the indoor and outside spaces relate.

■ **FURNITURE** I wanted it to feel like a living room—well-appointed and cozy. I set up multiple seating areas and chose pale finishes that will stay cool under the hot sun.

■ **LANDSCAPING** Keeping all the plantings within a monochromatic palette helped me get a cohesive look. Deep into Pinterest, I realized I loved shades of green with white florals, so that's what I stuck to.



before



1 || THE TREE
I could have built a larger addition and patio but not without sacrificing an 80-year-old white mulberry tree. Instead I designed the backyard around it and enjoy the shade it provides. I named the home Mulberry House after it.

2 || THE COLORS
For the English-meets-Mediterranean look I love, I layered shades of weathered gray: the stained basket-weave fence I designed, the rustic concrete patio, and the teak table and chairs, which naturally weathered to a soft gray.

3 || THE FIRE PIT
California's temperate climate allows us to use our backyard most of the year. I had a gas line run to the 8-foot fire pit where Benicio and I spend weekends roasting marshmallows for s'mores. I topped four rusty old chairs with comfy cushions to lounge in.

4 || THE GROUND
In place of grass, I wanted low-maintenance pea gravel, but weeds always seem to end up peeking through. To avoid needing landscape fabric, we scraped the lot, watered it, and killed any weeds that sprouted.

5 || THE PLANTS
Everything looks good at a nursery, but to find plants that would thrive in my yard, I walked around and took notes on what was doing well in my neighbors' yards. The winners were boxwood, lavender, rosemary, and westringia. ■

LIVING SPACES

In the second part of our series, interior designer **Rosa Beltran** does what some would consider the unthinkable—tearing out original house features—to create a modern living room and sunroom in her Los Angeles home.



*M*y 1936 California Craftsman had that charming old-house style—formal rooms with built-ins, a fireplace, and cove molding—but the layout wasn't working for me. The house is 1,400 square feet, and the little rooms felt extra tight. I knew tearing out walls would give me the indoor-outdoor flow I was going for, but it also meant taking out the fireplace. That's a solution most people wouldn't consider, but for me, the open space was totally worth it. It's important to think about how you want to live. So we replaced load-bearing walls with structural beams to create one long room with the living room at the front, a sunroom at the back, and a kitchen in the middle.

It could have easily turned into a new-construction drywall box, but I wanted the house to feel like a restored 1930s home. So



✂ COMEONIN There's no foyer in these old houses. You open the front door and there you are, right in the living room. So I set up the furniture and the rug to make a walkway. The sofa faces a dresser that's also a



PAINT
Benjamin Moore Chantilly Lace (OC-65) paint covers the ceiling and every wall—inside and out.

BEAMS
The faux beams are hollow boxes made by mitering together 2x6 fir planks.

SEATING
The counter stools don't have backs, so people can face toward the living room.

HISTORY
I always bring in something with age to add character. Here it's the vintage side table.

FLOORING
Gray stain makes common white oak look modern.



in the living room, I added architectural detail with faux exposed beams and shiplap siding in the TV nook. I designed the sunroom to feel like a porch that had been enclosed at some point in the past 80 years—a vaulted ceiling, board-and-batten on the walls, and a brick floor make it feel like you're stepping into a different space. Instead of re-creating built-ins, I realized I could add more personality with furniture. And because the rooms are still small, all the pieces have to work hard. In the living room, for example, I chose the biggest sleeper sofa that would fit from my line Clad Home, and in the sunroom bookcases double as a spot to prop art for a rotating gallery wall. I used every inch to get exactly what I wanted—a place to relax and enjoy family time.

one long room

Removing the fireplace wall opened up space for the kitchen peninsula. Now from the front door, you can see the backyard through the sunroom's French doors.

GET THE LOOK

The black window trim and my desire for an airy look led me to a wire-frame pendant. The cage design comes in other styles too.



CONICAL DRUM PENDANT

Antique Bronze and White shade, \$429 (16" diameter); rejuvenation.com



BE SQUARED PENDANT

Bronze, \$198 (17" wide); shadesoflight.com



MADISON ENTRY PENDANT

Bronze, \$250 (18" wide); lampsplus.com



LOFT SHADE CHANDELIER

Dark Iron, \$419 (19½" diameter); shadesoflight.com



THE FULTON LANTERN LIGHT FROM *BUILD.COM* REPEATS THE CEILING SLOPE.

✂ INSTANT

At some point while searching Pinterest for inspiration, I realized I had pinned a lot of herringbone brick floors. That's when you know you're onto something—if an idea strikes you again and again. I got the look in my sunroom with Arto Brick, which is made here in Los Angeles. It's actually a concrete tile that looks like old brick, but it's more durable than real brick. I wanted the floor to look soulful and handmade and full of character, which made my type-A tile setter crazy. He's a perfectionist, so I had to constantly remind him that I was going for rustic and a little uneven—that the imperfections make it interesting.



it had to go

The original sunroom was a tacked-on shack with low ceilings. It didn't have a proper foundation, and the whole thing was tilting. I tore it off and rebuilt in almost the same footprint.

“THE SUNROOM IS A LIBRARY ON ONE SIDE, LOUNGING SPACE ON THE OTHER.” ROSA BELTRAN

Next month

We'll zoom in on the space between Rosa's living room and sunroom—the storage-filled kitchen.



WHEN YOUR MOTHER IS A LIBRARIAN...

you grow up with a lot of books. I was set on keeping up the tradition by having a little library.

STUDY SPOT

I made a desk from two file cabinets and a countertop so my son can do his homework while I read.

BOOKSHELVES

I cobbled together four vintage barrister cabinets. They were different depths and heights, but modification was pretty simple. An oak top ties them together. I spent about \$1,000 on the bookshelves, about half the price (and twice the character) of a custom piece. ■

THE KITCHEN

In the third part of our series, interior designer **Rosa Beltran** takes on her kitchen reno and talks mix-and-match finishes (a do), storage (extra drawers, please), and a floor plan that maximizes space (two peninsulas instead of an island).



From the very start of this renovation, my goal was to modernize and open up the floor plan of our 1936 California Craftsman. That meant tearing out some walls, and the thing you learn pretty quickly when you lose walls—especially in a kitchen—is that you need to be mindful about planning storage and function alongside style. Where the original kitchen walls were located, I placed two peninsulas. This layout creates a U-shape work space that lets me cook while my son sits at the counter on one side or friends relax on the banquette built into the other.

The focal point is a 1950s stove I found on Craigslist. I bought it from an 80-year-old woman who had cooked on it her whole life and babied it. The stove was in perfect condition and a steal at \$300, and the white enamel and chrome worked with my modern farmhouse vision. I centered it on the main wall and traded one large window for two tall, narrow ones in order to top the stove with a big vent hood and backsplash. I chose white for everything



A NEW VIEW Before, the sink was under a window that looked out at a too-close house next door. With a better view in mind, I moved the sink to the peninsula that replaced the original back wall, *above*. Now I can see out to the backyard garden when I'm washing dishes.



between the peninsulas: paint, counters, stove, apron-front sink, backsplash, cabinets. I didn't want the eye to get hung up on a busy backsplash tile or a countertop that would define the size and shape of the kitchen. White keeps the flow going.

I used IKEA flat-pack cabinets upgraded with Shaker-style doors and drawer fronts from Semihandmade, a company that makes doors and trim for IKEA cabinetry. On the opposite wall, a floor-to-ceiling breakfront mimics one you might have found in homes a hundred years ago. But designing this wall was tricky. I stacked two stock upper cabinets on top of deep base cabinets. To give the stock cabinets a built-in look, I added trim to cover a gap at the top and painted it to match the cabinets. I thought about painting these accent cabinets black for high contrast then decided, **Let's live a little and go green!** Green cabinets were a first for me, but I love how they help bring the outside in.



✂ PERSONALIZED STORAGE

I'm not a fan of lazy Susan corner cabinets. They don't hold much, and some are flimsy. I replaced mine with deep, solid shelves that hold small appliances.



DISHES

My plates, glasses, and serving pieces are all clear glass or white ceramic, so they look cohesive displayed behind glass doors.

PANTRY

Drawers next to the refrigerator hold boxed and canned foods.

BAR

Barware, liquor, and large pantry items are above the fridge.

POTS AND PANS

Cookware, baking dishes, and mixing bowls go in peninsula drawers. I love drawers in the kitchen; they're workhorses.

GET THE LOOK

I chose hardware with exposed rivets and pendants that mimic galvanized metal to evoke a utilitarian vibe.



CABINET HARDWARE

Window latches give my cabinet doors industrial style. Casement Window Lock in brushed nickel, \$35; rejuvenation.com



DRAWER PULL

Rochdale Cabinet Pull in brushed nickel, \$8; signaturehardware.com



PENDANT LIGHT

Industrial Era Task Large with pewter shade, \$289 (12½" D); rhubabyandchild.com

Next month

In our final installment, we'll look at the bedrooms and bathrooms and see how the floor plan evolved.



NOT-SO-FORMAL DINING ROOM

We live informally, so when we want a quick bite, we sit at the counter. When we sit down for a family meal, we usually go to the patio in the backyard. Still, there's always a need for a table and chairs. Here's how I squeezed a dining room into the floor plan.

- **NO COUNTER OVERHANG** We didn't need counter seating at both of the peninsulas, so I designed one without an overhang to free a little room for a dining area.
- **FREESTANDING FURNITURE** I had benches custom made (through my company, Clad Home) to have flat backs so they snug tight against the walls. They take advantage of every inch, seating six or seven—more if we're talking my son's friends.



1 || FLOOR

To avoid choppiness, gray-stained white oak floors flow from the front door through the rear dining area. They are slowly weathering, bolstering my philosophy to live and let wear happen.

2 || FURNISHINGS

The light finish on the table and chairs complements the light floors for a cohesive look. The way it blends—rather than contrasts—helps the space appear a bit bigger than it is.

3 || FAUCET

With the sink set in one of the peninsulas, the faucet is on full display the minute you walk in the door. I splurged on this bridge faucet that has extra height and plenty of vintage-inspired style.

4 || UPHOLSTERY

Fabric used where messes happen has to be cleanable, so I chose a durable polyester for the banquette. Outdoor fabric is another great choice, or pretreat fabric with Scotchgard.

5 || FINISHES

I didn't get hung up on matching. You'll find black window frames and shelf brackets, iron hardware, galvanized pendants, and a polished-nickel faucet. The mix makes it interesting. ■

BEDROOMS & BATHS

In the last of our four-part series, designer **Rosa Beltran** shares the secrets and swaps that made it possible to rework a pair of bedrooms and baths and add a storage-filled hallway to her newly opened-up bungalow.



FRINGED LIGHT
COTTON TASSELS
ADD SOFTNESS
AND TEXTURE.

There's rarely a hallway in old homes like my 1936 bungalow—you walk through one room to get to the next. So I knew my remodel would mean reimagining the layout. I designed my new floor plan as a rectangle divided by a central hall. The open kitchen and living spaces are on one side; the bedrooms and baths are on the other side for privacy. For my room, I wanted a retreat, so I layered it with neutral colors and natural materials like the raw linen window treatments. The centerpiece is the mossy green velvet bed I designed for my store, Clad Home. More soft greens come in through the vintage Turkish rug. I like that it has a subtle pattern that's a little bit worn. I bought it through an Etsy store that connected me directly to a market in Turkey that let me ask questions and see lots of pictures before picking one. Bonus: Buying that way costs about a third of what you might spend at a showroom.



STAY THE COURSE The lot was zoned for a larger house, but I chose to stay close to the original footprint and add charm—like French doors that open to my bedroom patio—rather than sizing up much.



SPLASH GUARD
THE DOOR SWINGS
OPEN ON HINGES
SO I CAN REACH
THE CONTROLS.

**SINGLE SINK
COUNTER
SPACE IS MORE
VALUABLE IN A
SMALL BATH.**



I sacrificed a little size in my bathroom to have more closet space, and it's a trade I'd make again and again. To give the illusion that the bathroom is bigger, I used a glass splash guard instead of a full shower door, and I hung a wall-mount vanity instead of a freestanding one. Slabs of quartz with dramatic veining and handmade tiles in the shower echo the organic look in my bedroom.

My son Benicio's bedroom maintained its original footprint and bay window. I added a window seat with storage drawers to hold his toys and costumes. He was involved with the decisions in his bedroom and his bathroom, which also serves as a hall bath for guests. I bought the claw-foot tub on Craigslist and hired a pro to reglaze the inside, then Benny and I worked together to fix it up. We sanded the outside to knock down the rust and painted it black. We left the feet rusty as a reminder of how far we've come—both the house and us.

BIG STYLE, SMALL SPACES

My master suite includes a walk-in closet and a small but upgraded bath.

■ VINTAGE LOOK

Let fixtures define the style. The bridge faucet has that 1930s old-house look I love. So does the showerhead with its valve and exposed pipes.

■ SURPRISE TOUCH

If something makes you happy, give it to yourself even if it's a departure. I went for Moroccan floor tile in my bathroom and wallpaper in my closet.

■ STORAGE FOR IT ALL

I built out the closet with an Elfa system from The Container Store. I'm crazy for the flat jewelry trays.



✂ **SUBTLY
THEMED**

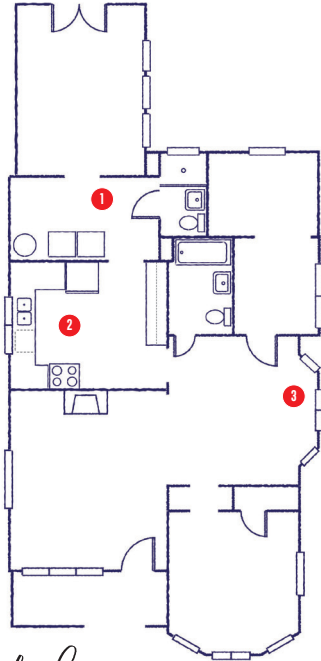
Benicio's room started with a vintage Hudson's Bay point blanket and grew into a cabin look he loves.

■ **COLOR PALETTE**

Taking color notes from the blanket, I painted the spindle bed green, repeated the black with the plaid rug, and brought in touches of red in the window seat cushion and Roman shades.

■ **TRAVEL ART**

The map has stickers marking everywhere we've been. We live in earthquake country, so there's no glass in the frame. I tacked the map up and secured trim pieces to the wall.



before Lots of walls, small rooms, and uninspired views, but I thought, *I can fix this.*



after I opted against a partial wall separating the sunroom so there's a sight line from front to back.

[FLOOR PLAN]

BIG CHANGES

As a designer, I was excited to make this once run-down house my own open, modern home. I got a crash course in being a contractor, but I figured if there was a time to take that on and learn the ropes, it was on my own project.

1 || DEMO

The badly built back addition was a teardown. We dug trenches and poured a new foundation.

2 || OPEN UP

The original walls made the living areas feel cramped. I replaced them with support beams.

3 || EXPAND

I gained bathroom space by extending the exterior wall out to where the bay window had been.

4 || RELOCATE

Moving a closet from the front bedroom to the hall let me recess a TV in its old alcove.

5 || DIVIDE

A new hallway increased privacy between the bedrooms and the open public spaces.

6 || COMBINE

Two bedrooms, two baths, and a laundry area with plenty of storage are in one wing.



BENICIO'S BATH I covered the walls in wide shiplap and hung an oval ceiling-mount shower curtain rod. We can pull the curtain around the tub 360 degrees to take a shower. For the vanity, I bought a vintage dresser and cut it down a few inches then topped it with quartz and an undermount sink. It seems like it could have been original to the house. Narrow terra-cotta tiles give the floor the look of copper that has taken on a patina over time.

GET THE LOOK

I chose to upgrade the basics. It's a small move that really elevates the design.



LIGHT SWITCHES

Legrand Whisper Switch in White, \$10, and Legrand Adorne Cast Metal Wall Plate in Brushed Brass, from \$38; build.com



MASTER BEDROOM WINDOW TREATMENTS

Linen-cotton with the look of raw linen. Riverhead in Marble by Jaclyn Smith, \$39/yard; calicocorners.com



REGISTER COVER

Oversized Antique Cast Iron Wall Register in Black, \$59; signaturehardware.com



THE CENTER HALL

HIDDEN UTILITIES

I put a stackable washer and dryer in the hall along with a big counter for folding. The cabinetry holds a pair of pullout hampers, a broom and vacuum closet, linens, and other storage.

LIGHT SOURCE

The 9½-foot-high ceilings meant I was able to install vintage-style transom windows above the doors to both bedrooms and baths so natural light can flow into the hallway.

That's a wrap

Here are a few things I learned along the way: **TAKE RISKS** I got rid of a fireplace, bay window, and some serious molding to create a fresh, functional plan. It was worth it. **PLAN THE DETAILS** An open floor plan means losing walls, finding new ways to store things, and choosing materials and finishes that work together. **BUILD IN HISTORY** Nothing makes a house feel more like a home than an old Craigslist find or a handmade Etsy item. I even drove my tile setter crazy choosing tiles with uneven surfaces and slightly different tones to achieve an aged look. Quirk adds character. ■