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# DESIGNED TO RENT

Homeowners of a 1957 Alexander/Krisel home give an inside perspective on getting an MCM home to be a vacation rental.

By Jolene Nolte • Photography by Oscar Flink

Pops of chartreuse, yellow and blue add a sense of carefree, mid-century vibrancy that makes the 1957 Krisel home feel more like a fun vacation home. Concrete floors are eminently practical for the wear and tear of guests coming and going.





**FOR RANDI MEREL AND HER HUSBAND ALLEN LEHEW,** finding a home in the Little Beverly Hills neighborhood of Palm Springs was just the beginning. The couple is based in Chicago and loves the Palm Springs MCM style and vibe. When they bought a 1957 home built by the Alexander Construction Company with William Krisel as the architect, it met all their criteria: Krisel-designed, with clerestory windows and floor to ceiling glass for stunning views and that classic indoor-outdoor feel. However, being based in Chicago, they were only able to use the home for a few weeks per year. In addition to a vacation home, it became an investment as a vacation rental property, dubbed West Elm House 1, the Alexander.

**BUILD ON AN MCM FOUNDATION**

If your vacation home rental is in a Mid Century Modern Mecca like Palm Springs, then making sure your home reflects that is the first layer. The previous owners had recently renovated, and so their job was to furnish it and make it vacation-rental worthy. Randi decorates with a mix of old and reproduction. It's important for her that the design pays homage to the location but also can stand up to the wear and tear of heavy use. Her furniture is a mix of reliable stylish finds from West Elm, Bludot, and Mitchell Gold + Bob Williams with some MCM minded new picks from Moodway and Modernica. She used FLOR for some of her high-traffic areas because of its durability and ease of maintenance. "I was really impressed because I picked my patterns online and when they arrived they were exactly as pictured—the colors looked just like they did onscreen," she says.



**top:** In addition to appeal and comfort, the furniture needs to be durable, especially if it's outdoors. Notice as well that while the landscape creates a natural border around the conversation area, there are no prickly cactus in this central spot.

**above:** The canvas sail provides welcome shade from the desert sun and an ideal spot for lounging and conversation while also being able to keep an eye on kids in the pool. The bright turquoise and yellow adds to the carefree vacation feel.





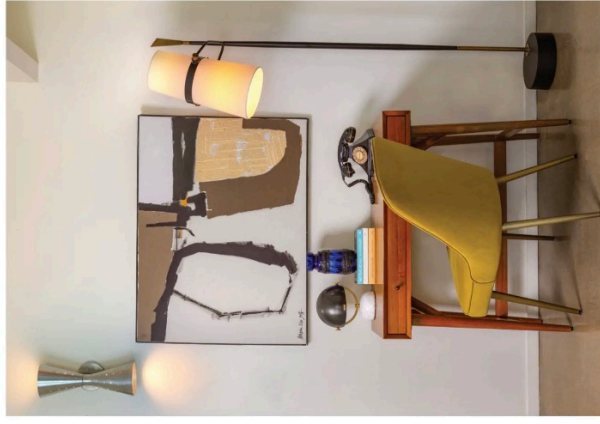
Randi recently updated the rugs in some key rooms with FLOR carpet tiles. She was in search of something that was durable and easy to care for and was drawn to elevated modernist style of this, Tailored Touch pattern for the living room.

Even if you don't live in Palm Springs or a location similarly known for its Mid Century Modern style, the aesthetic will still draw visitors who much prefer the clean lines, good vibes and great design of the mid-century rather than the unremarkable style of most hotels or rentals.

**CREATE A READY FOR ANYTHING EXTERIOR**

If someone is renting an entire home for their vacation, there will likely be many people. On vacation, "people really are looking for an indoor-outdoor experience," Randi says. Make sure to accommodate that by having several outdoor zones that serve for mingling and retreat, dining, relaxing and playing. Also, make sure your exterior is ready for the variety of weather. For instance, Randi has outdoor fans installed on her home's outdoor porch and used artificial grass sparingly since that gets hotter than natural grass in the summer. Fire pits are also appealing for cold desert nights. Make sure there are plenty of shaded areas for shelter from the sun.

A stylish desk is one of those practical amenities that's simple to have but offers a well-appointed and well lit place for guests working remotely.



**BE PRACTICAL**

When it comes to furniture, Randi says that you be aware that no one is going to treat the home with the same care you will. "People will lay on the sofa like it's a bed. People will put their feet on a cocktail table," Randi says. So, Randi suggests, opt for consignment store furniture, monitor Facebook Marketplace or shop for replicas. "Make sure you don't have an emotional attachment to anything," she says. You also want to keep in mind the variety of people who may be staying there. Is it kid friendly? Beware of hard edges on your furniture and the placement of prickly cactus in your landscaping. Is everything durable? Also, keep in mind that you might have quick "turns," when one group checks out and another checks in, potentially even the same day. Can everything in the house be easily cleaned or swapped out quickly to accommodate quick turns?

Randi actually keeps extra tiles of her FLOR rugs on-hand so that any stained sections can be quickly swapped out for the next guest while the stained tile is cleaned.

