

# REMODELISTA

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## Before the Auction: Inside Designer Cliff Fong's Los Angeles Home

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[Cliff Fong](#) likes change. In fact, the interior designer and [Matt Blacke Inc.](#) founder craves a fresh start every so often. He even admits to having a slight aversion to complacency, which is precisely why [he decided to let Bonhams auction off](#) nearly all the furniture and artworks in his 1953 ranch-style Los Angeles house.



“A lot of the material I’ve had for over 20 years and brought to three different homes,” explains Cliff, whose high-profile clients include Ryan Murphy and Ellen DeGeneres. “And I just felt it was time to do something a little different. I will always love these historically important design pieces...but I’m very careful not to become too comfortable with certain kinds of defaults. I would like to explore a different perspective.”

In the past, Cliff would have answered the itch for a scenery shift by moving to a new place, but he couldn’t seem to leave his current mid-century abode behind. Every time he toured another property, he realized it couldn’t live up to the quirky-yet-streamlined interiors and lush surrounds he already had. So he decided to purge the home’s contents instead.

While Cliff has already moved on to the next chapter of his house (the Bonhams auction took place last month), he recently took a trip down memory lane and reviewed its first iteration with us. Let’s take a look.



Above: Before Cliff purchased his 2,400-square-foot LA home in 2016, it was owned by an architect who made compelling updates like the funky asymmetrical skylight in the entryway. Cliff put his own stamp on the place by replacing the dark mahogany floors with light gray cement and installing contemporary doors and windows. “There was a lot of stripping of finishes to minimize the amount of different materials that were here,” he says. “I basically landed on something that felt concrete and glass dominant, which ended up working out really nicely.”



Above: Cliff also added a series of built-in shelves to accommodate his collection of design reference books, which he kept out of the auction. The vintage Børge Mogensen black leather Embassy sofa and Jean Royère cream mohair Trèfle armchair, however, were sold.



Above: To create a sense of privacy and coziness, Cliff used a Jean Prouvé sun shutter to separate the dining and living areas. “Even though it’s a smaller house, when I walked into the front of it, I felt like too much was immediately being revealed, so I wanted to make it a little more intimate and less open,” he says.





Above: In the dining zone, Cliff paired a Charlotte Perriand three-legged table with a trio of Les Arcs stools by the same designer, a Joe Goode charcoal drawing, and a Jean Prouvé armoire that served as his young son's toy chest. He parted with all of those items but opted to keep the brushed aluminum Faye Toogood Roly-Poly chair.



Above: One of Cliff's three dogs lounges on a Charlotte Perriand daybed.





Above: Even Cliff's bedroom, which he once decorated with art by Gonzalo Lebrija and Lita Albuquerque, is almost empty now. "After 20 years, some things just have too much meaning, too many memories, or too many reference points," he reasons. "It's just nice to clear your head and to stop carrying all the history with me all the time. I just need to let go of some stuff in order to evolve a little bit creatively."



Above: Cliff didn't sell the original Le Corbusier dresser in his closet, which was the inspiration for the built-in quarter-sawn oak units that he added around it. "The piece is very functional, and I have too many clothes, so I can't really get rid of any storage," he says.



Above: The ornate black-and-gold secretary is another keeper. “That has been in my family for quite some time,” Cliff says. “It was actually a gift from my mother when she closed up that last house. It has been in my son’s room for a few years, and I just brought it into my bedroom. That’s a piece that will always remain in the family.”



Above: The main reason Cliff chose to stay in this house is the jungle-like backyard he developed, which is complete with a koi pond, a steel shade structure, a Louis Poulsen copper artichoke pendant, and a variety of wild flora. “I have jasmine blooming and the wisteria is just coming in,” he says. “I’ve got about 400 species of orchids, which is a bit of an obsession and a passion of mine. It’s always fun seeing things grow. And when you get these beautiful flowers, honestly, nothing makes me happier than being out in my garden on a weekend and having some tea in the morning.”





Above: Cliff perches on the edge of his fish pool.