

# INSTANT CURB APPEAL



Summer Camp in Ojai

High style, low fuss—that was Rachel and Michael Graves’s goal for the exterior of the 1951 ranch house they purchased last summer in Ojai, California. “We needed to bring it back to its roots with clean lines, modernist color, and a general midcentury vibe,” Michael says. The couple—who owns the home-goods store Summer Camp ([shopsummercamp.com](http://shopsummercamp.com))—shares their budget-minded formula. —*Chantal Lamers*



## **PAINT**

“Choose a color that’s noticeably different than the previous hue for maximum impact,” suggests Michael. The couple opted to treat the trim in the same moody shade for consistency and easy application. *Benjamin Moore Aura in Soot 2129-20, \$75; benjaminmoore.com.*

## **DOOR**

“Nothing drags down a house like a tired front door,” says Michael. In keeping with their streamlined sensibility, the couple picked a mahogany one with slats of frosted glass and accented it with matte black hardware. *Milan Round Keyed Entry Lever in iron black, \$48; kwikset.com.*

## **PLANTS**

Sculptural, drought-tolerant greenery was the ideal counterpoint to the house’s dark finish. “We went with cactus to continue the midcentury look,” Michael says. Pea gravel tops the previous mulch-and-dirt mixture.

## **FIXTURES**

The couple installed the new lighting themselves, replacing an old gas-lantern post with a Plexiglas fixture and pairing a brass globe light with brass address numbers as a finishing touch. *Powell LED Wall Sconce in aged brass, \$119; lights.com. Architectural Mailboxes Brass 5-inch Floating House Numbers in antique brass, \$5.79/each; amazon.com.*

FRESH STARTS

## **3 QUICK FIXES FOR INDOORS**



### **1. TILE**

The big fall reveal from Sunset fave Fireclay Tile comes in 24 stunning colorways and mix-and-match matte and polished finishes. The inspiration for this glass-tile collection came from John James Audubon’s 1821 painting *Great Blue Heron*. From \$35/sq. ft.; [fireclaytile.com](http://fireclaytile.com).



### **2. STONE**

Caesarstone’s versatile new quartz marries casual sophistication with earthy elements. *Excava 4046, \$25/sq. ft.; caesarstone.com.*



### **3. WALLPAPER**

The latest pattern from Half Moon Bay designer Kate Miller—a painterly take on the California poppy—is a lovely motif for a contemporary dressing room. *Botanica wallpaper in ink, \$65/yard; elworthystudio.com.*



# SMALL FOR ALL

BACKYARD  
PREFAB

Last year, after California passed new legislation cutting down the red tape around building in-law units, cottages, and other so-called “accessory dwellings,” the architects at Santa Monica’s Minarc devised a way to make adding one to a single-family lot more efficient too. Husband-and-wife team Tryggvi Thorsteinsson and Erla Dögg Ingjaldsdóttir tapped into their Nordic roots to create a minimal prefab they dubbed Plús Hús. It eschews the conventional construction route for a method that’s cost-effective, quick, and environmentally sound. Starting at \$37,000, the units—which take only a week to assemble—are made of a wood-free prefab panel system manufactured at Minarc’s sustainable fabrication facility in Downtown Los Angeles. The 16- by 20-foot structures are mold- and termite-resistant, available in 23 VOC-free exterior finishes, and come in three models with an optional bathroom and kitchenette. “The size speaks to the accessibility,” says Dögg Ingjaldsdóttir. “When we looked at Los Angeles, we realized that 320 square feet can fit harmoniously in most backyards. The magic is in the scale.” *theplushus.com*. —Chantal Lamers

PLAN B

## MODERN FARMER

“You know that person who talks about quitting their safe corporate career to follow their crazy dream? That’s me.” So writes Meredith Bell (below) on her Instagram for Autonomy Farms, her 20-acre environmentally friendly operation in Bakersfield, California. Turns out, her leap of faith paid off. Despite having to overcome many challenges, from personal health problems to devastating floods, Bell and her four-year-old farm now supply some of Southern California’s buzziest restaurants. Customers like Rustic Canyon and Kismet turn to Autonomy Farms for natural and humanely raised meat, such as pastured chickens and grass-fed Angus beef. You can too: A monthly meat CSA delivery (from \$83) ships to states west of Texas. Bell, who still works the farmers’ market circuit with her staff, also hosts special events on her property, including a recent dinner with Outstanding in the Field. “You never know what’s going to work until you try something,” she says. “You wear multiple hats and are constantly problem-solving. There’s no going back; you just figure it out.” *autonomyfarms.com*. —Jessica Ritz

