



The CA Modernist

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Modern Furniture Made in an Eichler

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An Eichler home in Terra Linda provides furniture designer Alice Tacheny with an ideal work place – while allowing her and her husband, who also works from home, room to raise two young boys.

"When you work from home what tends to happen is, you work all day long," Tacheny says. "We can stop and take our children somewhere then come back and work some more. It's one of those things that's sort of infused into our life."

"It's good for me because my work is so personal to me. I'm pretty passionate about it and I enjoy doing it."

What Tacheny does is produce a line of furniture and home accessories, mostly of wood but also using metal and, recently, concrete. She designs at home and makes the accessories herself at home. She contracts with a woodworker in Petaluma and a metal worker in San Francisco's South of Market for furniture production. She finishes each piece herself in the shop she's installed in their garage.

Her eponymous [firm](#) makes dining tables, beds, dressers and more. Pieces are sleek, simple, attractive, too warm to be called minimal. Accessories include wall hooks with leather straps, and the "Headlands," a brass-and-concrete box, of sorts, with asymmetrical compartments that can be used as its buyer desires.

Her collection debuted in New York City in 2012. Pieces can be acquired via her website and can be seen currently at the contemporary carpet shop [Peace Industry](#) on Mission Street in San Francisco. She's gotten some good press, including in the [San Francisco Chronicle](#), which profiled her as a "stylemaker."

Tacheny, who apprenticed after college as a woodworker in Minneapolis and Chicago, at a time when relatively few women worked in the craft, worked as a designer for now famous Blu Dot in Minneapolis, learning the business.

She and her husband, a freelance clinical researcher, moved to the Bay Area five years ago for their careers. They chose San Rafael for its central location and good schools.



Alice Tacheny's dining room furniture in her own Eichler house. Courtesy of Alice Tacheny



Alice Tacheny in her atrium. Above her are her "teddy hooks" of wood and leather. Courtesy of Alice Tacheny



The Tilde Credenza. Courtesy of Alice Tacheny

After having two children, Tacheny says, "I wanted to scale down, go back to having my hands on the furniture and get a balance between the design world and the crafts world."

"I love just being able to have the creative freedom to do what I want to do," she says. "It's just me. I'm the only one running the company. It's something I've wanted to do for so long. And I love having the flexibility of being able to work from home."

Tacheny and her husband already knew about and liked Eichlers, which they had learned about when living in Santa Rosa a few years earlier.

"We're mid-century modern fans," she says.

Her furniture is not inspired directly by mid-century design, she says, "But again, (mid-century modern design) is a huge part of our modern furniture heritage and it's pretty hard to avoid."

Living in an Eichler makes sense for a furniture designer, she says. It is conducive to working – her office occupies the former laundry space right next to her garage-shop. "The door from my office leads right into the garage, so it's one large connected area," she says.

"The Eichler has good spaces. They're open and they're flexible."

The house also provides the proper canvas for her wares.

"The house serves as an experiment for the pieces I make. It's a place to use pieces and to see how they work in a home setting."



Philippine mahogany walls in Tacheny's Eichler provide a setting for some of her furnishings, including the brass "Flax" object in the upper right. Courtesy of Alice Tacheny

Tacheny is adding to her debut collection. "I would love to branch out more accessories, lighting, objects, smaller pieces that are complementary to the furniture, like tabletop accessories, bowls, trays."

"You can get more creative with pieces where the utilitarian aspect is not so important."

She's not thinking about starting a factory or of outsourcing overseas. "I want to keep it pretty small and pretty local ... The largest I'd want to get is to work with a manufacturer domestically on small production runs."

Currently, much of her work is semi-custom, coming to her through interior designers or architects who provide her furniture to clients. Her Tilde credenza goes for \$9,400. Cute little side tables start at \$1,200. "Flax," a "sculptural brass object to hang on your wall," handmade of course, is a bargain at \$120.

"If I could make it more affordable I definitely would," Tacheny says of her furniture line. "But just by the nature of it, it's going to be high end. I don't want to compromise quality. I don't want to do mass production level work."

"The idea behind it is, you're going to have it forever. It's not something that's trendy, it's not something you're going to get tired of. It's a permanent piece."

Terra Linda is a friendly place and sometimes neighbors stroll by while Tacheny is working in the shop with doors open. Sometimes they walk away with a piece.

"It's nice to see my work in other Eichlers," she says.

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