

# Mark Cravotta

## Cravotta Studios

BY LYSSA MYSKA ALLEN  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY ALLISON FREEMAN

**M**ark Cravotta is a bit of a Renaissance man. His Cravotta Studios is the peak of chic to design aficionados, his Hideout Studios is a stylish professional recording studio, and his light-filled '30s bungalow is playhouse for the dotting dad's three daughters.

Cravotta was the son of a visual merchandiser who sometimes designed windows for retail establishments—as a result, Cravotta's childhood homes always seemed to be in constant visual flux. They were lively and eclectic spaces that he describes as “where modern neon sculpture was at home with rusty roadhouse relics.”

When the designer and his family fell so much in love with a small 1930s bungalow that they just had to buy it, Cravotta went about figuring out how to double the space to fit the family of five. The remodel went down to the studs. To make sure he held true to the original Bungalow style, Cravotta used his architectural detailing skills to maintain the history while introducing more modern elements.

Much of the home's charm lies in surprising details. In the library, a window fills an entire shelf. Cravotta says, “My desire to bring the outside in had me looking for where windows could be inserted in unexpected places. The library is a place my girls love to spend time. I don't know if that would be true if it had no natural light.”

He also introduced a unique half-pyramid of windows to the mod master bedroom. It's a super cool and unique touch, but Cravotta admits it's a result of the home's design—it fits around the gable of the roof just outside.



**Q&A** You use creative flourishes alongside spartan furnishings. Why do you like that interplay?

I need my personal living space to be a calming influence. Living in a house full of women (my wife and our three daughters) can make battling clutter a problem. The simpler, the better. That said, the spaces need to have life and personality, so a hit of art, color and a bit of the unexpected keep calm and simple from being boring. You use a lot of light in both your home and interior designs. What makes light so important?

Proper lighting might be the single most overlooked element in the design of a space. You can have a most inspired design, but without the right light, the soul of the project stays hidden.

**What's your favorite room in your house?** The kitchen. It's where everything happens. I especially love the custom mosaic backsplash by Ryah Christensen. **What's your least favorite thing about the house?**

I love to work from home, but there is no good separation between my work and living spaces.

**What would you change about your house?** I'd love to add solar power.

**What's a big challenge you face decorating (both your home and clients' homes)?** The biggest challenge when I design for couples is how to find a way to connect two different personalities to one central design concept. That challenge is also a gift for inspiration and the way each interior I work on becomes something completely new.

PHOTOS BY ALLISON FREEMAN



### MARK CRAVOTTA'S FAVORITE THINGS:

**1 A ROI JAMES PAINTING** It's not really mine but rather on indefinite loan from Roi. There is something masterful about the way he moves paint. Looking at his work never fails to move me.

**2 A RYAH CHRISTENSEN MOSAIC PORTRAIT OF MY WIFE** I don't know how she gets so much soul and expression from her arrangement of pieces of glass, but I've never seen anything like it in other mosaic works.

**3 OUR KITCHEN ISLAND, MADE BY KEVIN COY** It's steel and mahogany, with a mesquite butcher-block top. We use it every day for every meal. The girls eat there. Meals are prepared there. Adults stand around it, drink wine and converse there. What could be better?

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**4 LIVING SCULPTURE BY MONIQUE AT ARTCULTURE DESIGN** The succulents blended with carefully chosen objects create a compelling composition that I have the good fortune to look at every day.

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