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GLORIOUS SUNSET

Designer Chad Eisner helps to transform Danica and Charles Perez's Beverly Hills house into the home of their dreams

In the living room, a tufted wing chair from Greg Jordan's line at Scalamandré adds a touch of whimsy. OPPOSITE Reverse painted glass creates a luminous ambiance in the dining room.

By Nathan Cooper Photographed by Lisa Romerein

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tars of high-profile creative fields like fashion, architecture or decor can invariably pinpoint the exact moment of their fateful break into the business—the perfectly unplanned moment that vaulted them from the due-paying ranks onto solidly established ground. Los Angeles-based interior architect and designer Chad Eisner's pivotal moment arrived just as the most rewarding phase of his career thus far had come undone.

After stints assisting Rene Rodriguez in Miami and Michael S. Smith in Los Angeles, Eisner, a native of Orange County who got his first taste of design at 17, outfitting a Palm Springs house for a friend of his mother for a \$500 fee, became the right-hand-man of esteemed New York designer Greg Jordan just as Jordan was expanding his business in Los Angeles with a shop and workspace on Melrose Place. With projects on both coasts and product lines in the works, Jordan relied heavily on Eisner and imparted his invaluable years of expertise along the way.

Then in 2005, the 48-year-old Jordan suffered a fatal heart attack, leaving his young apprentice to steer the ship. “I tried to keep [the business] afloat for a little while, but it just dissolved,” says Eisner, who had envisioned working with Jordan for many years to come. “Ultimately, people want the person whose name is on the door,” he adds.

On his last day at Jordan's office, as Eisner was packing up his desk, the phone rang. Danica Perez had signed a contract with her husband Charles for Jordan to revamp their house overlooking the L.A. Country Club in Beverly Hills a week before the designer's death. She had a proposition for Eisner, then 26.



Danica Perez, wearing a Carolina Herrera dress and Loree Rodkin jewelry.

“I asked, ‘Do you want to come and talk, to tell me your vision for the house?’” recalls Perez. “Sometimes you have to take a chance and give somebody an opportunity,” she adds. Eisner jumped at the offer and spelled out a pared-down, polished and stylishly muted approach to the 12,000-square-foot house, which Charles had bought in the 1980s. And so began a three-year process of transforming the house (and Eisner's career).

Before the overhaul, the Perezes, who have five daughters and recently celebrated their 17th wedding anniversary, had decorated their house organically, mixing pieces from each of their first marriages with items found along the way. “We kept changing one room at a time,” notes Danica, “but we never really gutted it and said, ‘This is us, this is our house.’ It should reflect our life

together. So that is what we decided to do with Chad,” she says.

Far too gracious to openly disparage the house's previous look, Eisner simply describes it as heavy. His mission, then, was to simplify things without abandoning the family's vivacious spirit. “I knew from the first time I met Danica that she's not the type of person who wants what her next-door-neighbor or girlfriend has. She wants something customized for her,” he says.

After Eisner proposed a cleaner, more linear flow of rooms throughout the house, he and his clients began the work of finding the perfect pieces for each room. “We traveled everywhere together and had a lot of fun,” says Danica, mentioning trips to France, Italy, San Francisco and Tucson for the gem show. On one European mission to fill a shipping



The dining room chairs, originally flanked the conference room of Jacques Adnet's offices.

“The house is a study in neutrals: grays that fade into tans, taupes and whites.”

STYLIST: ASHLEY AVIGNONE. HAIR + MAKEUP: JOEY MAALOUF AND DELIA KENNEY



LEFT A Catalonian fountain gurgles in a courtyard off the living room. RIGHT Mia Perez practices ballet in her bedroom. BELOW Jansen armchairs and a custom sofa in the master bedroom.



ABOVE In the master bath, a 1950s French alabaster and nickel light completes the glow. TOP RIGHT Olivia Perez strikes a mod pose in her bedroom. BOTTOM RIGHT A vegetable and herb garden next to the covered terrace supplies the kitchen. BELOW Eisner had the kitchen built to scale in plywood to test the flow and efficiency of the workspace before final construction.



“Life is meant to be lived with the plastic off—you have to use and enjoy what you’ve got.”
—Danica Perez

“I knew from the first time I met Danica that she’s not the type of person who wants what her next-door-neighbor has.”
—Chad Eisner



A rock crystal chandelier from Dennis & Leen fills the center stairwell.



container with antiques, Eisner recalls doing a small victory dance after persuading the Perezes to add a particular Royère console to their order.

The renovation spanned three years, with the Perezes living at their week-end house on Malibu’s Carbon Beach much of the time. The kitchen alone took a year and a half to perfect. The finished result is an utterly polished study in neutrals which provides a serene backdrop for the family’s lively and joyous activities, from a Sweet 16 backyard birthday party for daughter Olivia to quiet dinners for Danica and Charles on the terrace. Understanding his clients’ lifestyle rates highest on Eisner’s to-do list for any project. “I try to get as much time just being with them as possible at the beginning,” he says. “It’s such a personal business. At the end of a project, we know so much about our clients,” he adds. And in the ultimate testament to a successful renovation, Eisner has remained close with his clients.

Danica has referred a handful of friends to Eisner, who now works out of his own suite of lofty offices in Venice. And the happy client relishes her family’s reborn abode. Danica believes the house, even in its newly perfected state, is meant to be used rather than admired. “We’ve had weddings and celebrations here. It’s a romantic, beautiful house with wonderful energy,” she says. “Life is meant to be lived with the plastic off—you have to use and enjoy what you’ve got,” she adds. “I love it here. I can’t imagine where else I’d want to go.” •