

ELLE DECOR



THE FUTURE
of DESIGN

**25 RISING TALENTS
SHAPING
OUR WORLD**

**PLUS:
PARIS STYLE UPDATE**

**THOM FILICIA'S
MUST-HAVES**

*fresh
thinking*



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: The family room of a Hollywood Hills home designed by Chad Elsner. Salt and pepper shakers by Waylande Gregory. Mathilde Labrousse's kitchen in southwest France. A table designed by John Reeves.

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In the living room of a Los Angeles home designed by Chad Eisner, walnut panels line the back walls, the custom-made sofas are covered in a Cowtan & Tout velvet, and the 1970s cocktail table is by Willy Doro; the burl-wood side table is from JF Chen, the table lamps are Christian Llaigre designs, and the rug is by Mansour Modern. See Resources.



A FRESH TAKE ON GLAMOUR

With nods to Hollywood and Art Deco, a young designer updates a 1970s Los Angeles house into a perfect setting for easy, elegant entertaining

ELLEDECOR: This house is in the Hollywood Hills and looks quite new. Did it need much work when your clients bought it?

CHAD EISNER: Not really. The house was built in 1972 and then remodeled in 2006 by architect C. J. Bonura, who worked for Frank Gehry for six years before starting his own firm. The first owner was designer Mark Schomisch, and the second was a British reality-television mogul.

ED: What were the major changes?

CE: Actually, there were no major changes. We redid the powder room and replaced a sunken bathtub in the master suite with a sculptural, freestanding one. We added an outdoor kitchen, took down some grass cloth and reworked some of the walls, but no heavy construction.

ED: You certainly didn't need to open it up any more, did you? >



The façade is painted in Benjamin Moore's Super White, the door is painted in the company's Steel Wool, and the custom-made grills are cast bronze.



Pieces by Summit Furniture on the terrace; the cushions and pillows are covered in Perennials fabrics, and the shade is by Brown Jordan.

WHAT THE PROS KNOW

- Don't assume you can't afford special pieces. "Custom-made furniture sounds expensive," Eisner says, "but there are times when you can make a piece for less than it would cost to buy something similar from a showroom."
- Furniture placement can be tricky in a room without much wall space. In the family room, Eisner pulled the furniture into the middle of the room and designed a screen that "wraps" the sofa and anchors a desk behind it.
- Don't always follow the plan: The upholstered wall in the guest room was to be outlined in nailhead trim, but once the panels were hung, Eisner decided the wall didn't need further embellishment.



The photograph in the dining area is by Massimo Vitalli, and the light fixture is by PaganStudio; the Moura Starr table is surrounded by Powell & Bonnell armchairs upholstered in a Jerry Pair leather.

CE: No. In fact, we had the opposite problem. There's a downside to all that light and openness—a certain loss of privacy and the exposure of the art and antiques to potentially harmful light. We actually installed some sliding doors to create the option of closing off the dining area.

ED: If light was an issue, why did you choose bright white for the walls?

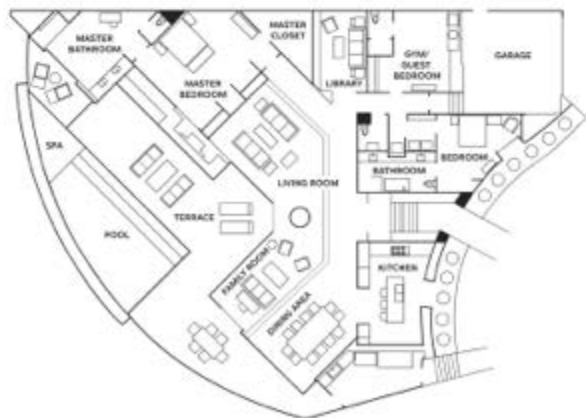
CE: My clients entertain a lot, mostly at night. They bought the house because it works so well for entertaining, and for the view, of course. I chose Benjamin Moore's Super White because I wanted the walls to look crisp and fresh even in low light.

ED: What was the look you were going for?

CE: Well, we wanted it modern, certainly, but I didn't want to lose sight of the past, of the source of what we call "modern" now, and in particular Art Deco. I like to think there's a certain prewar French salon feeling to the place—it's meant to be romantic and sexy. And the homeowners have a particular affection for Africa, so there are some references to that, too, like the animal-print rug in the master bedroom and the living-room rug, which is a contemporary take on zebra skin.



The custom-made sofa in the family room is upholstered in a Manuel Canovas velvet, and the 1950s chairs are covered in an Edelman leather; the rug is by Mansour Modern, and the flooring is travertine. **RIGHT:** The floor plan.



DESIGN SOLUTIONS

ED: Do you ever mismatch your dining room chairs?

CE: I'm not really a big fan of mismatched dining chairs. I think somebody always winds up sitting an inch too low. In this case, I didn't want to distract from the Moura Starr table, which is quite a piece of engineering: Big expanses of the top have no visible support at all. The top, by the way, is clear crystal, not glass.

ED: In terms of the color palette, it's pretty much beige and brown, isn't it?

CE: The tone-on-tone color scheme was another nod to Africa. Plus we didn't want to distract from the views. But there are very subtle hints of color in the fabrics, in the pillows and the welting, which is one of the ways you can warm up or cool down a space with a tight palette. There are light blues and pale lavenders and even some understated rose hues.

ED: Did you add the wood paneling in the living room, alongside the fireplace?

CE: Yes. It's walnut. And we reworked the fireplace surround, which was finished using a hand-troweled plaster technique that gives it a lot of luster. We did that on one wall in almost every room. With all

the glass and terrazzo, we wanted to add some depth and texture and visual interest. I designed the bronze fire screen, which is based on the handle of a piece of furniture designed by Émile-Jacques Ruhlmann, one of the great masters of French Art Deco.

ED: What was the thinking behind your fabric choices?

CE: We wanted to soften the space and have everything feel good to touch, or to look like it would feel good to touch. So most of the upholstery fabrics are velvet and suede. But I wanted to balance the man-made with the natural, so the curtains are a nubby raw silk, and the Mansour Modern rugs have hemp in the weave, which gives a little roughness to the refinement.

ED: When do you decide to customize a piece of furniture and when do you buy it?

CE: That depends on a lot of things. Sometimes you can't find just the style you want. Modern furniture isn't always as comfortable as it might be, so I wound up designing most of the sofas, for example. The master bedroom didn't give us much space for a bed, so I designed one that incorporates side tables. And, of course, when you design something yourself for a project, it's unique, which is always nice for the client. ■



Marble tiles line a wall in the master bath; the stool is from JF Chen, and the tub fittings are by Dornbracht.



The walnut headboard and the daybed in the master bedroom are custom made, and the lamps are by Willy Daro; the vintage rug is from Mansour.



A Christian Liaigre bed dressed with Pratesi linens in a guest room; the lamp is by Belvedere, and the armchair is by Jean de Merry.