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A Historic Beverly Hills Palazzo With An Impressive
Celebrity Pedigree Recaptures The Grandeur Of
Timeless Southern California Luxury

THE GOLDEN AGE



INTERIOR DESIGN Monique Lafia and Chris Anvin,
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LEFT: A Louis XV-style chandelier from Therien centers the foyer, where Rose Tarlow fabric wraps a Chippendale bench. Steps up in the hallway, Neo-Gothic mahogany chairs herald the entrance to the loggia. Interior designer Monique Lafia, shown above, salvaged some of the home's original light fixtures to capture the essence of the 1920s.

ABOVE: Opposite the foyer, the loggia exemplifies the home's easy transition from indoors to outdoors. From here, Beverly Hills comes to view in the distance. Appropriate to the setting, wrought-iron furniture from Murray's Iron Works dressed in Sunbrella fabric from JANUS et Cie forms intimate social groupings.

Italian actor Rudolph Valentino danced among the stars of the silent era in this music area during Hollywood's Golden Age of motion pictures in the 1920s.



WHAT DO 1950S FILM ACTRESS

Marlene Dietrich, Woolworth heiress Barbara Hutton, leading man Cary Grant and British actor James Mason have in common? Fame, yes. But each also lived in this 1920s grand Hollywood estate in Beverly Hills. Originally built in 1926 by an iconic silent film star, the home is situated near the panoramic view of the city from Sunset Boulevard to the palm tree-lined Rodeo Drive.

Thus, the word historic seems an understatement for this Mediterranean manse, whose celebrity pedigree reads like the final credits of a film. The desire to recapture the home's original golden Hollywood glow would seem a challenge. But not for interior designer Monique Lafia and partner Chris Arvin, who have worked with the present owners on



The living room melds the finest antiques, furniture and fabrics, including a Rose Tarlow-Melrose House sofa covered in Brunswick & Fils fabric, an ottoman wrapped in a Scalamandré solid and a "Paris" armchair dressed in Old World Weavers fabric from Stark Carpet. Laffa custom designed the lounge chairs draped in gold silk velvet from Jean Pierre Bellini to finish the look.



"THE OWNERS WANTED TO PRESERVE THE

In the parlor, the owners' most impressive pieces of art are on view, including an original René Magritte. Above, a cone-shaped mosaic light fixture boasts its own unique pedigree — it was originally owned by heavy metal legend Ozzy Osbourne.



five projects and specialize in historic renovations including a newly finished \$20 million brownstone in New York. "The new owners of this Beverly Hills estate have a very distinct aesthetic sense and were involved in the design process that evokes the Old Hollywood style," Lafia says. "We were able to salvage an antique rose garden and some of the original light fixtures that reflect the feel of the 1920s, and incorporate some of the owners' pieces."

Working with the original layout, which includes four large wings, the design duo began by finishing all of the interior walls in ivory Venetian plaster. Next, they mixed new and custom-designed pieces with antiques in gold and celadon hues to give

the interior an eclectic, Old World look with a fresh feel.

Upon entering the home, the foyer sets the period tone with its Chippendale bench and Venetian console — both from Caché. The first of many rare antique area rugs tops original white Carrara and Negro marble checkerboard flooring.

FACING: When Barbara Hutton and Cary Grant owned the property in the 1940s, they covered up the dining room's stenciled beams. Lafia and partner Chris Arvin brought the wood beams back to life with a faux-finish in an amber glaze. Two paintings — "Lady" by Kees van Dongen, left, and "Spanish Woman and Child" by Victor Manuel Garcia, right — flank the doorway to the pool area.

HISTORIC VALUE OF THE ESTATE," ARVIN SAYS.







LEFT: Close to its original design, the kitchen posed a unique challenge for Lafia and Arvin — how to make an expansive space warm and inviting. To start, they cleared the island to create a display area. Decorative touches add dimension, including antique furniture, blue French tiles above the La Cornue stove and ebonized-hardware flooring that complements the beamed ceiling.

A few steps up, the foyer hallway was kept intentionally unfettered. “I wanted to keep the sightline open from the entrance to the open-air space on the opposite side,” Lafia says. From here, arched glass double doors open to reveal the loggia. Dressed in wrought-iron furniture, this outdoor area features several of the original fixtures Lafia was able to bring back to light.

To the right of the hallway, the living room and music area form one of the home’s four wings. Central to the living room is a Portland cement fireplace mantel and surround refinished with an amber glaze and accented with faux-finished rosettes.

Two conversation groupings come together to transform a once-expansive space into an intimate gathering area that accommodates 20 people yet still feels approachable. Italian Neoclassical chandeliers from the 18th century sparkle above an eye-catching mix of styles that meld seamlessly — a traditional rolled-arm sofa, cane-back settees, and Italian rococo gilt stools upholstered with antique Aubusson tapestry. Through triple archways, the music area features the owners’ limited-edition, 150th-anniversary piano signed by Steinway.

To the left of the hallway, the parlor and dining room forge another wing. Lafia and Arvin kept the parlor functional to service different parts of the home.



The formal dining room offers flexibility for entertaining, seating anywhere from four to 16 people. Walnut is the wood of choice for this symmetrical space — from the inlaid table to the feather dining chairs and console with crackled-lacquer finish from Rose Tarlow-Melrose House. Above, a Danish gilt-wood 19th-century chandelier from Therien reflects the designers' Midas touch.

The quandary in the kitchen was to make a once functionally challenged space user-friendly. Lafia and Arvin kept the dark-wood ceiling beams, and white cabinetry and island, adding stools at one end to create a breakfast bar.

Just outside, a small patio steps down to the pool area — moved to the side of the house facing the dining room from the original position in the front. Cradling the pool's edge, a circular fountain doubles as a hot tub amidst lavish landscaping that provides natural shade for the home's Italianate architecture.

The Mediterranean aesthetic continues to the courtyard, a new addition located off the kitchen and family room. "This is where the family has dinner most nights," Lafia says. "They hold charity events here, host tea parties and enjoy the ambiance."

Inside and out, Lafia and Arvin fashioned the future of this Beverly Hills estate in honor of its pedigree past.

ABOVE: Off the dining room, the pool area accentuates the home's Italianate exterior. Architect Gene Vierge, a student of Italian Palladio architecture, built this Beverly Hills mansion in 1926. With its mix of Hollywood glamour, and Mission, Spanish, Italian and Moorish details, the 10,000-square-foot-plus palazzo exudes classic Southern California style.





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A crane carried the antique Spanish limestone dining table from La Maison Francaise Antiques to the courtyard. For some levity, Latta chose delicately designed rose Tarlow Melrose House wrought-iron chairs from its twig collection to surround the table. Limestone flooring underscores this outdoor space.