

# ARCHITECTURAL DIGEST

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ARCHITECTURAL DIGEST VISITS  
**CANDICE BERGEN**  
CALIFORNIA COMFORTS FOR THE ACTRESS'S SPANISH-  
STYLE RESIDENCE IN LOS ANGELES



"I love Spanish houses—they're the only houses that make sense in Los Angeles," says Candice Bergen (left, with her dogs, Larry and Lois). The actress, who lives with her daughter, Chloe, renovated a hacienda-style residence in west Los Angeles that she'd admired as a child.

*Interior Architecture by William Murray  
Interior Design by Linda Marder, ASID  
Landscape Design by Richard Hayden  
Text by Susan Cheever  
Photography by Robert Reck*

During the renovation, "I was thinking family, I was thinking new start," Bergen says. "Chloe is about to be a teenager, and I wanted her and her friends to hang out here." ABOVE: The low profile of the exterior disguises the interior volume. Column from *Arté de Mexico*.



"I wanted a house that was more European than Californian," says Bergen (below right), who worked with designer Linda Marder. OPPOSITE: Nancy Kintisch stenciled Mediterranean designs on the living room ceiling. Donghia sofa chenille; Houliès sofa trim; Clarence House chair velvet.

Over the years she often explored the hidden cul-de-sac twisting down a hill between thick walls of ivy and creeping fig. One house fascinated her, although all she could see was a white chimney and a mysterious tile roof rising from masses of bougainvillea and avocado trees. "I had always been drawn to this house; it was vaguely Spanish, and I grew up in a Spanish house," says Candice Bergen, sitting on the brick terrace of the house, where she lives now. "Of course, when I finally looked at it as a buyer, I was shocked to see all this." She waves past the fountain and the stairs planted with orchids and agave, toward a grassy private valley where a gazebo peeks from a grove of fruit trees.

Candice Bergen has reinvented herself many times—as an actress in films directed by Sidney Lumet and Mike Nichols; as a writer whose memoir, *Knock Wood*, told about being the daughter of Edgar Bergen and the sister of puppet Charlie McCarthy; as television's unsinkable Murphy Brown; as the wife of the late film director Louis Malle; and as the mother of their daughter, Chloe. Next year she will launch another career, as a late-night talk-show host on cable's Oxygen channel. But she had never reinvented a house before. "I'd never done a real renovation," she says. "It was a massive and prolonged dose of stress: It was like a stress time-release capsule."



**"I DON'T LIKE HOUSES THAT TAKE THEMSELVES TOO SERIOUSLY. I CAN ONLY BE ON MY BEST BEHAVIOR FOR SO LONG."**

Bergen wanted a change from the nearby house where she had lived with her husband, who died of cancer in 1995. "After he died, I thought a lot about whether we should stay in Los Angeles," she says. "My mother and my brother are here, and it seemed very important to hold on to a sense of family. I was trying to compensate for what we've been through, to make an idyllic place for my daughter."

Transforming the original house into an idyllic place, however, seemed like a Span-

ish mission impossible. Below the white chimney was a narrow house built in 1941. "It was a maze of add-ons," says architect William Murray. "Each add-on went further underground." The overgrown gardens were beyond a white picket fence and a small cliff. To open the house to the land, and to transform it into rooms where Bergen could live comfortably with her daughter, their two dogs and a rotating cast of friends and guests, Murray took the house down to its walls, constructed a series of private

terraces, and planned rooms joined by archways on four different levels. He carved a sitting room for the master bedroom out of a porch, built a tower with clerestory windows for the master bath and created a new family room and kitchen around a huge Victorian box tree surrounded by white *Stephanotis* and glacier ivy. In the end, the renovations were so extensive and expensive that Bergen christened her new home "Casa Costa Mucho."

"She bought it because she wanted a change," says designer Linda Marder. "I said to myself, She's a widow, she's under an enormous amount of stress, and we'll make it perfect for her." While Murray drew plans for a light-filled central space, with a living room, dining room and sitting room, Marder took Bergen shopping for reproduction Sultanabads and Ushaks in soft blue, red and ivory patterns. They laid the rugs down on the rubble and began to choose colors, fabrics and furniture, building the design from the ground up. "I call myself more a collaborator than a decorator," Marder says. "Candy has great taste." Nancy Kintisch came in to stencil and paint the walls and ceilings. Outside, Murray and landscape architect Richard Hayden created a secluded Shangri-la where paths curve past Santa Barbara daisies, jasmynes and lavender, and trellises by the swimming pool drip with bougainvillea. "When I first saw it, I had a glimpse of what it could be, a combination of



OPPOSITE: Architect William Murray installed bookshelves and paneling in the dining room. J. H. Minassian & Co. rug; table and chairs from Elijah Slocum; Lee Jofa floral fabric. THIS PAGE: Photographs show Bergen's family, including her late husband, director Louis Malle.





Spanish and Moroccan," Bergen says. "I didn't realize that it was just a glimpse."

"This design was about the intimacy of a small house," says Marder, who furnished it with reproductions, antiques, flea market finds, old fixtures, and pictures and objects from Bergen's life—prints of Egypt she and Malle collected, a camel-bone-and-coral chest bought in a Mo-

Top: Enclosing a porch created a sitting room off the master bedroom. S. Harris chenille fabric and Houllès trim on love seat. ABOVE: Murray built a clerestory tower to permit light into the master bath. Silk Trading Co. plaid.

RIGHT: Draperies section off the sleeping and sitting areas. Cowtan & Tout linen for headboard and bed skirt; Clarence House chair stripe; Silk Trading Co. drapery fabric; Elijah Slocum Roman shade linen; J. H. Minassian & Co. bedroom rug.







roccan souk, an inlaid chair that was a gift from the *Murphy Brown* cast at the end of the series' decade-long run, inscribed "A Perfect Ten." An ornately carved Indian column is an introduction to the front door. A small entranceway, where a bench found for Bergen by the *Murphy Brown* set director sits under an iron chandelier, leads through an archway down steps to the living room.

Marder furnished the dining room with Queen Anne-style chairs and a peg-top



cherry table from Los Angeles furniture maker Elijah Slocum. She hung an old California chandelier in front of a Maurice Braun landscape. "I love lamps," Bergen says. "Don't even talk to me about track lighting. I love lamps for the warmth they give a room, for the way the light comes through the shade." In

**LEFT:** "The rear terrace is one of the most important features of the house," Murray points out. "Each interior space opens onto it, and it acts as a living area and a circulation path to the rooms." A small fountain is adjacent to stairs leading to the lawn.

the sitting room, which faces the gardens, Marder flanked a leather sofa with two red-lacquered Chinese chests. The space also includes an Anglo-Indian inlaid chair, a custom-made armchair and a nineteenth-century English table on which rests a bronze sculpture of a cheetah, made by T. D. Kelsey, that was given to Bergen by a friend.

"What's important to me in a house is that there's a tremendous sense of comfort," explains Bergen. "Every chair you sit in is comfortable. If you can't sit back, you're just in transit. If you're

"Candice wanted the garden to be natural, to have a little of that old California ranchy feeling," landscape architect Richard Hayden says. **TOP:** Bougainvillea vines create a colorful backdrop for a simple pool. **ABOVE:** A view from the far garden takes in the house.

perched on a chair, you're perched to leave. Every table should be the type of table you can put your feet up on. Life is too short not to be comfortable." In the living room, Marder grouped sofas and chairs around a Giacometti-style iron-and-glass low table in front of the

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enormous fireplace. She separated the sofas with an English armchair and an inlaid Anglo-Indian table. On the ceiling beams Kintisch, working on a scaffold, stenciled a Mediterranean design. Over the mantelpiece, lit by candelabra and a Fortuny lamp, Marder hung a Dedrick Brandes Stuber painting. Sprays of white *Phalaenopsis* from Bergen's mother, Frances, droop toward the hand-forged fire screen.

Down several more steps, the master bedroom and its sitting room have their own terrace. On their walls Kintisch stenciled pale, abstract florals. A Regency cabinet and a leather bench at the end of the bed hold picture books on subjects from architecture to Zanzibar. "I like to have books around that you can actually open and read, as opposed to books piled up as a sculptural statement," Bergen says.

In the master bath, a sort of sitting room with silk- and cotton-upholstered chairs, Marder decorated the tub with a large cement garden duck. "When I saw the duck, I knew Linda understood me," Bergen says. "I don't like houses that take themselves too seriously." Where

**"Don't even talk to me about track lighting," Bergen says. "I love lamps for the warmth they give a room."**

ever Bergen lives, there are dogs on the furniture and a rubber chicken hanging from a chandelier—in this house it's in the breakfast room. "I can only be on my best behavior for so long," she says. "Then I need my rubber chicken. I need to laugh."

In this house she first saw so long ago, Bergen has found a new home for the woman she is right now. "As you get older, home becomes more important," she says. "You want to spend more time with friends. You're conscious of looking for a certain calm. Your priorities clarify themselves, and you're able to appreciate what you have." □

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were joined vertically to create the library, which is paneled in mahogany and burnished by firelight in winter. At night it is lit by the glow of an Art Nouveau chandelier and cast-bronze lamps designed by Turnbough.

While some of the furnishings for the house came from New York—in-

**"Much of the real grandeur is in details that don't immediately register," says Robert Bray.**

cluding a core of favorite possessions from the couple's Park Avenue apartment—they and the designers shopped for antiques together in London. "The Regency dining table," Bray points out, "is mysteriously large—seven feet in diameter." The Irish sideboard in the columned serving alcove is from the late eighteenth century; in the living room, where a magnificent Chippendale console with clustered column legs displays family treasures, are two extremely rare circa 1800 George III wheel-back hall chairs. Two more are in the entrance hall.

"We're not modernists, though we do love Bob and Michael's streamlined version of tradition," says the wife. "They're purists, and so are we. We could never live in a decorator's show house. Yet it's difficult to articulate just how you *do* want to live, and our rapport is such that they're able to translate for us."

"Purism," adds Bray, "is trickier than it looks. It takes a lot of virtuosity to perpetrate the illusion that nothing has been touched."

This is one of the firm's last site visits: Their work in Greenwich is nearly done. Except, perhaps, for the romantic carriage house behind the pond—crescent-shaped, a little derelict, with a dove-cote in the rafters and moss growing between the stones. "We'll probably leave it very spare," says Bray. "It would make a charming guest pavilion. Come to think of it, if I don't win the lottery, it would do me very nicely as a one-room Cistercian abbey." □

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eighteenth-century *canapé d'alcove* is from my family, but I bought the chintz covering it from Harrod's twenty years ago—over the telephone. I'd call one day and say, 'Send me twenty meters.' Then I'd call the next day and ask for ten more." Shades for the Chinese porcelain lamps throughout the room are covered in the same chintz; the screens, made from nineteenth-century scenic Zuber wallpaper, camouflage the rough stone walls, which Lavoix is planning to line with wood paneling as one of his next projects.

The study doubles as a guest bedroom and is the same colorful mix of flea market items (such as the passementerie-covered trunk in front of the fireplace) and family mementos, like the portrait of Lavoix's great-grandmother over the daybed. He used an Indian cotton on the walls and the bed and for the draperies.

Tucked up under the eaves is Lavoix's bedroom, dominated by an eighteenth-century painted Hungarian armoire with decorative moldings picked out in a dark wood. "One of my luckier flea market finds," Lavoix recalls. "It was well over my budget, but it was the last day at a small regional fair, and as the dealer didn't want to return with it, he gave in and let me have it at my price." Pricier, he adds, are two bedside tables that came from an auction of the furnishings of the Hotel George V in Paris. "How could I resist when the auctioneer said they came from the room Clark Gable had slept in!"

As a teenager, Patrick Lavoix saw a movie about the life of a famous eighteenth-century French bandit named Cartouche. "I didn't feel like I had much in common with him," he says, "but I was completely charmed by the atmosphere of his hiding place. It was a rock cavern filled with gilt mirrors and furniture, ormolu-mounted Chinese porcelain, tapestries and so on. The mix of beautiful pieces in the rough environment seemed to me the height of luxury."

When he remembers the salon as it looked the day he bought his cottage—a bare barn with dirt floors and old stone walls—Lavoix's youthful enthusiasm instantly returns. "I decided to decorate it like the cavern that had made me dream so much." □