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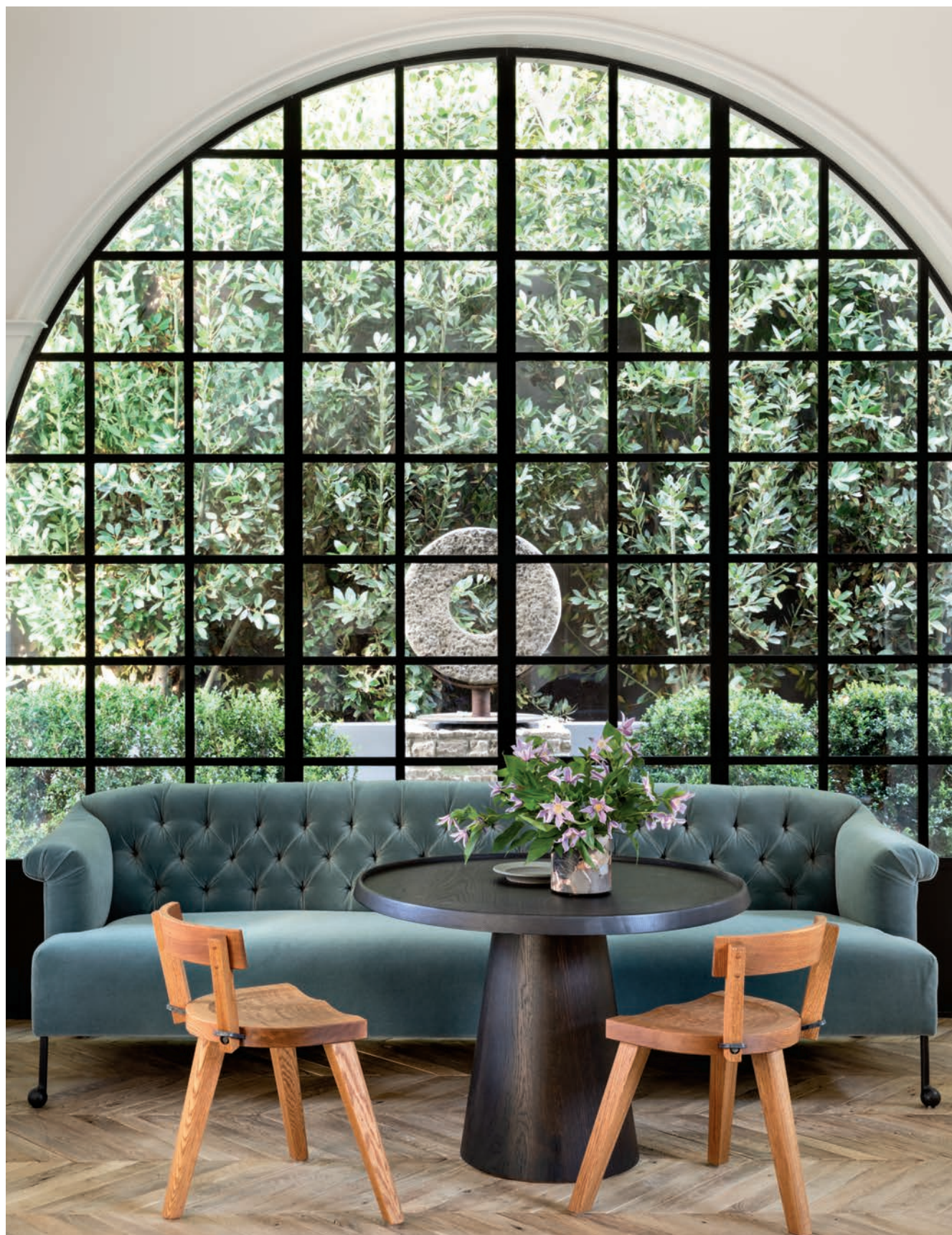
# Moment of Peace

A family's charming new home in Pacific Palisades conjures a European ambience amid elements of wonder.

WRITTEN BY KATE ABNEY | PHOTOGRAPHY BY LISA ROMERÉIN

**Architecture:** Bobby McAlpine, McAlpine **Interior Design:** Ray Booth, McAlpine  
**Home Builder:** Ron Udall and Tyler Udall, Tyler Development Corporation **Landscape Architecture:** Christine London, Christine London Ltd.





Rose Tarlow Melrose House's Lugano mohair velvet covers BDDW's Edmund sofa in the family room, where designer Ray Booth placed vintage Furniture Marolles chairs by Carneros Studios beside a custom Stave table by Blackcreek Mercantile & Trading Co. Flooring throughout the house is reclaimed chevron-patterned oak from Chateau Domingue.

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os Angeles is not exactly known for its sweeping countryside. But homeowners Mario and Chantal Spanicciati, who had spent significant time in England, did not let that deter them from dreaming up a serene dwelling for their young family.

"I'm half Swiss and grew up hiking in the Alps," shares Chantal, who runs a mental well-being practice based on sophrology. Prioritizing wellness for her family was key to the project, as was providing a peaceful refuge from Mario's fast-paced career. The pair found the perfect plot of land near a protected stretch of the Santa Monica Mountains that would allow them to create a connection to the natural world amid Will Rogers State Historic Park's powerful views.

A former designer herself, she turned with confidence to Bobby McAlpine to create a warm and receptive environment for loved ones. "I understood they wanted a romantic house, not a showplace," the architect shares. "A home that would be resonant and traditional, but also youthful, fresh and modern."

Taking stock of the site, McAlpine devised an unorthodox concept: orienting the public spaces toward views along the back of the property, while placing service areas street-side. "It is not intended to be a trophy or a temple," he notes. "It's an experiential house and a place for this family to live in an authentic way." To wit, entering the residence at the center of the complex is an intentionally disorienting experience intended to "make you lose the street," McAlpine says, and guide visitors into a new realm. Connected by long axes, the architect's symphony of structures "does not ramble," Chantal assures. "He keeps it very succinct."

While another architect from McAlpine's firm, J. Allen Harris II, served as project architect, it was his colleague Ryan Moss—acting as project manager on the architecture side—who handled the daily coordination of endeavors on site. Spearheading construction was the father-and-son duo of general contractors Ron and Tyler Udall.

The completed compound is bookended by a green clapboard carriage house and guest cottage—the latter complete with a home theater aerie—while a façade of mortar-slathered tumbled stone evocative of the Cotswolds covers the main buildings. The result is a poetic combination of

provincial-meets-sleek, particularly in the pool pavilion capped with a roof of artificial thatch. "Texture is so befriending—especially in a house with steel windows," McAlpine notes. This much is evident in the home's proliferation of hand-carved mantels and paneled walls. "And imperfection is how a new house gains humility."

Appointing the interiors was a collaborative exercise that tapped into Chantal's deep well of design knowledge. "She and Mario wanted to show evidence of all they had learned and lived together," shares McAlpine firm partner Ray Booth, whose first move was to place a foundational layer of Old World-inspired herringbone flooring throughout. Working with fellow designer Molly White, Booth appointed McAlpine's masterful enfilade of rooms with a reverberating procession of furnishings: patinated reproduction pieces and antiques, upholstery with English proportions, sculptural elements that surprise and unassuming window treatments that do not compete with the vistas.

"For a place as populated as Los Angeles, the view is truly extraordinary," says Booth, whose textile selections with White was directly inspired by the landscape and light. Mindful of the many months the owners would be spending outdoors, he placed an extended farm table beneath the silver leaves of 125-year-old Barouni olive trees installed on the property by landscape designer Christine London.

From the pollinator-friendly plantings to the kitchen garden, London's knack for storytelling proved as impactful as McAlpine's architecture, balancing elements of earthy wildness with appealing symmetries. Sweeping shrub drifts follow the flow between buildings, "meandering between light and shade on the exterior terraces," adds the England native, who buffered the buildings from the street by way of a walled containment, thus making space for the children to play among wispy tufts of drought-tolerant native grasses.

Beyond the numerous ways it hints at the heart of who they are, the Spanicciati estate is a place for their four children to grow up immersed in beauty: to decorate cookies on the kitchen's double islands, to paint, craft and arrange flowers in the stone room off the garden. It's a home designed to host the chorus of laughter emanating from a children's wing outfitted for respite, schoolwork and play. As McAlpine sums it: "This house is a secret garden. It's an invitation. A mystery that must be unfolded and experienced." ■





**Above:** The family room features a 17<sup>th</sup>-century Spanish trestle console from Chateau Domingue supporting Rose Tarlow Melrose House's Cylindre Moderne lamps. A broad steel window by Albertini makes for a dramatic focal point.

**Opposite:** Texture reigns in the salon, where white oak millwork by Bellisi Design graces the walls. Sheer panels of Holly Hunt linen define the room's seating groups. In one, a Howe London Lurcher sofa teams with Domingos Tótor's Leiras chair from Sossego and a cocktail table from Balsamo Antiques.





**Right:** Steel Albertini French doors lead from the library to the patio for enjoying moments of reprieve. Belgian Bluestone pavers and a pea gravel courtyard converge among plantings of pieris and karo by landscape designer Christine London.

**Opposite:** The study features bookshelves painted Sherwin-Williams' Iron Ore and punctuated by an Andreas Eriksson canvas. Soane's Clifton Library Shelf Light illuminates a Dmitry sofa donning Fortuny's Bacan velvet from Grizzel & Mann, Inc.





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A Tudor-style arch frames the English-inspired kitchen. Twin stilted islands and perimeter cabinetry crafted by Expression in Wood are topped with Pietra del Cardoso and Calacatta Viola marble, respectively, while Van Cronenburg hardware accents both. The faucets are Easton by Waterworks.





**Above:** The kids' library delights with lively color, as seen on books within Bellisi Design's built-ins and on Windsor-style Ercol Heritage chairs. Vintage brass Afra & Tobia Scarpa pendants suspend above a circa-1820 English plank table from Randall Tysinger Antiques.

**Opposite:** The petite motif of Cole & Son's Hummingbirds Icons wallpaper wraps the adjoining daughters' bedroom, where McAlpine's built-in bunks boast decorative corbels. Booth's furnishings sweetly follow suit with a pair of John Derian's Baronet chairs for Cisco Home set around Nickey Kehoe's Round Hassock ottoman beneath a lantern by Coleen & Company. Below lies RH's Malta rug.



Liaigre's folding Folio chairs from R Hughes line a streamlined waterfall table by Michael Del Piero Good Design. String lights illuminate London's artfully composed olive grove, an ideal setting for alfresco meals.

