


PAUL FORTUNE DESIGN

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HOUSE & GARDEN



Comfortable seating is in ample supply on the poolside terrace. The curtains and the cushions on the '40s furnishings are Perennials weather-resistant fabrics. ■ A slate-top poolside table, opposite page, is set with a '50s Danish wood tray, '60s Kosta Boda glassware, and '40s Bauerware plates.

BY PAUL FORTUNE PHOTOGRAPHED BY OBERTO GILI FOOD STYLING BY LORA ZARUBIN

The well-lived life

WINNING WAYS

REFINED YET RELAXED, UNDERSTATED WITH A DASH OF ÉLAN, THE HOLLYWOOD HILLS HOME OF INTERIOR DESIGNER (AND *HOUSE & GARDEN* EDITOR AT LARGE) PAUL FORTUNE IS A MODEL OF TRADITION-INFORMED MODERNISM



THE IDEA WAS TO ENJOY THE HOUSE'S AURA OF OLD HOLLYWOOD



BUT GIVE IT A LITTLE NEW MAGIC



first came to Los Angeles for a couple of weeks on my way back to the ranch in Oregon where I'd been living. That was 25 years ago, and I'm still here, trying to figure out what happened.

I do remember visiting a friend that first balmy night in April, climbing up the canyon road in a '67 Cadillac convertible and swooning from the scent of mock orange and jasmine as a new moon climbed into the deep blue sky. I was astonished at the absurdity of the cliché and yet thrilled. I remember thinking, this works, I could do this. And I did, in the very house I was about to visit.

The finger of fate was really poking me in the eye that night, and within months I was living there—in Hollywood! This was 1978, and I had been living in New York and London, just out of art school and deeply enthusiastic about the high-tech look. The house I had moved into had been the fantasy home of an old movie designer, and was rumored to have been Stan Laurel's canyon hideaway.

The look was canyon cottage, but the owner had come back from Europe after the war and added his take on a Provençal bastide. Needless to say, the mutant result did not lend itself easily to the high-tech revamp I wanted to impose, but I was not to be thwarted, and friends still like to chide me about the several acres of asphaltlike industrial carpeting I installed over perfectly good hardwood floors, and the black Formica coffee tables, and the operating theater lamps! ▶

TRADE SECRETS

A ca. 1930s wrought-iron banister is original to the living room.

FURNISHINGS Fortune designed the daybed; coffee tables are by Roy McMakin. Danish armchairs are ca. 1960s. Brass and walnut table by Panaform. FABRICS Daybed in Larsen's Cafe stripe in Toffee. ART A 2001 painting by Charles Fine, and two works by Robert Kushner.

As the months turned into years I scooted through several “looks”—Mex-ethnic, Old Hollywood, minimalist, New Hollywood (I can’t quite remember what that was)—until I had my first design epiphany: work with what you’ve got. Don’t try to turn a cottage into a loft or a condo into (worst offender) a Tuscan villa. Accept the design hand you’ve been dealt and then work with it. Of course, you have to make it stunning, but my second epiphany came much later when I realized that though it takes time to design a house it takes much more to make a home. I’m working on it, although after this last slog of construction I think I’m almost done.

The results were worth it. The 1920s house always had a great feeling, and people invariably had a memorable time here. It had magic. But it did need a little tweaking to bring out its full potential, and that was what I was itching to do.

First on the list was a pool. For years I had resisted, but now I’m sorry I waited so long. There was a lot on one side of the house that had been used for parking. It had no privacy, and after years of having an extremely open house (we never had a key) I decided it was time to lower the portcullis, so to speak. A new retaining wall stabilized the hillside terraces and provided the foundation for a pool. The usual conflicts with contractors ensued, but after two years we got our pool, which is a huge success. With a new covered loggia for dining and a fireplace, our outside summerhouse was complete, and as we’re in California we can use it all year.

Next was a grown-up bathroom. The original was fine, but I wanted more, and got it, complete with an ivory-colored leather floor and an outdoor shower. To loll with a glass of wine in the sunken bath and watch hummingbirds dart through the jungle foliage outside the window is another Hollywood cliché, one that you enjoy getting used to.

There was no real master plan, but an organic style evolved that really worked with the vernacular of the house. Most of the furnishings are modern, in the twentieth-century sense. I’m not impressed with much that this century has to offer so far, but we’ll see. I like wood and brass and glass and heavy linen. The dashes



Chris Brock, far left, actress Lone Skye, and Fortune in a '67 Rolls-Royce Silver Shadow. ■ Skye and Michaela Livingston on the loggia. ■ In the kitchen, seed pods and a Holly Montgomery watercolor hang above Bauer plates, Fiestaware, Abingdon cups and vases, and an Allan Adler silver and ebony serving set. ■ Poolside, water pours through a giant Malaysian clamshell, and creeping fig climbs the wall. ■ In the library, Fortune designed the rear sofa, covered in an Old World Weavers twill. Twisted wool rug by Christine Van Der Hurd. Parchment and bamboo light, ca. '70s, by Michael Taylor.



THE WELL-LIVED LIFE

Interior designer Paul Fortune cuts an elegant path through the hills of Hollywood.

■ **Where do you buy your books in L.A.?**

"Book Soup and Arcana."

■ **What are you now reading?**

"Martial's *Epigrams*, written almost 2,000 years ago and still a brutally funny and relevant take on social behavior and foibles."

■ **What's your favorite cocktail?**

"I prefer wines, but a fresh pomegranate margarita can hit the spot once in a while." (See Shopping, back of book, for recipe.)

■ **What car do you drive?**

"A '92 Volvo station wagon, but

occasionally the '67 Rolls-Royce Silver Shadow I bought my partner for his 40th birthday."

■ **What had the biggest influence on your sense of design?**

"Old Hollywood films."

■ **If you could have anyone from history as a dinner partner, whom would you choose?**

"Cleopatra—just to see what all the fuss was about."

■ **Do you have a guilty pleasure?**

"Normandy butter on toasted Poilâne bread."

■ **If you weren't a decorator, what would you be?**

"A gardener or a singer. Actually, a singing gardener could be a winning combo."





of color in the house come from old Venini or Blenko glassware and the artworks. For some reason I find strong colors more palatable in glass or art. I love browns, creams, and greens, and interrupt these with a bit of orange or my new penchant, puce.

My best decorating moment came when my bookshelves were installed and the ziggurats of books that for years had been slumped against walls all over the house had a home. I cracked open a bottle of Meursault and stayed up until dawn organizing them and enjoying rediscovering lost gems and long neglected classics. Someone once said that books are the perfect decor, and I would have to agree.

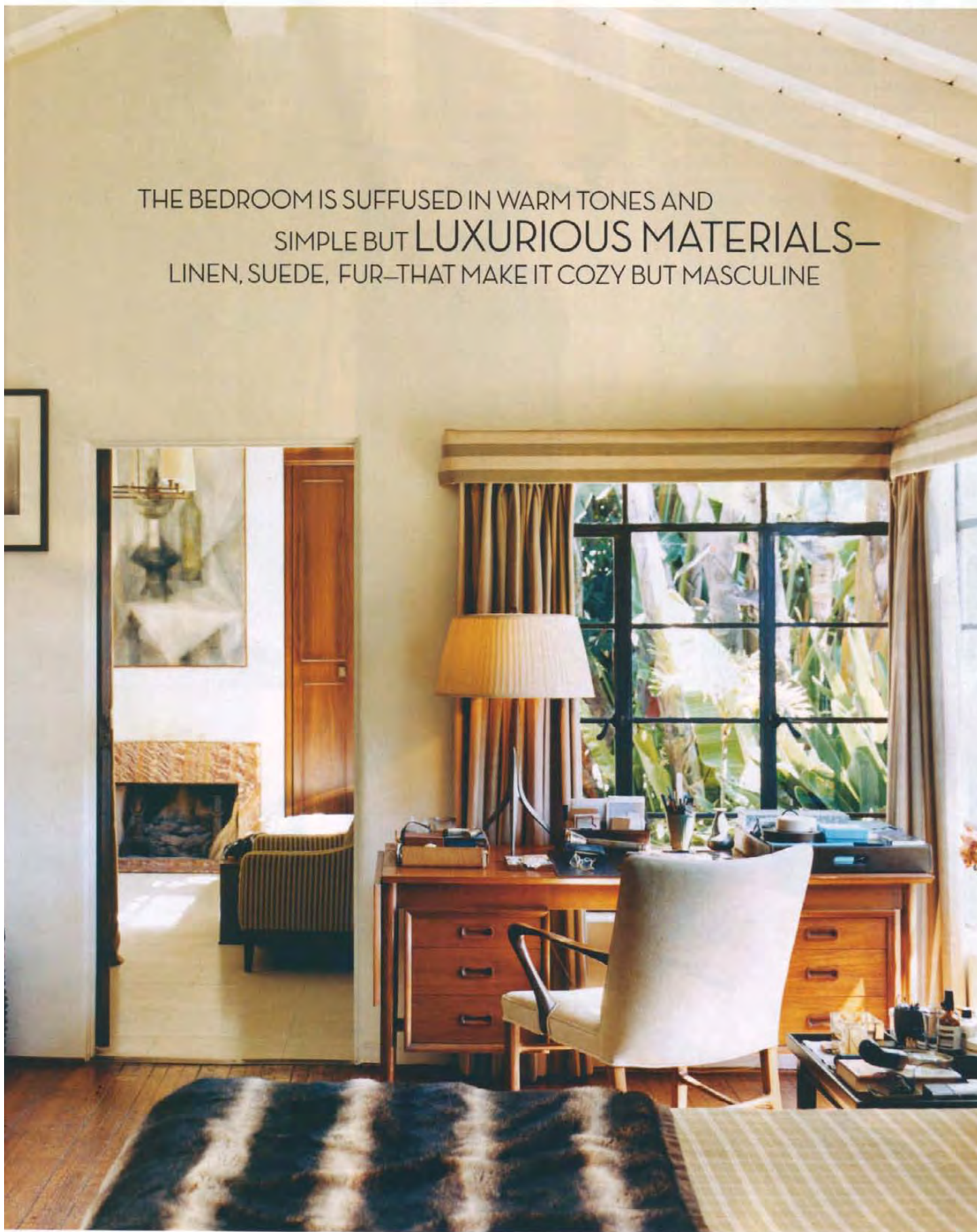
I finally feel that the house has fulfilled its potential. The rooms and gardens flow in an ideal manner, allowing the light and breeze to cast their spell, and my cats have many congenial corners to nap in. (They must be very congenial; Button, the oldest cat, is 24.)

I can still remember that first night in the canyon, and I continue to be restored by the house and its charms, but I always feel that I'm merely the caretaker and my hope is that whoever lives here in the future will appreciate and enjoy its special allure as I have had the good fortune to for a quarter century. ▷

TRADE SECRETS
FURNISHINGS In the master bedroom, a 1949 Ole Wanscher rosewood chair is paired with a '50s Danish desk. The ca. 1960s Italian wood and steel lamp is from Blackman-Cruz, L.A.
FABRICS Caledon Satin curtains and Oxford Plaid bedcover by Rose Tarlow-Melrose House.
BATH FITTINGS A tub, above, has Dornbracht's Tara hardware.



THE BEDROOM IS SUFFUSED IN WARM TONES AND
SIMPLE BUT **LUXURIOUS MATERIALS**—
LINEN, SUEDE, FUR—THAT MAKE IT COZY BUT MASCULINE



TRADE SECRETS "Showering outdoors is soothing and addictive," Fortune says of the installation he built, opposite page. The luxe master bath, this page, is tiled in Edelman leather in Ivory. **FURNISHINGS** Leather-topped console, ca. '40s, from Blackman-Cruz, L.A. Walnut door with '40s brass handles from Liz's Hardware, L.A. **ACCENTS** Brass chandelier, ca. 1960, from City Antiques, L.A. Marie Rouilly painting, 1958. **CURTAIN TRIM** Custom by Declercq, Paris.



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