

# STAR BILLING

A gracious 1920s home set in the Hollywood Hills that hints at a glamorous past is revamped to enhance its old-school beauty for the present day.

Photographs TIM STREET-PORTER Words JANICE JONES

This page: The 'Blanca' rug from Stark defines the living room. B&B Italia leather sofa. 'Easy' chair by Pierre Jeanneret. 'Dante Flor' floor lamp and 'Constellation' side table, all from Downtown, as are the Aldo Tura cocktail table and Murano vase. Jewel box by Kelly Wearstler. A Gucci cashmere throw drapes one of the Paul McCobb ottomans also from Downtown. Artworks by Thomas Wachholz.



This page Saarinen 'Tulip' dining table with Calacatta top from Knoll and 'Library' chairs by Pierre Jeanneret from Downtown. Walls painted in Ralph Lauren 'Chalk White'. The photograph in the living area is by Lyle Owerko. 'Souffle' ottoman by Kelly Wearstler. Opposite page The hillside home looks over Downtown LA and West Hollywood.



“There is a much freer attitude towards style and almost anything goes. It’s fun!”

**R**umoured to have once been home to screen legend Ginger Rogers, this beautiful understated 1920s house is built into the edge of a hillside and split over two levels. Its setting in the Hollywood Hills gives it an amazing outlook over Downtown Los Angeles and West Hollywood. The streets are steep here and there are no footpaths but the position is worth the hike. Generally early to mid century in pedigree, houses in this area are fairly low key in appearance with exteriors of render, timber cladding and glass.

This home’s air of old-school charm attracted the couple to the property and they were keen to retain that feeling. When it came to choosing a design firm to remodel their 1920s-era Hollywood Hills home in LA, the owners, a couple in the entertainment industry, came to the studio of Australian interior architect David Hicks.

Flying under the radar is the modus operandi for David’s LA studio rather than self-promotion. “We undertake a limited number of selected projects in the US, mainly for clients in the entertainment industry or who are in the public eye. So our work there is less publicised as anonymity is a luxury. All the projects we have done there to date are residential on various scales, from apartments to large homes,” says David who, along with local LA-based architects, has also undertaken concept and design development for one of the world’s biggest luxury property developers based in Dubai.

Originally David had set up the LA satellite studio a few years ago because of the demand from Australian clients for more individual, unique furniture, artwork, lighting and materials. “There is a huge choice in the US so to facilitate this desire for individuality I set up a base there to deal with sourcing, procurement and shipping. From this we started to get enquiries to undertake interior design work.

“Funnily enough, this project came to us because the owners of this home had wanted artwork selected for their previous home. Our LA studio is becoming sought after for putting together collections, not just of art but furniture as well. So when the client purchased this house they entrusted us to do a make-over, or re-modelling as it is known in the US,” he says.

The owners asked David to rationalise the space planning by streamlining the floor plan and connecting newer sections of building additions with the original 1920s parts. Many of the original kitchen and bathroom features and the existing marble fireplaces were retained and enhanced. David was briefed to cosmetically make over the exterior along with the interior finishes while keeping the home relevant to the era it was built in.

“The owners wanted something warm in texture and feel and simple in material palette as a clean canvas on which to layer a collection of decorative arts, furniture and lighting, which they requested the studio to curate for them,” he says. They had certain





pieces they desired, including the dining chairs and armchairs by Swiss architect Pierre Jeanneret which were high on the list, but they left the assembly and layering of the collection to David.

Most pieces were created by “very collectable designers, past and present”, says the interior architect. “I find clients are more open to this in the US, and even Europe, as there is more history and interest in vintage furniture – especially well-preserved items. They are not worried about living with these unique pieces – there is a much freer attitude towards style and almost anything goes. It’s fun!” says David.

Among pieces collected for the home are the 1950s modernist ‘Constellation’ side table by Edward Wormley for Dunbar, vintage Hollywood Regency furniture from the 1920s, contemporary works by German artist Thomas Wachholz and objects by the likes of Kelly Wearstler, Christian Louboutin and Gucci.

The eclectic combination of furniture periods and styles takes the design to a whole new level, says David. A story of “collecting, world travel and history” is created with the mix of a relaxed style and a more glamorous feel as hard-to-find pedigree pieces sit next to the accessible and contemporary.

Describing the home’s aesthetic as “eclectic, considered and curated”, David names the bedroom as his favourite room. “I love it as it is so fresh and fun. It features an old marble fireplace that was kept from the original home that seems a little out of place but adds to the eclectic feel. The pale blue that we painted on the walls contrasts with the coir carpet, and layering of furniture from various eras makes this room very intriguing and different. It is a really beautiful room.

“The owners love the result especially the integration of items they never thought would work together but had always desired. In fact, they love the finished scheme so much that they are selling the house to buy a larger one so we can add to the story and the collection of amazing furniture they have now.”

For more go to [davidhicks.com](http://davidhicks.com).



**SPEED READ**

» The LA studio of interior architect David Hicks was called on to streamline and refurbish the interiors of this Hollywood Hills home. » The owners, a couple in the entertainment industry, wanted to preserve the old-school charm of the 1920s house but rationalise the layout for their family. » They also briefed David’s studio to create a collection of contemporary, vintage and modernist furniture, lighting, artworks and objects to suit. » Interior walls were refreshed with Ralph Lauren paints in white for the living areas and blue for the main bedroom. » Original features such as the marble fireplaces in the living area and main bedroom were retained, adding to the aesthetic that David describes as “eclectic, considered and curated”.

This page A Calacatta benchtop adds light to the bathroom. Kelly Wearstler ‘Precision’ side table. Artwork unknown. Opposite page, from top Fratelli Toso bedside lamps in Murano glass from Downtown. ‘Classic Kiss’ throw by Kelly Wearstler. Artwork by James Nares. Walls painted in Ralph Lauren ‘Practical Blue’. Christian Louboutin ‘Rollerboy’ shoes. Hollywood Regency table and mirror, both from Dragonette Limited. Painting by Bui Van Hoan.