

HOME DECOR

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Fresh Rooms

with Knockout Color

Fashion Flash:

What 20 Top Designers
Can't Live Without

Kitchens that Cook





Speak, Memory

Peter Dunham and
Peter Kopelson transform a tired 1970s
Hollywood house into
a glamorous thing of the past

Text by Jessica Bendinger
Photography by Tim Street-Porter

A visitor arriving at the Hollywood Hills

Peter Dunham and Peter Kopelson might expect it to reflect their respective professions: showcase chic for the former, an interior designer, with bits of high tech for the latter, a dermatologist. But it turns out that nothing is predictable about the witty and whimsical couple about the house the couple couldn't resist rescuing.

"We were much more attracted to the old Mediterranean kind of architecture," says Dunham. Nevertheless, when they came to the curious 1975 contemporary house—"fake Swiss chalet on the one side, shantytown Naples modern on the other"—they snapped it up. "What was the selling point? "It had a lot of surprises," Kopelson explains. "When you enter, you see a very small structure, and when you go in, you get an extensive view of the city and the sea. The most exciting surprise was a huge basement with 20-foot ceilings that could be converted into a large room for entertaining."

Next came a bit of gracious remodeling. Switching the layout to move the living quarters downstairs and the master suite upstairs. Adding a 1,000-square-foot great room. And installing a tidy guest suite with a private entrance.



Facing page: Peter Kopelson (holding Bianca) and Peter Dunham at their Hollywood Hills house; the interior combines vintage and antique pieces with Dunham-designed fabrics and furniture. This page: Syrie Maughan armchairs in the great room are upholstered in Henry Calvin's Texture Oyster fabric; the Moroccan tole chandelier is from Blackman Cruz. See Resources.

8: A circa-1700 tapestry dominates the room; the painted ceiling by William IV table is desk. Facing page, Bianca, a West terrier, relaxes in a chair and curtains of a Dunham-designed print fabric. Vintage collection chaise on the terrace are in Dunham fabrics. Sources.



The result? A bright, fluid space sprinkled with French doors. Both the great room and the kitchen open onto a sunny hillside terrace, though the kitchen's cozy sitting area is where guests usually congregate. "Friends hang out and talk to us while we're cooking," says Kopelson, so he and Dunham graced the room with a large sofa with alternating slipcovers: a cheery red fabric and a botanical print popularized by Elsie de Wolfe that "looks like something on my Aunt Zora's lanai in Florida," says Kopelson. And in a prime example of the house's laid-back ethos, a host of ceramic plates hanging on the wall above—painted by Konstantin Kakanias and depicting the zany adventures of Mrs. Tependris, an Auntie Mame-like fictional globe-trotter—are often pulled down from their nails and put to work for dining at the kitchen's butcher-block table.

Much of the interior's charm comes from the furniture and objects acquired on the pair's travels. "It reminds me of Tangier," Kopelson adds. "We wanted to re-create that mixture of the Orient and Europe, the kind of chirping-bird, leafy-palm atmosphere." He especially relishes the mood-setting color schemes: "The red office overlooking the street brings the neighborhood inside, and the green master bedroom enhances the serenity of the sea by day and the romantic city lights at night."





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When there are the pieces discovered closer to home—old maps, light fixtures, grillwork, and wood doors from 1920s Spanish bungalows—picked up at salvage yards. “We enjoy objects that spark in conversation,” says Dunham, “so it was fun to go out and find this stuff.”

Many heirlooms and hand-me-downs occupy pride of place, however. A Danish chest in the office hails from Kopelson’s boyhood home in White Plains, New York; a 19th-century miniature ivory pagoda belonged to his great-grandfather, an antiques dealer. One of the mementos from Dunham’s native England is a framed Cecil Beaton print in the master bedroom. Tributes to some of his favorite designers include an apricot velvet Billy Baldwin boudoir chair, a ruby wool chair by Valerian Rybar, and a faux-leopard rug by Syrie Maugham.

Decorations from less exalted sources meld the old with the new, a striking combination of bargain finds and prized antiques, such as a large inlaid wooden Syrian chair found in a lower Manhattan shop juxtaposed with a contemporary blown-glass lamp from Urban Outfitters. A crimson William IV desk and magnificent circa-1700 tapestry that dominate the beamed great room were purchased on impulse at Christie’s sale of objects owned by English painter Christopher Gibbs. Quirky 1950s cheerleader megaphone and a 1930s lamp were picked up at a San Diego flea market, an amusing Art Deco lamp at Niall Smith Antiques. And an unabashedly ornate Moorish-style lamp lights the way to a Moorish-inspired terrace itself illuminated by exotic lanterns.

“The only rules were to keep it homey and lived in, with sofas and chairs where you can sit and talk for hours,” says Kopelson. “And plenty of books,” Dunham adds. “I’m claustrophobic in a house without books. Or memories from our individual pasts, along with all the offbeat stuff that we’ve brought together, things that speak to you and make you dream.” ■

Left: A Chesterfield sofa is paired with a Louis XV bench in the master bedroom; the bed linens are by Frette and the crewel curtain fabric from Old World Weavers. Right: In the kitchen’s sitting area, Dunham’s Spaulding Square sofa is upholstered in Ferns fabric from Old World Weavers; the artwork and ceramic plates are by Konstantin Kakania. See Resources.

