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# Seeking Sanctuary



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# & Tranquility in LA



Photo: Chris Seid

INTERIOR DESIGNER **ANNETTE ENGLISH'S**  
BUSY CLIENTS CRAVE TRANQUILITY, AND SHE HELPS  
THEM TO FIND IT IN THEIR VERY OWN HOMES

**Just as a good seamstress goes beyond** mere measurements and works to find just the right fabric, color and style to suit a fashionable woman's sartorial lifestyle, interior designer Annette English works with her clients to tailor their homes to fit their day-to-day routines.

"We have such fast-paced lives, and we need to come home to a sanctuary," says English, who founded Annette English Interior Design Inc. 11 years ago. "The only way for me to create that is to listen to both what my clients are saying and what they are not saying and then create an environment that supports who they are."

English left her native Perth, Australia, at 19 to explore the world for many years before settling in San Francisco. There, she opened a popular, chic restaurant, which was lauded not only for the cuisine, but particularly for the décor. "I did the interior design, and the restaurant received accolades for its innovation and beauty," she says. She went back to school and worked with one of the Bay Area's top designers, Alissa Quint. "While working with her, I jumped right into the multi-million-dollar projects she had," adds English, who started her own eponymous business at that time. "She taught me the business side of things and allowed me to flourish." ▸

Words by Laurie McLaughlin | Photography by Michael McCreary

While each project is very different in theme and style, her trademark is the elegance, sophistication and coziness in each of her interiors, English says. "I might learn at first that clients want a nice retreat for a bedroom, but I find out as I dig a little deeper that what they really want is a romantic getaway," she says, and she asks a lot of questions. "I'll ask them about their vision, and say, 'What do you want to experience in this room, and who are you going to experience it with?'"

One of the trends English has seen develop in home interiors over the last couple of years is clients' desires to create a private space within their homes just to unwind. "It's more about a sanctuary, a place that is clutter-free where there is a home for everything," she says. "I quite often bring in a personal organizer so clients can de-clutter the last 10 years of their lives, and we create storage options for everything. So, when they come in at the end of a hectic day, it's really simple, it's minimal and makes them feel really peaceful and calm."

Her clients are among the biggest names in Los Angeles, and she takes her projects very seriously and personally. "I'm really on-purpose with my life doing interior design, and I know this is what I'm meant to be doing," says English, and many of her clients become close friends. "It's an intimate experience. At the beginning, we are signing up for a one- or two-year commitment, and I really go out of my way to make sure they feel heard and to create a soulful environment for my clients." ▸







*"It's more about a sanctuary, a place that is clutter-free where there is a home for everything"*



# secret to the style



1 To make a statement with this small master bedroom, we used an elongated headboard that extends beyond the bedside tables—a visual manipulation of length—that echoes the horizontal windows. We used a color palette of mustard, charcoal, cream and a crisp white. The stylized trellis motif on the fabric covering the headboard really makes it pop. It's important to use a mixture of textures, both the sophisticated and relaxed. The wallpaper is bamboo raffia, but the lamps are polished nickel and the pillows are covered in suede and silk. The artwork above the headboard is a series of photographs by Hiroshi Sugimoto of horizon shots of the ocean and sky at different times of the day and night. They are very tranquil and speak volumes with very little.



2

The client for this project is a very successful real estate executive with a modern sense of style. He downsized when he moved to this condominium in West Hollywood, and we wanted to reconcile his modern taste with the smaller space and create the flavor of summer with hues that blur the frontier between the inside and outside. The intense moss green on the pillows and throw reflect the

horse tail on the deck, and provides a splashy detail within an otherwise serene monochrome. We eliminated interior boundaries by replacing the sliding glass doors with folding doors, and we removed the dropped ceiling in the living room. The high ceilings and low furniture, which we custom made, make the space look bigger than it is.



Annette English on . . .  
design details that  
create serene spaces

3 Everything in this bedroom is custom designed. We created it for Esquire magazine's showcase house in Beverly Ridge Estates. We determined that this was the guest room in the ultimate home of a wealthy, well-traveled Swiss gentleman. He's traveled the world, and this is where his guests would stay. To illustrate the Swiss theme, above the headboard are custom, hand-blown glass bowls hanging on beaded wire, which are like Alpine water droplets, and the bedside table lamps are made out of birch bark. Each designer for this home was paired with a luxury brand, and we worked with Bally and created a herringbone throw from their fabric line, hardware from their leather bags to hang the draperies, and "Bally"-embossed pony skin leather pillows on the bed.



Annette English Interior Design  
323.285.5180 | annetteenglish.com