

“Everything is overscale,” says designer David Desmond. “The hall isn’t filled with stuff, but it has great presence.” George I-style giltwood console; Neoclassical mirror; lanterns by Visual Comfort.



Colonial Glamour

ARCHITECT RICHARD MANION COLLABORATES WITH
INTERIOR DESIGNER DAVID DESMOND FOR SLEEK AND CHIC INTERIORS

TEXT BY LEIGH ESSEX | PHOTOGRAPHY BY ERHARD PFEIFFER

IN WITH OLD AND IN WITH THE RECENT-OLD. That’s the style statement of a new house that mixes the 18th century with Hollywood’s Golden Age and a dash of the 1970s.

The spark for the design was a Colonial Revival house that architect Richard Manion had built in Bel-Air, which in turn had been inspired by traditional estates built around Atlanta in the 1930s. But this lot in Brentwood was smaller and abutted a busy intersection. “By using an L shape, we placed the garages and service wing along the main road and fronted the family wing on the quieter side street,” Manion says. “And by grading the lot down about 12 feet, we were able to maximize the building height and minimize the noise and view of traffic.”

ABOVE Architect Richard Manion used white brick for the Colonial Revival façade and around the windows and corners for detailing. Cast-stone porch, exposed downspouts, big slate roof, grouping of different size windows and strong dormers and a symmetrical, organized floor plan.

We placed the formal dining room at the front as it's only used in the evenings and didn't need a garden view," Manion says. Hand-painted Chinese wallpaper; English pedestal table; Louis XVI-style chairs upholstered in gold leather; Chinoiserie rattan chairs upholstered in linen batik print; vintage gilded wall sconces with crystal leaves. Lalique Zeila panthers on table.



Desmond integrated the couple's collection of antiques with 1970s pieces. "The Pace Collection cocktail tables have a level of quality that holds up to antiques," he says. "And the Milo Baughman arc sofas and chairs all float and work with large groups of people."

But while the framework is Colonial Revival, with white brick, paneling and moldings, all revolving around a classic center hall floor plan, the interiors evolved in a different direction—sleeker and chicer. "Movie stars from Hollywood's Golden Age commissioned classically based houses from classically trained architects and designers, then hired English butlers and French ladies maids as the supporting cast," says interior designer David Desmond. "With this project, the clients—a young, cosmopolitan, polyglot couple with three kids—didn't want a stage set. They chose instead to adapt a classic style to the way they want to live today."

Desmond took inspiration from the interiors of William Haines—the former silent screen star who became one of Hollywood's top decorators—and architect Paul Williams for elements such as the black lacquered interior doors and black and white marble

At the other end of the long living room is a 1920s 12-panel Coromandel screen split in two, a nod to Coco Chanel's Paris apartment. Louis XV-style painted parcel gilt armchairs are upholstered in Clarence House linen.





ABOVE Tall doors with cremone bolts help maintain the wine room's temperature and prevent the wood from warping. Milo Baughman bronze table and tufted chairs, ca. 1970 French Empire-style chandelier; python-textured wallpaper in three shades of silver.

floors. "The interiors also explore the influence of the French design firm Maison Jansen—a way of looking back to the 18th century, but in a modern way," he adds.

The home swivels in two directions. To the right of the entry hall is the "grown-ups" area, with an extra-long living room that spills into a bar, a wine tasting room and the husband's office/library. To the left is the family wing, with the media room, dining room, kitchen and breakfast area.



Clad in charcoal and gray, the media room is a nighttime TV cocoon. Drawing over fireplace by Robert Bryce Muir; lithograph on mantel by Sol LeWitt; Lalique vases on fireplace mantel and coffee table. Maison Jansen Louis XVI-style armchair upholstered in black leather; custom sofa and ottoman; pair of articulating steel floor lamps by Restoration Hardware.



The large master bath, which the couple shares, is a study in gray and white. With its sharp geometric lines, the Equator Marmara Zebra marble from Turkey was cut into 18-inch squares. Silver damask-patterned wallpaper; Visual Comfort sconces and pendant light; Waterworks faucets.



The couple had been buying 18th century-style European furnishings, “but we made a conscious decision that they were done with collecting antiques and we were now moving into the 1970s,” says Desmond. With a cohesive color scheme of black, white, silver and gray, the interiors stay crisp and modern without going overboard.

Manion added several distinctive features. The entry has a 10-foot ceiling that then leads into a double-height center hall. He kept the ceiling height on both floors the same, instead of lowering the height on the second floor. And this couple wanted a self-contained master suite but preferred to share one large master bath.

Now this new house fits within both Los Angeles’ architectural tradition and an evolving idea of Hollywood glamour. In Brentwood, a new white brick Colonial Revival star is born. **CH**

ABOVE “The wife loves to cook. She wanted a pretty, restaurant-style eat-in kitchen and no high cabinets, so we made open marble shelves,” says Desmond. “The island is very functional—not too wide or long with enough room to move around.” Calacatta marble; double Wolf range; custom tufted bench; Bernhardt chairs. **LEFT** One axis leads directly from the entry through to the garden and brings natural light into the interiors. The color scheme of black, white, silver and grey creates a polished, high style look that is modern within a traditional framework.