

Trip to the Top

Interior designer Trip Haenisch shoots to the very heights of Beverly Hills to create a hideaway where curated finds can kick back and relax.

| By Alexandria Abramian-Mott | Photography by Peden + Munk |

Trip Haenisch may be one of the least assuming A-list designers in L.A. He has yet to brand himself as a this or a that; and even if he did have a Twitter account—he doesn't—it's doubtful he'd become a producer of one-liners about his clients Courteney Cox, Christina Aguilera, power agent Patrick Whitesell or Joe Francis of *Girls Gone Wild* infamy. Which isn't to say that he lacks access; it's just that urge to alchemize those relationships into a line of throw pillows for Target isn't there. And his house, it turns out, is the perfect expression of a soft-spoken person who runs a busy design firm by day and

retreats to a quiet cul-de-sac at the tippy-top of Benedict Canyon by night.

"They can never build on those hills," says Haenisch from his master bedroom, where floor-to-ceiling windows face a canyon of classic, dusty green Southern California scrubs. "You don't see any houses from here, so when I wake up in the morning, I could be anywhere in the world."

He's adopted a similar perspective toward the interiors, which aren't fad-stamped to any specific style or place. Instead, Haenisch has purposely taken an under-decorated approach to the house

Interior designer Trip Haenisch gets his dukes up at his Beverly Hills house. In one of the home's bedrooms, Haenisch placed a highly collectible Tawaraya boxing ring, designed by Memphis, the Milan-based design collective that was led by Ettore Sottsass.





that was built in 1959. "The more I do this, the more I really like a look that is curated as opposed to decorated," he says. "That's how I design these days."

In this case, it meant taking a ranch-style home that had great lines and so-so finishes and creating a knockout environment where family, dogs and art easily coexist. It's also a place where seriously collectible furniture gets near-constant use, whether Haenisch is enjoying a quiet weekend with his son Jake, 19, or entertaining 100 of his nearest and dearest.

"I didn't change the box, but I did change a lot of the surfaces of the house,"

says Haenisch, who purchased the property two years ago. "Outside there was brick and Spanish-style tile that was in the pool. I took out the brick and put in the concrete with the pebbles to kind of modernize that. And I changed the tile around the pool to something more modern." For the interiors, upgrades included whitewashing knotty pine walls, adding gray stone surfaces in the kitchen area and installing "random oak plank floors that get better with every nick and scratch."

"I love that dove gray with a medium oak color like my floors and an off-white on the walls," he says. "It's such a beautiful

Opposite page: In the master bedroom, a pair of photographs by Dara Friedman entitled "Kristan Closed/Kristan Open," hangs above the bed with Deborah Sharpe linens. Clockwise from top: Haenisch installed a movie screen for poolside viewing at night; a lifeguard chair from Tectone acts a cheeky, nautical touch to the area; Haenisch transformed a native tree from Indonesia, sold through Bo Tree, into a dramatic outdoor lamp.

palette. Especially when I'm using color, I have to figure out what I ground it with. Otherwise it can look really tacky. For example, I love red, but if I see just red and white together in a room it looks like a candy stripper. You need to richen those colors with neutral tones."

Case in point: a fiberglass Tomato Chair by Finnish designer Eero Aarnio that sits in the living room. In a different kind of house the flaming red seat could turn a room into a self-conscious, gallery-like experience. Here, surrounded by a biscuit-colored B&B sectional that Haenisch had recovered in, yes, teddy bear fabric ("When you lay on



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it you melt, and, it stands up to the sun, the dogs and people spilling wine on it,” he says) and piles upon piles of books, it actually looks inviting. “It’s comfortable!” says Haenisch of the low-slung chair.

And playful. Which may be the point to many of the Kansas-born designer’s choices here. From the lifeguard tower that he positioned poolside to the superhero statue (by artist Curtis Jere) that stands sentinel in the dining room, many of the home’s standout pieces are intended to create a sense of fun, says Haenisch. And the cake-taker here is the Tawayara boxing ring designed by Masanori Umeda of the 1980s

Milan-based Memphis design collective. Haenisch had the iconic piece placed in his son’s bedroom where it’s often strewn with books, pillows and an iPad. “The point is that it’s an amazing piece of art from an amazing time. And it’s fun!” he says.

A constant collector, Haenisch admits that he doesn’t have room for many of his finds. Some of his favorites—pieces by John Baldessari, photographs by Bruce Weber and Cartier-Bresson—are casually displayed, not preciously spotlighted.

“Good stuff travels no matter what style of house you live in,” says Haenisch. “When it comes to collecting art, I like the twists

Opposite page: The living room is dominated by a B&B Italia sectional that Haenisch had recovered in teddy bear fabric. Euro Aernout’s fiberglass Tomato Chair imports a burst of color into the otherwise neutral-toned room. Above: The dining area features a Holly Hunt table and Rolo Erdogari’s eye-catching Plexiglas chair that was purchased at JF Chen. A Fornasetti plate rests on a side table.

and turns of unexpected things. I think about how to juxtapose things; it’s one of the things that keeps me up at night, trying to figure out how to put things together. And I love it when it’s just an interesting mix of stuff. That’s the way to live.”

That may explain one of the home’s most striking combos: an enormous pair of photographs by Dara Friedman of a woman taking her shirt off hanging above Haenisch’s beautiful wood bed. “I bought that piece for Joe Francis. It was in his living room and he said, ‘I want that out of here. She’s ugly.’ So I took it and I love it. I think it’s so great.”

