

RENOVATION STYLE

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Lifestyles

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NEW
ENGLAND
STYLE

Los Angeles,
California

Inside & Out

A couple transform a dark warren of rooms into a relaxing, picture-perfect family home.

BY JENNIFER WILSON PHOTOGRAPHY BY EDMUND BARR PRODUCED BY LAURA HULL

"I loved the house," architect Tim Barber says. "I loved the view. The site is world-class. So the house is worth the effort. But when you see the inside, you'll know what I mean; it was a little daunting."



HOW WE LIVE TODAY

An entry hall should be bright, big enough to greet multiple guests simultaneously, and provide a place to sit and put on or take off shoes.



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Focused on the view of the ocean and mountains, Mark Tinker could look past the mix of design styles when he first saw the Los Angeles house formerly owned by actress and comedienne Carol Burnett. "I walked from the living room to the dining, looking across the canyon to the ocean and mountain view, and knew I had to buy this house," he says.

Director and producer of TV dramas *Deadwood* and *NYPD Blue*, Mark lived as a bachelor in the 1940s structure. It was originally built in New England style, but over the years it had acquired gingerbread details, country kitsch, and old-school wallpaper. Its interior leaned Southwestern, with plastered walls, bullnose corners, and New Mexico-style fireplaces.

When Mark married actress Chandra West six years ago, they pledged to bring the house into the 21st century and turn the dark and mismatched "man cave" into a traditional home full of warmth and comfort.

It would require a massive clarification of the layout, so the couple hired architect Tim Barber, "someone with imagination, excellent taste, and an understanding of where and how to spend within our budget," Mark says.



Top Left Barber added bookcases to the living area. To unify the nook with the rest of the space, which has vaulted tongue-in-groove ceilings, he backed the shelves with tongue-in-groove paneling and installed identical shelves on the opposite side of the room. **Top** Multiple exterior doorways were added to maximize outdoor connections. **Above** A piece of bound carpet sections off a conversation area in the living room. **Opposite** Barber retained the flooring from the original foyer.

"THIS ROOM HAS THE BEST VIEW IN THE HOUSE, SO WE KEPT THE DECOR SIMPLE."

ARCHITECT TIM BARBER



HOW WE LIVE TODAY

Even formal dining rooms want a more casual air these days. In this space, a sisal rug mitigates traditional furniture; seagrass works, too.

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BEFORE



In all of the renovation work, enhancing the million-dollar view was the overarching theme. That mission drove where to put in beams, paneling, moldings, and lighting, and it influenced the design of bookshelves, storage, and other built-ins.

Barber honed the architecture and connected living spaces first: moving walls and vaulting ceilings, widening doorways, installing beams and molding, replacing areas of the floor, and expanding the master bath and bedroom.

He further overhauled the public kitchen and the tiny, dark, and viewless master suite. "They were the worst offenders,"

Above Barber coffered portions of the family room ceiling with frosted glass reused from existing skylights. The beam's pale paint hues and semigloss finish help to bounce around light. **Opposite** Texture, pattern, and color repetition add a richness to the dining space, where wallpaper bring the halls to life.

Voice of Experience

Building with the environment in mind doesn't have to be expensive. Architect Tim Barber salvaged and relocated pieces skylights, windows, and cabinetry. "Even the best of houses wear and tear," he says. "If you maintain them nicely, it's not essential for everything to be brand-new. If you chip the marble countertop, polish it out. If the grout gets stained, clean it. These things aren't lauded as brightly as solar collectors or cisterns, but it's all important."



HOW WE LIVE TODAY

As the kitchen has evolved into a type of living room, multiple seating options help keep foot traffic out of the cooking zone.



Barber says with a chuckle. He added two sets of French doors in the kitchen area, inviting the sun and view. Lightening things further were the neutral and pale tones in the soapstone countertops, woodwork, and paint.

An unused fireplace in the master bedroom got the boot in favor of a bay window. A tiny enclosed balcony blocking the view was simply removed.

The master bathroom had a dismal shower enclosure and no storage—both were remedied with a modern bath system and built-ins. “They like things neat, Chandra especially, and they wanted a place to put everything,” Barber says.

Chandra’s preference for pale colors and glass added a new luminescent quality that enhanced the setting even more. Interior designer Peter Dunham, who recommended Barber for the job and was influential in the beginning design stages, engineered the lightened looks. The home’s new open design

Above One of the overhead beams is structural, which generated the pattern of the other beams. Barber hid ductwork inside one of them. The soapstone countertop generates little glare and softens the kitchen. **Right** A small bluestone mantel ties with bluestone on the patio. Above this pergola is the bay window added to the master bedroom. **Opposite** Barber took out a huge fireplace and inserted a breakfast area.



lets in natural light and cross-ventilation, lessening the family's dependence on artificial lighting, heating, and air-conditioning. The architect kept skylights and added or relocated windows. "For me," Barber says, "coming back to a more natural, passive partnership, especially with this gorgeous climate, is really essential."

To enhance the home's sensory pleasures, Barber insisted his clients touch all details before purchasing them. Mark and Chandra tested every doorknob, every faucet, and every drawer pull to make sure they felt good to use. Even making the unusual decision to keep the oak parquet flooring—integrating it with new wood and giving it a dark finish—was about maintaining a pleasant textural experience.

"No matter how right you get the big picture, you've got to pay attention to the small things," Barber says. "In older homes, details are abundant. But sometimes in expanding or restoring, people forget you need to put details back. Those things are grace. They're what give your life small pleasures."

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Above The pool lost 75 percent of its size, giving the yard room to gain seating and dining areas, all accessible from the house by French doors. **Left** Mirrors reflect light for abundant illumination. **Opposite** A bay window on the master suite created a sitting area. The different shades of blue add a liveliness to the otherwise cool color scheme.



HOW WE LIVE TODAY

Scale is of utmost importance when updating a house. No longer a tangle of rooms, this home has a series of usable, comfortable spaces of reasonable size.



"WE MADE EVERY FABRIC WE TOUCHED AS KIDPROOF AND STAINPROOF AS WE COULD."

ARCHITECT TIM BARBER

The Plans, Before & After

The redesign was guided by the need for flow and light. "Little rooms, little doorways, rooms that should be connected to each other but weren't," architect Tim Barber says of the 1940s house. "Getting doorways larger and rooms more accessible to one another always seems to be my task."



Tim Barber, above, has helped plenty of clients through renovations during his career as an architect. Here's what he's found works, and little of what doesn't, for today's on-the-go families.

What are some of the most common challenges for modern dwellers in an old home?

The biggest one is lifestyle change. We don't live the way we used to live. The little woman doesn't hide in the kitchen making the roast to put on the table when Dad gets home at 5 o'clock. Now mealtimes are more casual. Everybody participates. People actually talk to you while you're cooking. Opening up old homes is our biggest challenge.

What rooms do the modern family need that simply weren't needed, say, 100 years ago?

What we need now is storage. Cabinets or closets—many older homes just didn't have enough or any. Thinking through what you're storing and how you want to get to it is key. Another new need is space for electronic media.

What are the top three issues in an older home?

Improving natural light and ventilation; fixing the plan to work for modern life; and reducing maintenance costs, with energy savings and waterproofing and insulation, to make it less expensive and easier to live there.

Clockwise from Upper Left A trompe l'oeil adds perceived height in the dining room. Skylights in the family room keep the space bright. Vaults in the master bedroom open up the ceiling. Paneling and molding were added to the vaults in the living room.

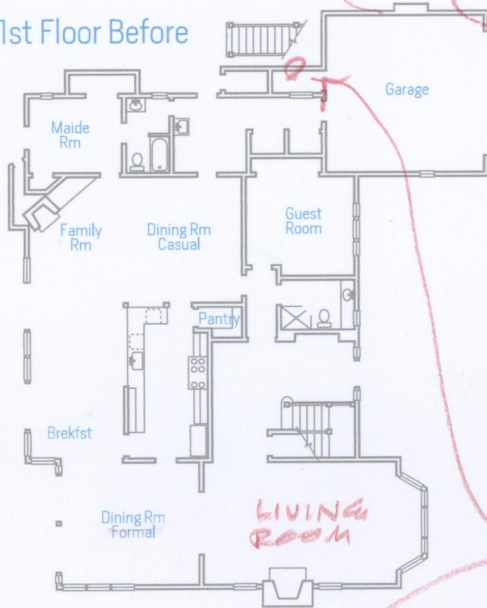


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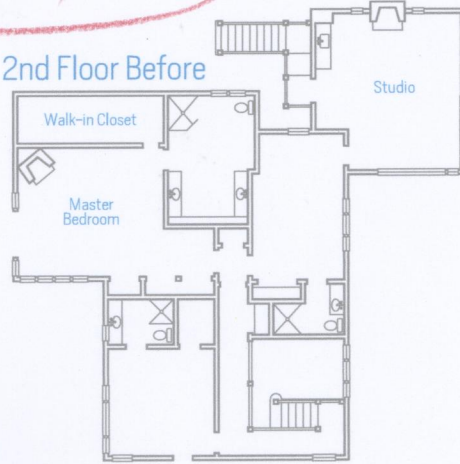
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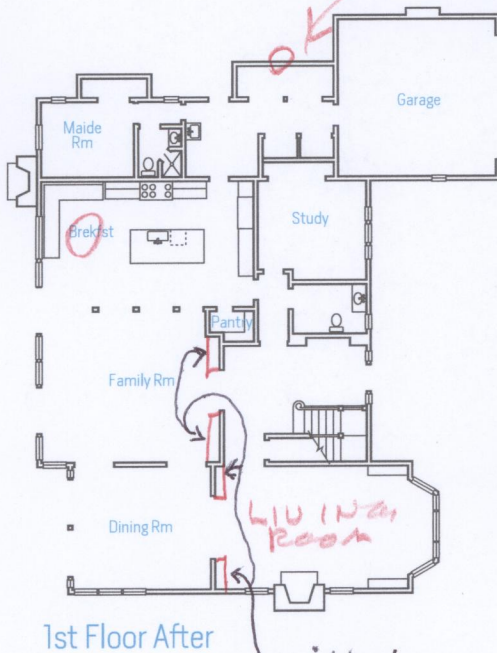
1st Floor Before



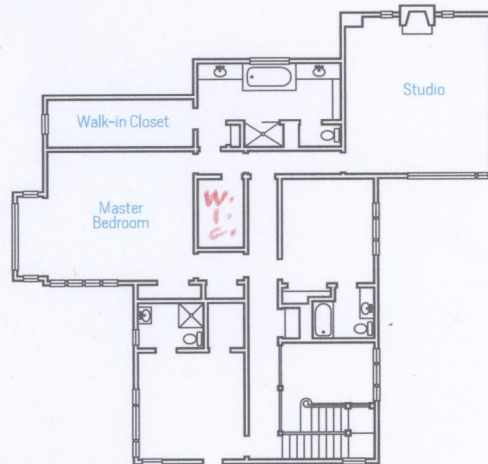
2nd Floor Before



no change to ext. wall



1st Floor After



2nd Floor After