



Private Residence 1

Location Withheld | 1962 | Robert L. Earl, Architect

2012 Renovation by Dennis Gibbens Architects

Part of what made Trousdale Estates so over the top was its embodiment of what it felt like to be wealthy in an optimistic era, an exuberance captured by some young architects just starting out at the time. One of them, Robert L. Earl, produced some phenomenally expressive homes there, and nowhere was this free-form, kinetic experimentation more evident than in his floor plans. Often hidden behind strict facades, his use of swoops, arcs, and circles were not only signature elements of their day, they've become prized design features of the present as well.

Yet few people or families in the 2010s who have the resources or ambition to live in a place like Trousdale Estates are interested in living in a time capsule. Even those who buy an architectural gem, or appreciate a certain style, want to put their own imprint on it. Since Trousdale was already well on its way back to desirability, and this house had the Trousdale swank in spades, it was clearly a good candidate for an update, rather than a tear-down. And it found its white knights in two entertainment



LEFT Living room ABOVE Entry and motor court



executives, who were eager to live the California lifestyle they'd envisioned in New York as younger men, a lifestyle that wasn't possible in their French Normandy style manse at the time—even if it was in the Hollywood Hills.

A down-to-the-studs redo followed; while it adhered to the basic footprint and organizational pattern of the original floor plan, every surface and finish is new—including tawny terrazzo floors poured in place of the black that had once laid underfoot. The circular form of the living room remains as more of a remnant suggestion than delineation; the curving glass of the new window wall alludes to it, but with a far finer technological prowess which would have simply been unavailable in 1962, at any price.

The pool area is hugely improved—mostly by process of elimination. Overgrown cypress and juniper trees and other unkempt planting had obscured the view of the city lights—balancing the pastoral, peaceful, and surprisingly refreshing view over Coldwater Canyon past Mulholland Drive and into the Valley. A curvaceous colonnade adjacent the pool was salvaged and refreshed as well.

The interiors are masculine, clean, and ready for prime time. A palette of very fine materials—woods, stone, bronze—lend a serene sophistication to the interiors; architectural devices introduce light from above along the circulation spines and the overhangs. If all new construction in the Trousdale of Today was this personalized and well-engineered, it would certainly be something to celebrate.

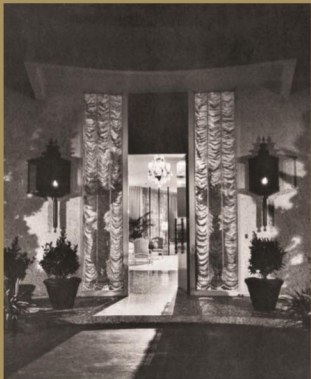
TOP LEFT Gallery TOP RIGHT Media room BOTTOM Master bath



ABOVE Pool area and rear facade

The Original, Looking Back

When this 1962 vintage home came on the market in 2010, it was intact except for a minor addition. Terrazzo tubs, round bedrooms, indoor planters in the bathrooms, brass-and-glass screens by sculptor Robert Webb (with participation from artist Clyde Harwick) that were works of art all by themselves, and an enormous (but immaculate) clamshell sink in the powder room had all survived. But while miraculously extant, speaking to a place in time now very much of interest, the period's actual artifacts sometimes find themselves in less demand to those who will actually have to live with them . . . and replacing one, becomes . . . replacing it all.



TOP Original pool LEFT Original facade and entry ABOVE Original floor plan. OPPOSITE Original living room featuring Robert Webb screens. Even photos don't tell the whole story, nor perhaps accurately depict the scale: That living room measured thirty feet in diameter.

