



Cher's Indian Fantasy

THE SINGER-ACTRESS CONJURES AN EXOTIC RESIDENCE ABOVE LOS ANGELES

Interior Design by Martyn Lawrence-Bullard
Text by Nancy Collins
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LEFT: A 19th-century Indian tapestry with gold and silver thread offers a dramatic backdrop for the master suite in the Los Angeles duplex of Cher (above). Designer Martyn Lawrence-Bullard created the sofa and the low table. The Tibetan monk statue is 18th century; the carved elephant is early 19th century. Edelman leather is on the daybed and the ottoman. Schumacher wallcovering. The Rug Company carpet.

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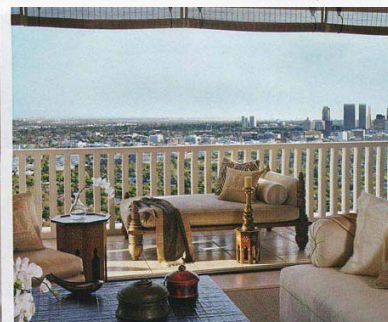


I'm a Buddhist," says Cher with characteristic self-deprecation, "who should always be in after-school detention." Indeed, And it is precisely that irrepressible mix of spirituality and punk that makes the singer-actress's spectacular new duplex, perched high above Los Angeles, as gloriously original as its owner. "My houses," she muses, "are passions." They are also decorative barometers of

the current state of her never-boring, ever-expanding consciousness. "I've played around with Buddhism for years," continues the actress, a devotee of the American Buddhist nun Pema Chödrön ("a genius in Sheldon Leonard's body," she quips). "As corny as it sounds, the soul of the universe, everything that I need, I can find in its practice."

So it wasn't surprising when, snapping up two floors and 4,000 square feet in one of Los Angeles' hottest buildings, Cher turned to friend and interior designer Martyn Lawrence-Bullard to help her conjure up "something ethnic, spicy and romantic"—albeit in creams, ivories, whites and buttery beiges. "Though I loved collecting Gothic and can spend hours drawing with every shade of Pantone pen, I prefer a neutral palette, espe-

cially in my bedrooms, because the colors are so easy to live with." Armed with his mandate, Lawrence-Bullard started the design ball rolling by eliminating the apartment's extant 12 rooms in favor of two lovelike open floors connected by a spiral staircase. "I always wanted an apartment that was one big bedroom," says Cher, "because that's really where I live, starting from the days when



LEFT AND ABOVE: Lawrence-Bullard designed comfortable seating for the actress in the main living space, where she can relax and enjoy the views over Los Angeles. "She didn't want color—we used creams, whites and ivories juxtaposed with ebony," he says. Kravet sofa fabric; Zebra-print rug, Edelman. Summit chaise fabric. Stark sea grass carpet. Brizo. Mahabuya hide the appliances in the kitchen. The hanging lanterns are Chinese. Indonesian platter from ABC Carpet & Home.



Sonny and I could only afford a bedroom." Clearly, things have changed. In fact, her latest boudoir not only occupies the entire second floor, it features an antique Indian-pancled platform bed facing a dazzling panorama stretching from Malibu to Hollywood, a sitting room and a bath so luxurious that even Lawrence-Bullard describes it as "very Cloopatra"—particularly when it comes to the tub wrapped in

19th-century stone sitting squarely in the middle of the room. "Push a button, and a gauze curtain embroidered with gold Indian symbols engulfs the tub," he explains, pointing out the dressing room camouflaged behind a mirrored facade from a palace in Jaipur. "Cher loves all things exotic," the designer says with a smile. "And this room is like one big harem."

On the main floor, which she calls her

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"parlor," the Zen feeling starts at the front door, where a pair of backlit eglomise panels depicting Indian deities cast a serene, flattering glow. Further into the ethereal space, hand-carved latticework screens conceal an up-to-the-minute kitchen, while a nearly 16th-century Chinese opium bed (and a flat-screen TV) works both "as guest room and sexy little TV nook," says Lawrence-Bullard.

The centerpiece of the living room (whose retracting doors open onto a glorious terrace), meanwhile, is an L-shaped sofa designed by Lawrence-Bullard to his

client's exacting specifications. "I like sitting with my legs up under me," says Cher, "so all the sofas in my houses have exceptionally large, deep cushions. I'd rather sit on the floor than a narrow couch."

But then, when it comes to design, the actress is no slouch. "If Cher hadn't been a singer," Lawrence-Bullard observes, "she definitely could've been a decorator. She was very involved in the design. I'd go to her house, get up on her bed and sit with her going through color samples."

"While I know what I want when I see it, Martyn can verbalize it," notes Cher.

"In the end, our sensibilities are on the same page because he's an artist. As a result, I never get tired of coming into these beautiful, peaceful rooms."

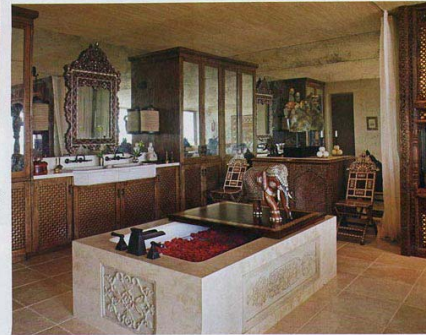
Especially now that the paparazzi have become, as she puts it, "so egregious. There are no words to describe how intrusive they can be," she adds, "which is why my homes, and now this among them, have become so very important. In a word, they are my sanctuaries." □

To see more of Cher's homes, visit www.ArchitecturalDigest.com.



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Left: The actress can curl up on the late-16th-century Chinese opium bed to watch TV. Schumacher bed silk. The Turkish gold-embroidered pillow is from Maudslowe Weirich. Right: Indian stone panels wrap a tub from Waterworks. A pair of 19th-century chairs flank a commode from Linda Horn.



Above: In the master suite, Lawrence-Bullard designed the bed using antique Indian panels. He made the bedside tables with antique Indian doors. An Indian pulpit facade conceals Cher's dressing room. Distressed mirrors reflect bronze lanterns from Marrakech. The floors are antique limestone.