

Hillside Retreat



Homeowners Kevin Howells (left) and Hadi Halawani, with Cooper, their white lab.

A 1930s French contemporary-style home in the West Hollywood Hills goes from outdated to chic with the help of designer **Trip Haenisch**

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"I love to design with pops of color," says Haenisch. "But in a bedroom, it's better to have less of it."

Trip Haenisch has a habit of burning the midnight oil when starting work on new projects. "I call it my 'insomnia period,'" he says of this time spent preparing and researching for clients of his interior design firm, Trip Haenisch & Associates. "It's a bit like solving the Rubik's cube. I'm in the middle of all this creativity, constantly thinking, constantly awake." The success of those projects proves his sleepless nights are paying off.

Haenisch's talent is manifold, producing spaces that are refined, comfortable, architecturally precise, and geographically specific. For him, it's about the twist: a traditional space juxtaposed with oversize modern art, or an 18th-century table set in the glow of a Ron Arad light. "You don't want to live in your parents' house," he says. "We need to take things forward."

"Taking things forward" was Haenisch's first priority when greeted with the 1930s West Hollywood Hills abode of Hadi Halawani, the office manager of Trip Haenisch & Associates, and his partner, Kevin Howells. Their home featured enviable French contemporary influences, such as metal elements on the roof and a canopy by the kitchen door. But it was in need of serious professional attention to let those elements shine. Renovations began promptly, including installing oak wood floors sturdy enough to allow Cooper, their white lab, to run free, and pairing them with crisp white walls. In respect to the furniture, French pieces from the 1930s and '40s are arranged in a bohemian manner, complemented by Halawani's distinctive art collection.

Haenisch's philosophy is to create timeless, original designs with purpose, spaces that are tailor-made for each individual client. "At the end of the day," Haenisch says, "you must understand what motivates your clients. It's my job to make them feel good and comfortable." ✎



"I tell my clients to think about how they live. And then, they need to fantasize about how they want to live."

— Trip Haenisch



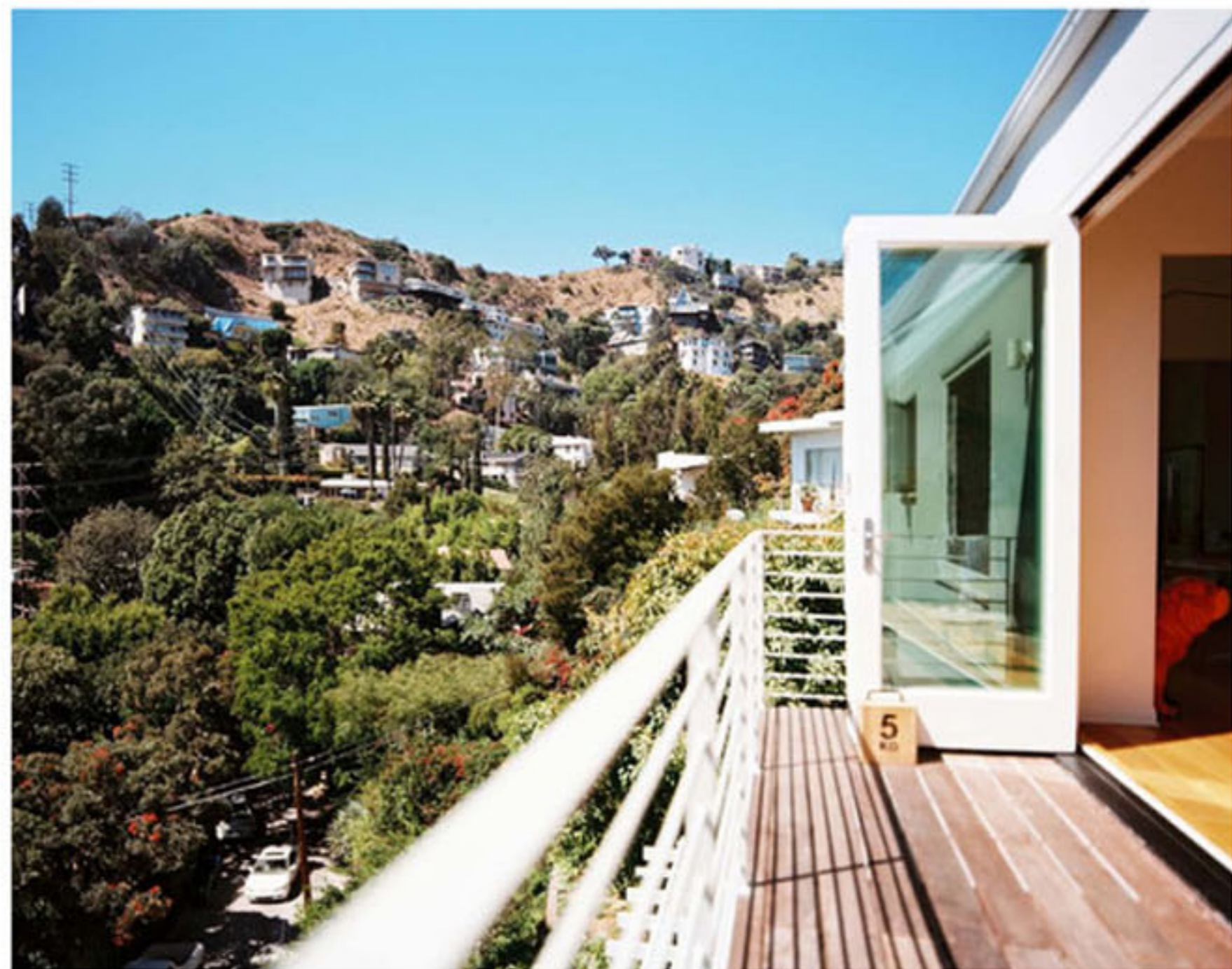
A Miami pool scene by Massimo Vitali hangs above the bed. "I love anything that reminds me of water or the beach," says Halawani.



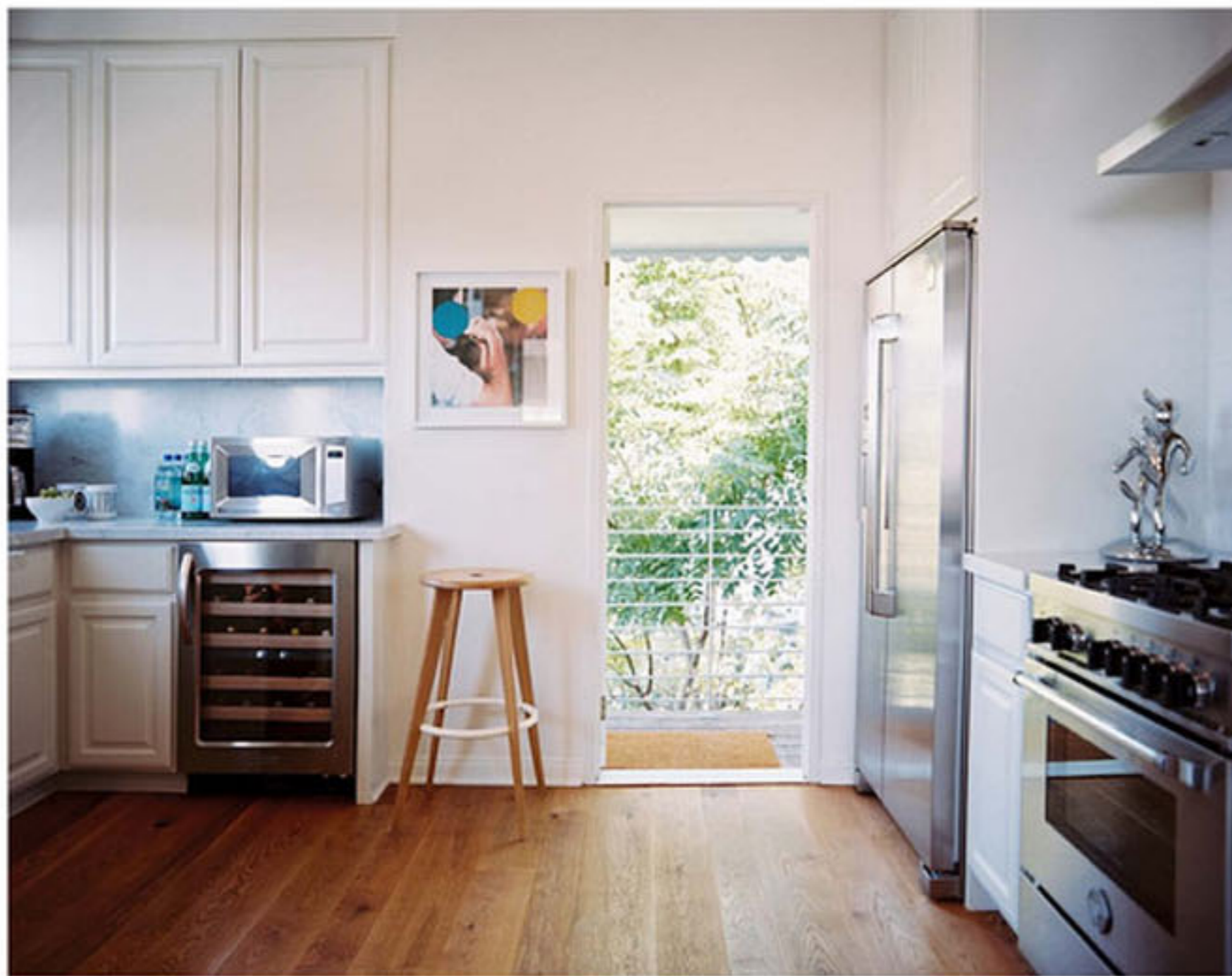
Haenisch designed the circular bookshelf. "I like the inclusion of different [shapes]," he says. "Especially because everything tends to be rectangular."

A cowhide-covered Danish chair complements the room's other furnishings, including a Royere-style sofa and chair upholstered in thick mohair. "It's a high/low idea," says Haenisch. "The hide is stiff and abrasive, while the mohair is soft and great. Plus they both wear incredibly well." The pieces are placed around the kidney-shaped coffee table at unconventional angles to create a natural, "undecorated" feeling.





Small French doors with gaudy mullions originally led to the patio. Haenisch installed a sliding glass door instead; it runs the length of the living room and creates an unobstructed view of the city below.



Trip's Tips for Knowing What You Really Want

1

Start with some heavy brainstorming. Go through tons of visual imagery and gather pictures that inspire you. Then, start to distill.

2

Build models of the floor plan on your computer so you can see exactly what you're getting.

3

Take the time to think about how you'd like each room to be used. What's the point of creating rooms you never enter?

4

Understand what you value and expose yourself to a range of artists, furniture makers, etc. There are so many choices, and if you take the time to learn and see what you respond to, your project will be much more personalized.

Halawani claims to have learned everything he knows about art from Haenisch, who is an avid collector. Above the stairwell is a photograph by Richard Misrach, and the portrait of the man in the turban was found at Hallworth Gallery in Los Angeles. "I'm really into bigger-scaled images... that you can see across the room," says Halawani.



Haenisch balanced the strong orange of Halawani's chair with a neutral-toned lamp wrapped in seagrass. A bull's-eye table from the 1950s sits to the right.

"Since guests generally stay only a night or two, our goal in this room was [to create] a more playful feeling," says Haenisch, "as opposed to the calming effect of the master."





"The end result turned out to be more amazing than we ever imagined."

— Hadi Halawani



Bathrooms are the one space where Haenisch prefers anything but white walls. "I like to have a departure in powder rooms," he says, "[to] let them be little jewels."



Trip's Hot Spots for Artwork in Los Angeles

Honor Fraser

M+B

Gagosian

Blum & Poe

Gallery Brown

Cooper enjoys a relaxing afternoon outdoors. "[Creating] a pet-friendly home was extremely important to us," says Halawani. "We wanted Cooper to be able to live on the furniture and not destroy it."





Interior designer Trip Haenisch.

The sitting area in front of the house is always a crowd-pleaser. "You hear the water from the fountain," says Haenisch, "and [there's] this great light from the fire pit, so everyone congregates there. At night, it really feels enchanting."