

Malibu

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Former model and face of Bijan, Tracy Murdock has been designing some of the most glamorous homes in Los Angeles for more than a decade. Her signature “drop dead design” covers the gamut from classic, to colorful, and dramatic to contemporary.

Tracy Murdock has just completed the remodeling and decorating her new architectural-style home designed by award-winning architect Frederick Fisher. Perched on a hill in Malibu, the residence is open and airy with expansive ocean views through what appear to be miles of floor-to-ceiling windows. On one side of the living room, giant green bamboo thickets jut up from a ravine below that give the home the feeling of a resort in Thailand rather than a house in Malibu. The soothing décor was designed by Murdock and includes a cracked-glass dining table with low Japanese-style seating and large white sofas. Family photos of her children line side tables and hallways, and giant white clamshells serve as potted plant holders along with other natural ornamental items. “I wanted to use some natural pieces, and there are a lot of Japanese influences,” says Murdock. The front lawn is still a work in progress, but plans are under way for an enclosed Zen garden with more bamboo and mahogany-framed glass panels with one wall of water and a table for dining. “It will be a cozy, outdoor courtyard eating area and meditation room. I can’t wait.”

Murdock has been living in the home since last summer and clearly loves her new slower-paced Malibu lifestyle, which includes spending time with her children when she is not working, writing poetry or walking one of her five dogs along Carbon Beach. “I was in shorts and [flip-flops] the first two months! You can get dressed up or be very casual here. I was working 80

hours a week when I lived in Calabasas. Malibu is a resort town. You can’t come here and run around like a crazy maniac. It’s kind of like Hawaii — the minute you get off the plane you go into that island mode.”

Perhaps this abode will be permanent. Murdock has been known to move every two years or when she tires of living in a particular dwelling. Then she sells them with everything in it — including the artwork. “That is part of the attraction for someone buying one of my decorated homes. I take a few special pieces with me, but that is it.”

A stunning beauty, Murdock was born in Japan and raised in California. She is relaxed and personable, and seems content with her endeavors. “All my life I’ve been in creative businesses. With Bijan (Murdock’s first husband), it was in modeling. When you’re that young, you don’t really know what you want to do and you change many times, but I ended up being very talented in the marketing end. I came up with the ads, and styled and produced them.”

Her second husband, developer David H. Murdock, would be one of the wealthiest men in the world. “When I was married to David, we built a lot of homes together and hotels. He owned the island of Lanai, so we were able to build villages and start from scratch. You could be so creative. It was so fascinating.” She credits David with helping her find “interior design enlightenment.”



"David had a very feminine side and he loved to shop. When you shopped with him you didn't buy one, you bought a dozen. And we had so many homes and projects going on, it didn't matter if we made a mistake — we'd just put it somewhere else." Shopping all over the world for their different projects was an eye opener. "What I did learn with him was design and home decorating. His mail-order catalogs were Sotheby's and Christie's. We bought the best. David knew and studied the best, and he taught me about the best including fabrics and home furnishings — it all had that Murdock stamp. I finally figured out what I really wanted to do at 40. All that design and creative background — I could see it, the epiphany."

Now Murdock's tastes lean toward impact, drama and color, but not in a monochromatic way. "I like your eye to go to something and I like to mix things up, and I want the room to be comfortable. I want you to not want to leave, and you can never go wrong if you have a view of anything — ocean, park or city."

Crazy for architectural style, Murdock embraces modern, but with a caveat: "I want it to be relaxed modern and not cold, but I like to do minimal and get rid of stuff and downsize." After living in the famous 40,000-square-foot Hilton home in the Bellagio estates in Beverly Hills with David, Murdock is going more toward smaller homes. "Nobody needs to live in a home that big. You usually live in the kitchen and den, and never even go into your living room." Now she lives in a home of just 3,000 square feet with her son Nicolas and is satisfied with smaller homes that are utilized; and she even has her eye on the modular, prefab homes that have been hitting the eco-friendly marketplace. "Those are really the wave of the future. They are quick, easy and affordable."

Nonetheless, Murdock finds a synergy in real estate, and has many Malibu clients and friends of former clients asking her to find them houses. "There are some incredible architects doing work out here."

Murdock has been known to take on every phase of the design process from conception to linens in the bathroom to stocking the refrigerator. When you hire TM Interior Designs, you're getting a full-service lifestyle organization all unto herself. And you might be surprised to learn that her favorite type of client to work for is the wealthy divorced man or bachelor. "Then I don't have to deal with the wife," she laughs. "When there are two people, they usually have different tastes and there is always conflict. When you are dealing with a man, they usually just write you a check and don't want to be bothered. Once you show them the concept, they are just so happy and appreciative. I had one divorced client with two kids, and he needed the kitchen set up from the pots and pans to the bathroom drawers with the kids' toothbrushes. I set up this man's whole life down to his closet. I even ordered the hangers and threw out the clothes that he should not wear."

Murdock knows a thing or two about living in five-star hotels from her years of traveling around the world, and wants to incorporate that elegance and convenience into her designs. Eighty percent of her home furnishings for a project are custom designed, including the beds and the built-ins. "I want to make [a home] feel like a hotel where everything fits perfectly. I love hotels and I'm inspired by their details."

Murdock's inspiration is clearly contagious. Two manufacturers are currently wooing the designer to put her creative stamp on a home furnishings line. ■