



Film World At Play



The ladder

to the wall

between actor Douglas Fairbanks Sr.'s estate and that of movie chieftain Irving Thalberg enabled the friends to hop in and out of each other's yards freely. Or so a young Peter Philbin was told after his family moved in 1952 to the compound Fairbanks had erected in the late 1920s, By the time he heard the tale, Philbin and best friend Barry Hilton, whose hotelier father, Barron Sr., had purchased the Thalberg home, had adopted the ladder as their own. From the platform on top they launched themselves into the pool that the athletic Fairbanks built. It was there that Philbin also caught glimpses of a parade of starlets. One of them might have been the stunning Elizabeth Taylor, newly divorced from Nicky Hilton.



The view of the Gold Coast house from the beach. The doors on the upstairs terrace lead to the master Michael, Danielle, and Zoey, the Maltipoo. The beams above them came from a Pennsylvania farm

The Moorish arches and iron gates open up the back patio, Malibu-style tile. to the expanse of sand and sea

pride of place in the study was bought by Michael on a trip to Spain

The Age of Romance

drivers whipping past on PCH, these dwellings of Santa Monica's historic Gold Coast. But walk the stretch of sand between the Jonathan Club and the Marion Davies estate (now the Annenberg Community Beach House), and the manses of Old Hollywood's elite are visible in all their splendor.

They changed hands over time, sometimes the new owners as prominent as the old (the towered beauty built by Louis B. Mayer became the property of Peter Lawford and the western White House for John Kennedy on visits to sister Pat). When Chicago entrepreneur Michael Braverman bought a piece of Douglas Fairbanks Sr.'s estate in 2000, he hewed to the home's footprint when he remodeled six years

HEY PRESENT a plain face to the later. The ceiling of the living room was raised to bring the outside in and a pool with fountain, tiled in the period style, was added to the yard (the original swimming area was filled in when yet-to-be-mayor Richard Riordan subdivided the estate in the 1970s).

> From the second-story terrace Michael, his wife, Danielle, and newborn son, Noah, can survey the

ARCHITECT

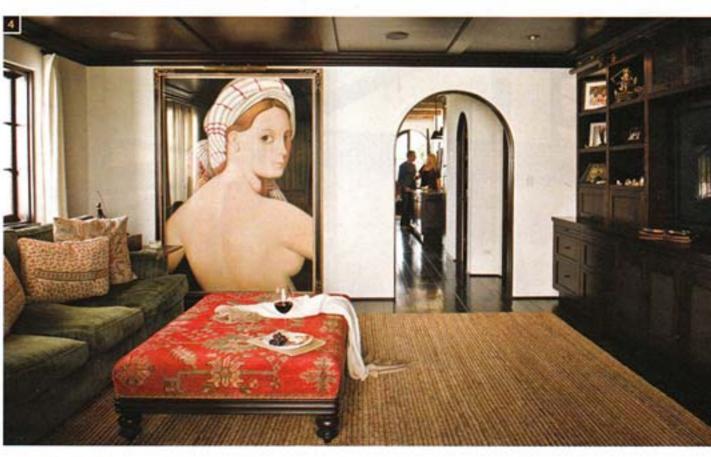
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Associates

runners and cyclists in the distance, Inside, Michael proudly displays the art he picked up on his wide-ranging travels, sojourns on hold for now. He revels in running at low tide on the firm wet sand. He and Danielle walk the dog and baby, usually at sunset. "I'm like most of my CONTRACTOR neighbors-out there every day Richard Holz Inc and night," Michael says.





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