



los angeles

animated SPACES

DESIGNER JAMIE BUSH AND
ARCHITECT GEORGIE KAJER HELPED
A FAMILY'S MIDCENTURY RANCH
HOUSE BRIDGE THE GENERATION GAP.
BY SALLY SCHULTHEISS PHOTOGRAPHY BY
GREY CRAWFORD STYLING BY CHAR HATCH LANGOS

To create a more open layout from the entrance to the kitchen, many of the walls in this 1941 house were removed. RIGHT: Don Hahn relaxes on the patio with the family's two dogs.



Don and Denise Hahn are not what you would call “hands-off” clients. When they bought their Los Angeles home in 2003, the couple pored over all aspects of its renovation, from the composition of the terrazzo floor that covers all 4,000-plus square feet to the two stacked-stone fireplaces they had made in reference to the 1941 home’s original one. “I would sit and watch the stonemason work for hours,” Denise says of the precise stacking required for the fireplaces. “I’d say, ‘I hope I’m not bothering you; it’s just so fascinating.’”

With the help of architect Georgie Kajer, the Hahns dramatically altered the home’s floor plan to make it more functional for a family of three, with a teenage daughter. Approximately half of the walls were removed so that, instead of moving from the entrance through the living room and dining room before arriving at the kitchen, one can stand in the front hall and see clear to the stovetop. “When we first finished the remodel, I panicked,” says Denise. “I worried that people would walk in the house and see right into the kitchen. But it’s turned out to have an incredible flow. I can be cooking and watch TV, or be a part of conversations in the living room, all at the same time.”

And now that the new kitchen is open to the rest of the house, there’s the added benefit of showcasing it from every angle. A dark gray CaesarStone countertop



ABOVE: A pair of 19th-century dining chairs, which were among the few furnishings imported from the Hahns' former home, now offers a subtle contrast in the modern living room's dining nook. BELOW: The Hahns display a restrained selection of 1950s dinnerware on the kitchen's open shelving.





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Architect Georgie Kajer
opened up the kitchen
to the rest of the house.
Vintage pendant lights
were powder-coated in red
to fulfill Denise's request
for brick red accents
throughout the house.



For both the kitchen's sunny breakfast nook and the living room's dining area, designer Jamie Bush upholstered the built-in banquettes in a water-resistant fabric that looks like natural raffia.

is warmed up with red-birch cabinetry, and several sculptural dishes on the open shelving keep the space looking artfully organized. A wide farmhouse sink on one end balances a second vegetable-washing station on the other. Red vintage pendant lights hang over the stainless steel-topped island. The less-artistic bits—a second refrigerator, pantry and wine storage—are tucked around the corner, along with a small bathroom and library/painting studio.

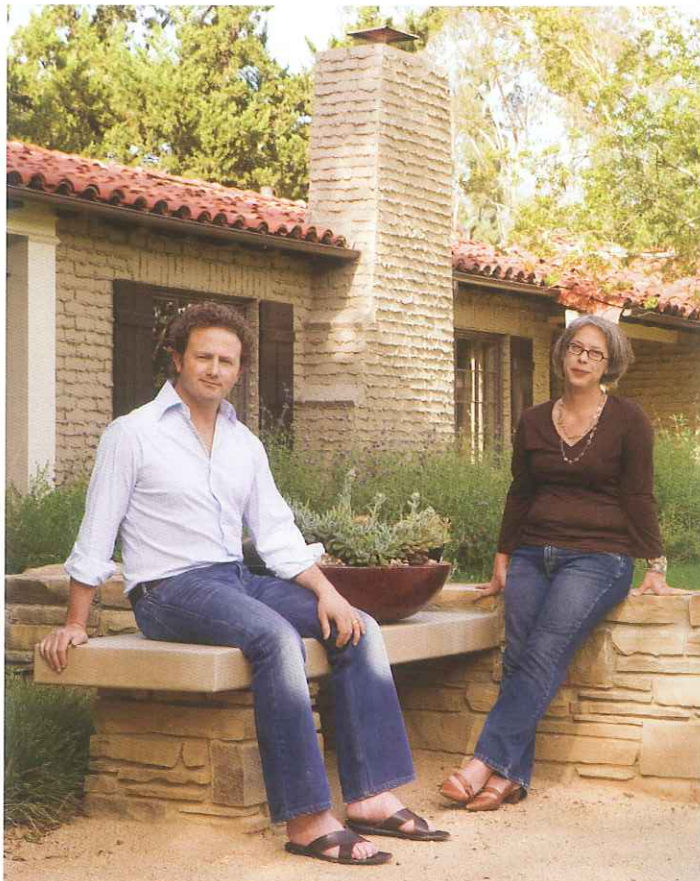
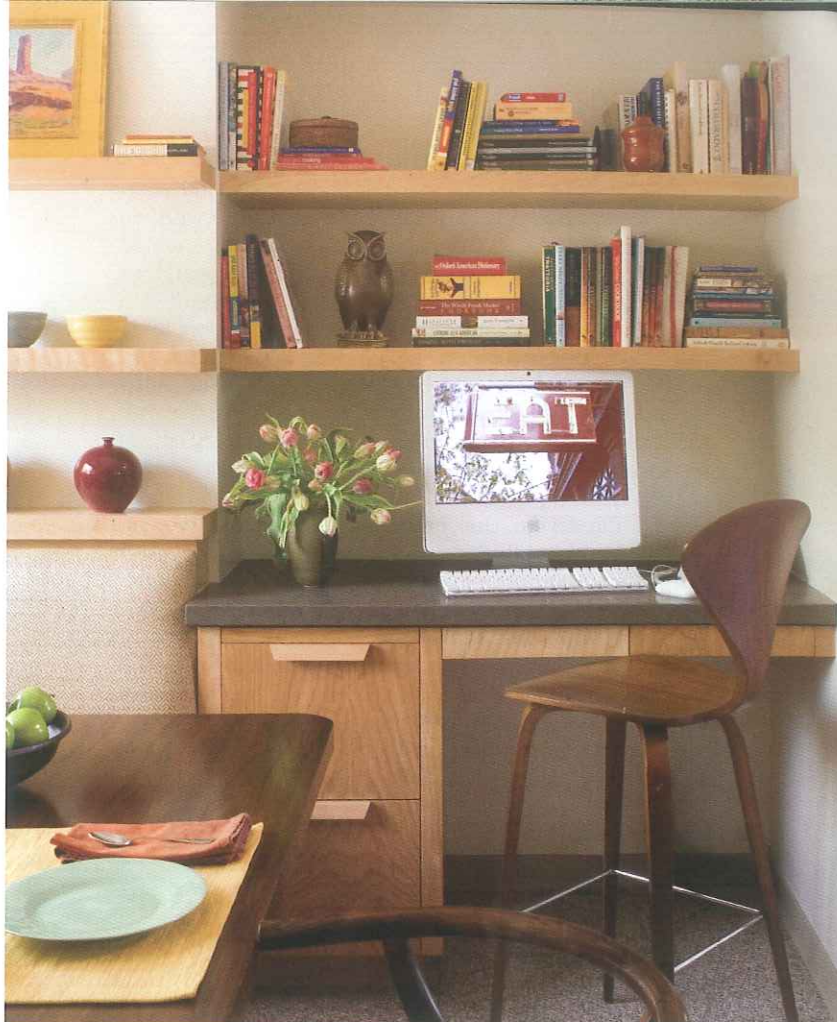
The couple met while working for Disney—she was an animator for films including *Who Framed Roger Rabbit?* and *Beauty and the Beast*, he is the Oscar-nominated producer of *The Lion King*, as well as *Roger Rabbit* and *Beauty and the Beast*. They are both also painters, book collectors and art and design enthusiasts. (Denise is also a docent at the Gamble House in Pasadena.)

Their backgrounds came in handy when it was time to describe the details of their dream renovation. “When we first took on the project, instead of describing the kinds of things he and Denise were interested in, Don would send us a sketch,” says Jamie Bush, the designer recommended by their architect. “It was sort of shocking, this unbelievable drawing of the furniture styles they liked, as if the tables and chairs were sitting right in front of him. I mean, I certainly can’t draw that well.” Denise, who knew from the beginning that she wanted accents of brick red throughout the house, also articulated her wishes with equal precision and imagination. “I told Jamie, ‘I don’t want it to look modern necessarily,’” she says. “I wanted it to look like what a person in the ’40s would *think* was modern.”

Only a handful of furnishings from their former Spanish Colonial-style home in Glendale made the transition: two 19th-century chairs in the living room and an ironwood side table adjacent to the dining banquette. Everything else in the house is either vintage, custom or a reproduction—all in a palette of gold, avocado and what Bush and the Hahns now affectionately term “Hahn red.” Denise says with a laugh, “I never would have thought 15 years ago that one day I’d have a gold sectional sofa.”

Arguably the biggest undertaking of the renovation was replacing the floors throughout the house. The original pale-pink terrazzo floors were irreparable after more than 60 years of use left them cracked and uneven, but the Hahns were committed to replacing them. The process of creating true terrazzo, which involves polishing a poured

ABOVE RIGHT: Kajer made smart use of a wasted corner in the kitchen by creating a home office. BELOW RIGHT: Denise Hahn and her husband often referred to *Sunset Western Ranch Houses* to help illustrate their design ideas to Jamie Bush (pictured on the left).



pebble-and-concrete mixture, is labor-intensive and usually reserved for spaces such as airports and shopping malls, making it hard to find an artisan to work on such a small area. In this case, the terrazzo was created with amber bottle glass and crushed mother-of-pearl by a craftsman who was trained in the '50s. The result is a surface as smooth as marble and, according to Don, undeniably tempting to a 14-year-old girl with Rollerblades.

The master bath and bedroom continue the retro-revival theme. The bedroom was extended further into the yard and finished with a stacked-stone fireplace to match the one in the living room. The bed's custom rustic redwood headboard was modeled after a George Nakashima design, the chairs are vintage Hans Wegner and the bedside table lamps are also vintage. "My sister said, 'You've got Mom's lamp!' when she walked in here," says Denise. "It's funny how our generation sold off this stuff at garage sales, and now we're buying it all back."

The master bath was another dream realized. "I'd always wanted a stone wall in my bathroom," says Denise. "I'd seen it once in a magazine, and it was one of the first things I asked for." Voilà: a stone wall that resembles both fireplaces, and a gold limestone tub. The terrazzo floors run right into

BELOW: In the master bath, a vintage Hans Wegner chair against a rustic stone wall provides this room's shot of red. The soaking tub from Waterworks is clad in gold limestone.



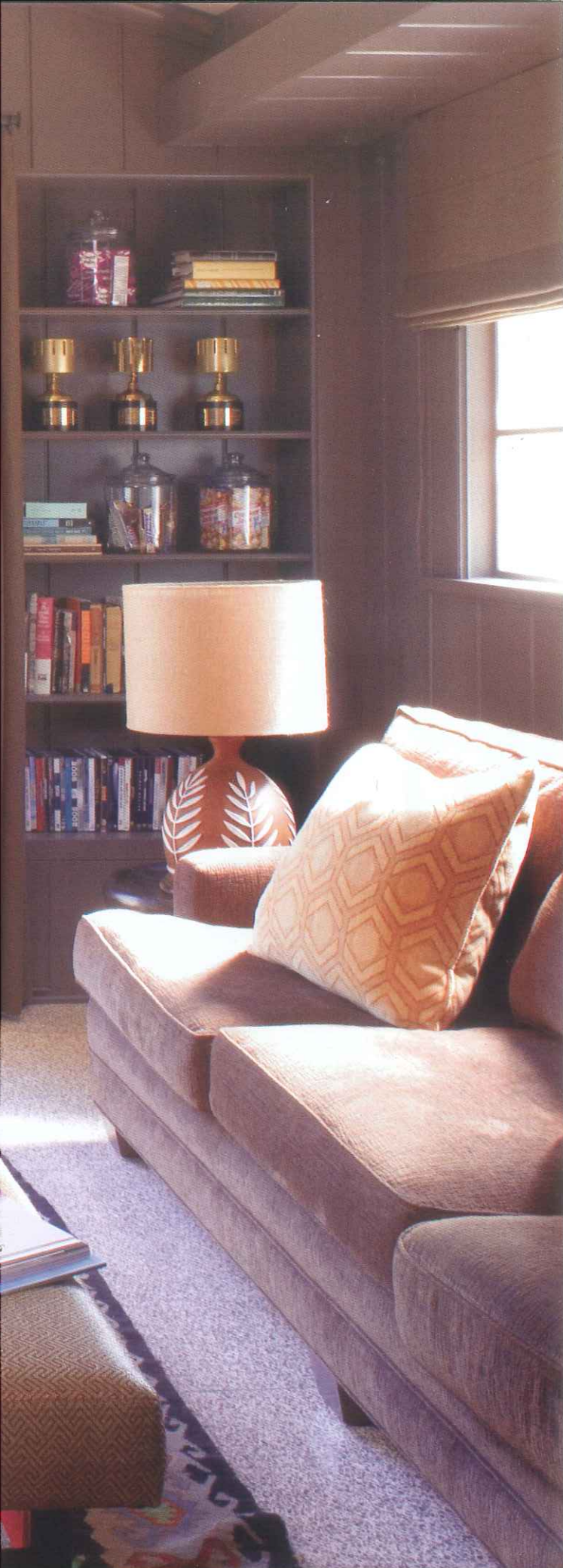
*"The best thing we did
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The new pink terrazzo floors, created with a slurry of amber bottle-glass and mother-of-pearl, extend from the bedroom all the way into the shower and through the living room outside to the patio.

In the den, the mood is set by multiple kilims and original wood-paneled walls painted dark gray. Because it's one of the few rooms without vaulted wood ceilings, the den feels especially cozy.





ABOVE: Local stonemason Dave Pycz precisely stacked the sandstone that shows up inside on the fireplaces and outdoors in elements like a low bench inspired by the original ranch-style landscaping.

the shower with no threshold, "so we can roll our wheelchairs in," says Denise. "Seriously, we are not moving."

There's an eye to the future in this house, but there are also constant references to the past. In addition to capturing the era of the house with new design elements that feel suitably retro, salvaged remnants of the old interiors are also visible. There's the original chandelier, removed from its spot in the former dining room—now a nook for the baby grand—and hung in the outside pavilion. The 1941 wood paneling still remains in the den and the house's original living room windows, with handle cranks intact, are now lighting the Hahns' painting studio.

Another touch, almost second nature to Southern California architecture and design, is the interaction between interior and exterior spaces. Bush chose a water-resistant fabric that looks like woven raffia for both the kitchen and living room banquettes. He then put curtains around the outside pavilion (complete with its original grill) and extended the terrazzo floors past the sliding doors in the master bedroom and onto the patio. "The best thing we did was to really flood the house with terrazzo," says Bush. "It became the unifying factor—something decadent and simple at the same time—as well as a nice metaphor for the house itself." ■