

# on topa W<sup>the</sup>ORLD

CALIFORNIA'S TOPA TOPA MOUNTAINS PROVIDE ROOM TO RANGE.

BY CANDACE ORD MANROE PHOTOGRAPHY BY TIM STREET-PORTER



Los Angeles designer Trip Haenisch took his cues from the views—how could he not?—in decorating a three-bedroom ranch house as the weekend getaway of the Rozelles, a young Pacific Palisades family. Originally known as Gridley Ranch, the 45 acres were part of a land grant from President Benjamin Harrison in 1891.







## FROM AN EXOTIC PAVILION TO THIS FOLK-ART FILLED FAMILY



ranch house is a stretch, spanning decorating's extremes. But Los Angeles designer Trip Haenisch enjoys nothing if not variety. So when he was approached by Kacy and Marcia Rozelle to decorate their weekend place in the mountains near Ojai, he couldn't say no.

"The first project I ever did was a very eclectic pavilion infused with Indonesian and African ethnicity for Cheryl Tiegs," says Haenisch. "But for me, the fun lies in doing new things—never repeating myself." It helps that every client is different. "The Rozelles have toddlers, so they didn't want anything too uptight or formal, especially in a second home. My only parameters were a design that's inviting, kid-friendly, and cozy." Given the property's views of the Topa Topa Mountains and Los Padres National Forest, making nice with the vistas went unsaid.

The exterior, originally painted white with blue trim, looked too cottagey to complement the rustic environment. Plus, says Haenisch, the lines of the house lacked drama, so calling attention to them with pop-out paint incongruous with the surroundings only compounded the mistake. His remedy was to paint the wood siding a sandstone hue that matches the stone on the lower facade. "This made the house disappear, and it cleaned it up. We added red exterior doors to introduce the indoor palette—terra-cotta is a part of each room."

Terra-cotta's role in the palette actually was a matter of making do. "We inherited the terra-cotta tile floors, which I wasn't







**Top:** Red pillows on outdoor pool furniture pick up the hue of the back doors.  
**Above:** For privacy, puddling curtain panels encircle the master bedroom on an iron rod, while small, high windows still let in light.  
**Top right:** A leaf-print shower-style curtain cordons off the toilet.  
**Opposite:** In the bathroom, towering window walls blur the boundary between outside and in.



crazy about, but in design, you sometimes just have to go with the imperfections and find a way to make them charming."

In the living room, he found the charm by introducing terracotta in a printed floral cotton. "I'm not a very flowery guy, so for me, it's all about juxtaposing a fabric like this with masculine pieces like the antique brown-leather English club chairs," explains Haenisch. Old tramp art frames, a pine-cone mirror, and a folk art rooster inject rustic appeal. An antique gilt, iron, and blue chandelier Marcia found in Italy prompted Haenisch to add subtle Newport blue to the palette. "I introduced it on Roman shades, the ceiling in between the beams, and the rug," he points out. He repeated the color in other spaces—on the bedroom's blue-and-ocher checked drapery panels, and on the bathroom's striped shades, which blend with the sky outside.

Because of its glorious sky-hugging windows, the bath posed the biggest decorating challenge. "We didn't want to hide the views, but there was a privacy issue," Haenisch observes. "The house is a fishbowl—it's completely exposed." His solution was to affix Roman shades halfway up the windows. "I worried it would look awkward, but it ended up fun and funky. Even when the shades are down, the room is still flooded with light." As a further convenience, he encircled the toilet with a shower curtain. "The curtain creates its own privacy so they don't have to be constantly lowering the shades every time someone wants to use the toilet," Haenisch says. He completed the bath's character by enlisting an antique French cupboard as a storage vanity and outfitting it with his and her sinks.

Enhancing the house's character often meant relying more on creativity than on cash. The stone-floor mudroom, which serves as the front entry, received a dash of rusticity with a distressed paint finish on its cabinets. "We built relatively inexpensive cabinets, then added a distressed finish, which made all the difference," reflects Haenisch. Even toddlers find it indestructible. ■

For more information, see sources on page 195.







Seating at a table designed by Haenisch is provided by a mismatched collection of Windsor chairs and a window seat he built in the breakfast room.

**Right:** Blue linen shades in the living room echo the color of the antique Italian chandelier. Haenisch designed the table lamp from an old baluster.

**Opposite top:** The casual style is established up front—the red front door opens onto the mudroom.

**Opposite bottom:** “I love color, but for me, texture is more important,” says Haenisch, illustrating his point with the sunroom’s woven alpaca rug, part of his own line.



in contrasts as he totes a tiny bundle under each arm right up to an outdoor dining table. “Nothing’s too good for Señorita Quatro,” he purrs. The dog taps her nails on the tabletop while Romeo, her male companion, quietly observes from Thomas’s lap. “But it’s really the white cat who rules the roost,” he says, nodding to the cat placidly sunning on the patio below.

Because he believes outdoor living is as important as indoor, he carries the decorative themes seamlessly outdoors. “I wanted to evoke ocean and sky, so I did the house in blues accented with pale yellows and whites. I wanted to use furnishings indigenous to Mexico, mixed with a European feeling inspired by Portuguese style, with a little Italian—as though Andrea Palladio [the Italian architect of Palladian window fame] had visited Portugal and somehow ended up here,” he explains.

*Equipal* furniture—classic Mexican seating of leather stretched over wood—is a recurring native theme. But Thomas’s pieces are larger than most. “I had to have them custom-made in Puerto Vallarta to fit my scale.” Accessories also represent the country. “My rugs are from Oaxaca. The tin-and-glass sconces are from Tlaquepaque. And the chest of drawers in the dining room is an adaptation of a fine Mexican antique.”

The exquisitely painted hand carvings on the gate, doors, and headboards were a team effort: Thomas drew the designs; accomplished muralist Antoinette, the Baroness von Grone, transformed them to full-size cartoons; and decorative painter Carole Lansdown did the final coloration. “This place is a lifetime project for me. I’ll never be done,” Thomas happily insists. ■

For more information, see sources on page 195.