

CALIFORNIA DREAM

Simple and casual define the California-style good vibrations in a Mountain Brook renovation designed for company and comfort.

A MOVIE REFERENCE IS NOT THE USUAL REACTION UPON SEEING A HOUSE. But that is exactly what came to the minds of decorator Patti Woods and architects Jeremy Corkern and Paul Bates as they walked through a to-be-remodeled Mountain Brook house. “We looked around and said *It’s Complicated*,” explains Patti. “This house had similar bones to the

house that was featured in that movie.” Bones were actually all they had to work with as the design team embarked on a renovation project that involved taking the house down to its skeleton. “It was a ’50s ranch house that had been remodeled about 10 years ago in a vaguely Mediterranean style,” says Jeremy. “We decided we needed to gut it down to the studs.”

Text by LUCY MERRILL / Floral design by SYBIL SYLVESTER / Photography by JEAN ALLSOPP



The focus of the rear of the house, and the inspiration for its California look, is a 60-foot infinity pool and pavilion. Sunbathers and swimmers are accommodated on classic wood recliners poolside.



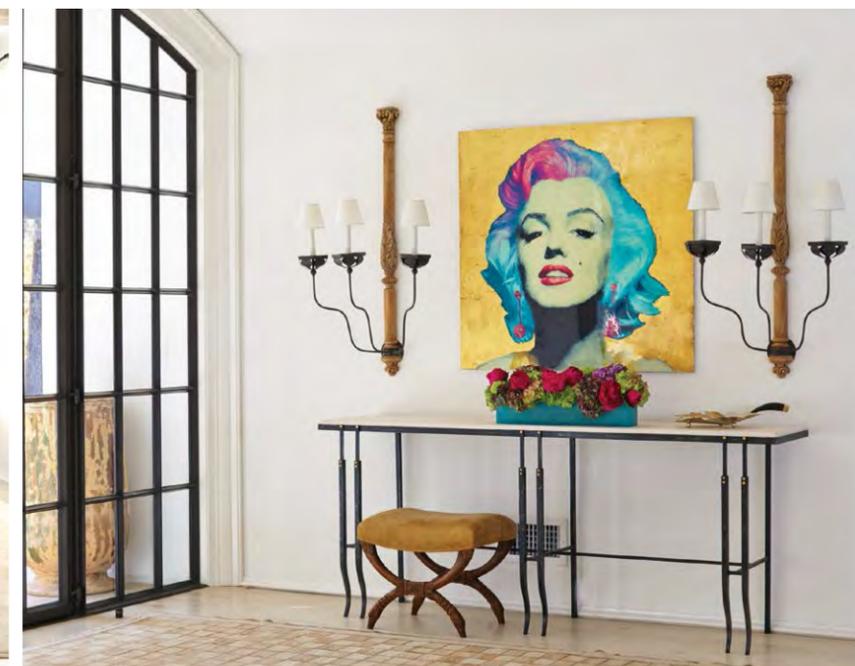
A pavilion marks the end of the long pool, perfectly embodying the home's theme of indoor/outdoor living. It offers a respite from the sun, as well as an impressive view.



All attention in this media room is directed to a large-screen television (right). A mix of new and vintage furniture provides comfortable viewing. Additional hospitality is afforded from a bar, complete with a dishwasher, ice machine, and wine keeper.



ABOVE LEFT: Clean lines mark the modern dining room. Anchored by a massive Holly Hunt walnut-and-stainless steel table, accompanying furnishings seem lighter than air, including the contemporary glass chandelier, chosen so as not to compete with the other elements but "to unify the room," says Patti. ABOVE RIGHT: The airy foyer has a barrel ceiling, echoing the arch of the glass door. The console table repeats the metal of the door, with the marble top blending with the white walls. The Marilyn Monroe artwork, which the owner bought in South Beach, is actually a print on metal.



Once the dated interiors were eliminated, the home's true potential became even more evident. The design team then set to work creating the certain sunny clime that the homeowner had requested. "He had lived in Newport Beach while growing up and loved it," says Patti. "He really wanted that California style—a sort of Malibu-like feeling."

In order to transform the rancher into a California beauty, more light was needed. The original front of the home seemed



The kitchen area brings together the bleached wood and white backdrop to create a casual, functional space. A breakfast space is tucked into a box bay window. A waterfall-style island delineates the work area that was set at an angle, which Patti says was “a challenge but made it interesting.” The range hood was crafted to disappear. Similarly, cabinetry blends into the light floor and the light oak beams.

to be weighed down with a heavy-looking wood door and exterior walls made of stucco. Inside, too few windows and too many dark wood accents kept the rooms in a constant state of semi-gloom.

By adding more windows, skylights, and a striking new bronze-and-glass entryway, the design team brought the house to life. Interior walls were painted white for a beach-bright ambiance. “We all love white,” Jeremy explains. “We wanted the house to be a beautiful backdrop for gatherings.”

The back of the home was also opened up to continue the living space out of doors. As a result, the home’s flow—from

room to room and to the outside—not only contributes to the West Coast flavor, it makes for an easy atmosphere for entertaining, something the homeowner loves to do.

The basic palette inside the home served as the team’s inspiration for the bleached, character oak flooring. Upholstered pieces in shades of brown and beige help to soften the surroundings, while a variety of rugs add subtle character to each area of the open space. “We had to carefully coordinate the rugs because they could all ‘see’ each other,” explains Patti. “We didn’t want them to compete or take away from the bleached floors, so it was important

A beautiful swimming pool is the center of entertaining in warm months, so even the pool house bath is dressed for company. Limestone flooring and glass tiles add luxury to the glass-walled shower. The view to Vulcan is part of the ambiance, but when privacy is needed, blinds can be operated by remote control.



In contrast to the palette of the rest of the house, the master bedroom is a deep-chocolate, masculine cocoon. A car collector, the owner fell in love with the Ralph Lauren bed that resembles the interior of a vintage automobile. A framed photo of a racecar over the headboard reinforces the theme.

that we find just the right combination. And we seemed to have succeeded”

Alfresco areas of the home also played a prominent role in the renovation. The original pool was strangely located in a covered area. Since guests don't clamor for fun in the shade, the pool area had to be changed. Rethinking that space led to opening the house onto a graceful veranda offering outdoor dining with media and party space as well.

Now, the revamped California-casual house serves as the perfect venue for large parties as well as a serene escape for quiet at-home evenings. In short, it's anything but complicated.

resources: architects: **JEREMY CORKERN AND PAUL BATES • BATES CORKERN STUDIO** 205.414.9939 • batescorkern.com
 builder: **PHILIP WOODS HOME BUILDER** 1102 20th Street South, Birmingham • 205.933.2373 decorator: **PATTI WOODS INTERIORS**
 205.566.1173 landscaping: **BATES CORKERN STUDIO AND GREEN LANDSCAPING** 205.933.0707 oak flooring: River Bottom Pine
 • 2336 F.L. Shuttlesworth Drive, Birmingham • 205.527.6848 • riverbottompine.com rugs: **PAIGE ALBRIGHT ORIENTALS** 2814
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