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VICENTE WOLF
MIXES IT UP IN A
HAMPTONS
KITCHEN, P.98





The formal living room, a traditional beauty with French doors, ornate moldings and an elegant neoclassical mantelpiece, reveals an understanding of comfort and luxury, urban sophistication and endearingly screwball wit. Two amply sized vintage chairs were dandified and upholstered in crushed-white velvet. The vintage American Empire sofa is covered in high-contrast green-and-white fabric (*Imperial Trellis* by Kelly Wearstler).

happy blendings

A sassy mix of patterns and styles transforms a 1922 Los Angeles home and reflects the vibrant lives of one young family in this traditional Hollywood enclave.



When Carolyn Bernstein and Nicholas Grad, TV execs and parents of two, moved from a mid-century house to this classic 1922 villa, the couple—working with designer Sasha Emerson—were clear about what they wanted in a family home:

luxuriant comfort and a confident mix of period styles. It had to be a cozy place that could embrace a sense of amused sophistication. For Grad, who had grown up in the old Beverly Hills of towering palms and elegant variations on traditional architecture, their new Hancock Park neighborhood—with its vintage homes, quiet sidewalks and verdant gardens—was familiar territory.

Bernstein grew up on the Upper East Side of Manhattan. “Every Park Avenue family I knew had a red-lacquered library,” she says winsomely. “I thought that was the height of glamour. That was the one specific request I had for Sasha: I wanted a red room.” Based in Santa Monica, Emerson grew up in New York City too and was equally versed in those crimson salons with their deep, voluptuous sofas, patterns ranging deliriously from leopard to chintz and globetrotters’ troves of objets d’art.

“We wanted to translate Nick and Carolyn’s backgrounds into a

more modern idiom,” remarks Emerson, who worked with colorist Philippa Radon to find the right shade of Pompeii red for the new library—coral without a trace of orange, ripe tomato infused with cream. “I’m very happy with this red,” says Bernstein. “It wasn’t the red in my memory; it was something much more surprising.” Radon also selected a pale, cool blue paint for the library ceiling. “Philippa came up with that idea and it’s genius,” Bernstein effuses. “It makes the room feel much more modern and inspired.”

Above, from left: A dragon-encrusted Chinese ceramic table against the wainscoting of the blue-on-blue dining room; in the red library, homeowner Carolyn Bernstein (left) relaxes with designer Sasha Emerson. Opposite: Every dining room should feature medallions for the Kiwanis and Rotary clubs and a vintage Tommi Parzinger chandelier; the chairs are covered in a Bob Collins & Sons print.

PRODUCED BY LINDA O’KEEFFE AND LAURA HULL. PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOHN ELLIS. WRITTEN BY SUSAN MORGAN.



at first glance, the sunroom—
an addition dating back to the
1920s—wasn't a space the home-
owners could envision using: With

old linoleum floors, skylights and no electricity, the room felt disconnected from the rest of the house. "It was hot in the summer and cold in the winter," explains Bernstein. "And we'd even discussed chopping it off entirely and expanding the backyard." Happily, Bernstein and Grad agree, they chose renovation over demolition. Once the original home's hardwood floors had been refinished with a dark stain, the sunroom floor was replaced to match. The ceiling was lowered to accommodate new wiring, and French doors were installed, creating easy access to the outdoors. "Now it's a room we use all the time," Bernstein sighs appreciatively.

An easy flow occurs between the sunroom, the adjoining breakfast room and the large, light-drenched kitchen, a family-friendly renovation completed by the previous homeowner. Furnishings from Bernstein and Grad's old house—also designed by Emerson—were transplanted; viewed in this radically different architectural context, the familiar objects generated plenty of new design ideas. Emerson, who received an M.F.A. from the Yale School of Drama, has a quick-witted visual sense and a flair for improvisation.

"Nick and Carolyn own a great collection of outsider art," explains Emerson. The core of their collection—paintings and ceramics created at LA Goal, a community-based program for developmentally disabled adults—celebrates a fearless enthusiasm for bold colors and rhythmic patterns. Emerson encouraged Bernstein to display her own childhood drawings as well.

Right, from top: The house relaxes into its Mediterranean roots; the sun porch was transformed into a highly functional family room with a 1960s chinoiserie secretary and a child-size Ikea table and chair for father-and-son Lego projects. Opposite: The breakfast room features a midcentury Eero Saarinen table and Thonet-inspired Holz chairs from Design Within Reach. The framed artwork is a vintage wallpaper panel.





Throughout the house, a captivating mix of styles and provenances—the refurbished and the newly produced, the distinctly madcap and the

incontrovertibly genteel—produces an atmosphere of great conviviality and welcome surprises. “In the library, we know that the furniture is oversize,” Emerson admits. “Those chairs are kind of ridiculous for the room, but it’s the bargain we struck to make the comfortable room we wanted.”

For the master bedroom, Emerson recovered a vintage wide-body chaise in garnet red, a color plucked from the exaggerated pattern of the room’s floral carpet. A pair of wall-mounted Artemide *Tolomeo* lamps illuminates bedtime reading. A Chinese ceramic garden stool contributes another layer of color and pattern.

“So often it’s a mix of lucky finds and really good textiles,” observes Emerson, who moves assuredly between flea markets and designer showrooms. After discovering a basketful of Italian glass pendant lights in an antique store, she bought a cache of old brass

hardware and produced a series of lamps for the house that have a timeless look: the ideal combination of serendipity and intention.

“My mother always said she thought the sign of a lovely house was that there was always something interesting for your eye to light on,” Bernstein says. “One of the pleasures of being in your surroundings is seeing a new juxtaposition, a new shape, a new color. That makes me feel that there is life, energy, running around the room, and I think that is a very good thing.”

See Resources, last pages.

Above: The master bath was modernized with a *Happy D* soaking tub by Sieger Design for Duravit; ceramic tile in a rich turquoise color (reminiscent of Bernstein’s Rimini Blu Bitossi pottery collection) was used on some walls. Opposite: The serenely simple California king bed was custom-made. The exuberant flower-field rug was designed by Consuelo Castiglioni of Marni for the Rug Company.



What the Pros Know

Sometimes a totally simpatico designer is the key to personal style. Collaborating on a house was practically a natural progression in designer Sasha Emerson and homeowner Carolyn Bernstein's long friendship: In addition to sharing a hometown (New York) and an alma mater (Brown), they are sharp-eyed flea market devotees. When Emerson gave Bernstein two pieces of Raymor pottery—Italian ceramics designed by Aldo Londi between 1957 and 1962—the seed for an ever-expanding collection was planted. Bernstein and Emerson were inspired by the pottery's turquoise glaze (Rimini Blu) and handmade charm. Remembering a particular New York time—when Amish quilts first appeared on Bleecker Street, Marimekko fabrics and op art arrived and Park Avenue hostesses still set out cigarettes—they recognized a complex theme worthy of design improvisation. "I loved our old house, but the architecture dictated what was needed," says Bernstein. "This house is more my natural aesthetic."

