

SOFA (similar to shown) "Paramount," \$1,899, bludot.com WHITE CHAIR "MR Lounge Chair with Arms" by Knoll, Mies van der Rohe, leather, from \$6,274, allmodern.com COFFEE TABLE (similar to shown) "Art Deco," gilded wood and mirror, \$699, wisteria.com THROW PILLOWS (on sofa and chair, similar to shown) "Medallion," cotton ikat, \$49 each, wisteria.com; reclaimed kilim, \$500 each, communedesign.com; and Vakarētājas traditional Latvian textiles, from \$65 each, baltic-crossroads.com LAMP (similar to shown) vintage 1950s ceramic, \$575, nickeykehoe.com FLOOR PILLOWS (similar to shown) Sure Fit ikat floor cushion, \$29.99 each, target.com



In the living room, favorite objects are arranged on the mantel and various tables. "It's not decorator-y," Johanknecht says of his style. "It's more gathered-and-found."

Cottage Living

In a fairy-tale L.A. home (with classic Hollywood roots), one designer amps up the style, sidesteps the precious, and makes every inch count.

BY SALLY SCHULTHEISS

WHEN DESIGNER STEVEN Johanknecht moved into his storybook Silver Lake cottage eight years ago, the neighbors told him that the house had been built in 1928 by Disney Studios in the style of the Seven Dwarfs' forest cabin. Indeed, the Tudor home still had the original kitchen, dark hallways, and attic-like master bedroom. "It's a good thing I'm not tall," Johanknecht says with a chuckle, standing under the sloped ceiling of his very cozy bedroom. The idiosyncrasies of the house add character, he explains, and he credits its efficient layout: "There's no excess or unused space."

Johanknecht, a founder of the design firm Commune, believes "anyone can surround themselves with an environment they love." In his case, that means kilim pillows, layers of art, lots of wood, and bold graphic color—an earthy-glam mix that has become Commune's signature. Johanknecht admits that his own house, at 1,400 square feet, is "small by L.A. standards but large by New York's," and is filled with furnishings that went through "awkward teenage years" until they found themselves here. "L.A. taught me to repurpose things," he adds. "There is something about the Wild West that allows you to break free."

In the living room, paintings and framed posters, mostly from flea markets, are stacked against the wall and under the bar. "It's amazing how much a small house can absorb," Johanknecht says. By not hanging them, he can change the decor every month or so. "It allows the space to evolve and feel fresh," he says.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY SIMON UPTON

The rustic-chic kitchen combines bold hues, varnished wood beams, and antique lighting fixtures.



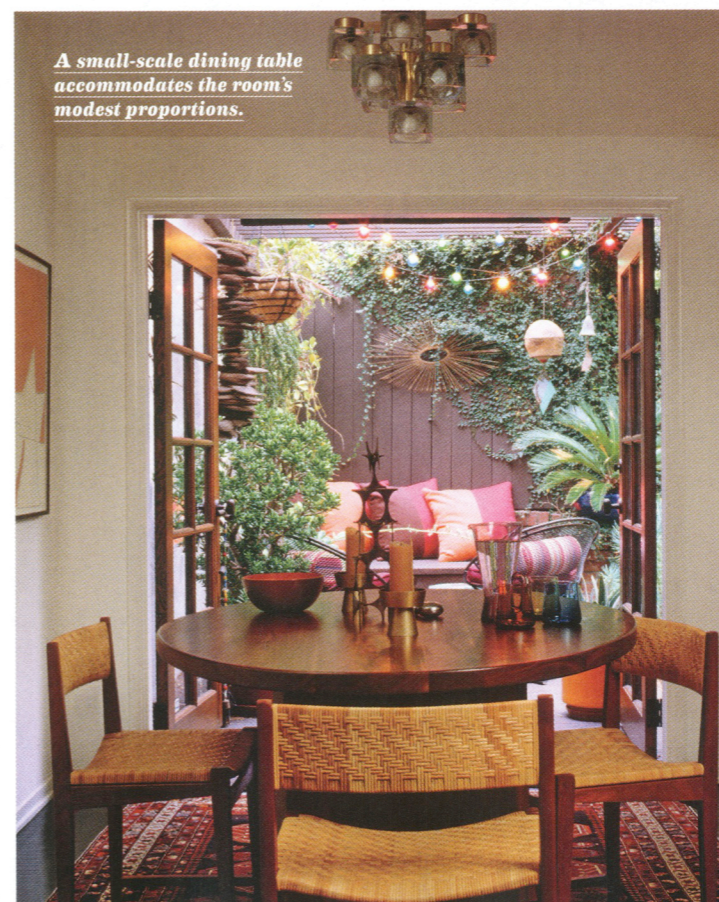
THE PRE-WAR SURFING
PHOTOGRAPHS OF DON JAMES
JULY 1 TO AUGUST 14, 1998
DANZIGER GALLERY
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CHERRY RED IS A
SIGNATURE COLOR—
EVEN ON KITCHEN
CABINETS.

this page, right CHAIRS “Sixties Armchair,” Frédéric Sofia for Fermob, aluminum tube, \$488 each, yliving.com FABRIC (on bench pillows, similar to shown) “Splash,” Sunbrella, indoor/outdoor chenille, \$95/yd., and (on chair bolsters) “Lifeguard,” acrylic, \$70/yd., both at donghia.com TABLE vintage 19th-century Chinese root stool, from \$1,500, 1stdibs.com for similar **this page, below** DINING CHAIRS Hvidt & Mølgaard for Søborg Møbelabrik, vintage 1950s caned teak chairs, \$695 each, denmark 50.com for similar **opposite page** CHANDELIER (similar to shown) French, hand-forged iron, \$650, carlmooreantiques.com PAINT (on cabinets) semi-gloss in Deep Rose 2004-10, benjaminmoore.com



A banquette, some throw pillows, and pretty strings of lights turn a deck into an outdoor living room.



A small-scale dining table accommodates the room's modest proportions.

DINING ROOM, KITCHEN, AND PATIO

● “The kitchen hadn’t been overrenovated,” says Johanknecht. “I like adding layers and layers of paint and lacquers. Instead of redoing, I like to mend.” The former Barneys New York executive designed an oval dining table of solid walnut to fit the narrow dining area (near left). French doors and windows covered in vintage lace and bamboo ease the indoor-outdoor flow of California living. The wood deck (above) just outside the dining room extends the house’s entertaining area. And there, too, the furnishings are no afterthought: An upholstered banquette, wood slats, strings of lights, hanging plants, chimes, and sculptures create an outdoor living room.

STUDIO

● Johanknecht's art studio is a converted garage. Every Sunday, he opens the French doors, tunes in to National Public Radio, and spends all day painting small, colorful abstracts that explore what he calls "the tension, or balance, between order and chaos." Antlers "from a crazy antiques store in San Francisco" hover above it all. Instead of needing a large space to house and display his various collections, Johanknecht simply moves things around, rotating paintings and treasured objects in and out of storage.

this page FILING CABINETS (similar to shown) "600 Series" by Sandusky Lee, three-drawer lateral, \$320 each, schoolsin.com DESK (similar to shown) "Wedgwood," Reed La Plant Design, maple and walnut, \$1,750, schoolhouseelectric.com CHAIR (similar to shown) Baltic birch drafting chair, \$168, dickblick.com DESK LAMP (similar to shown) Robert Sonneman, vintage 1960s chrome-and-marble globe, \$1,400, 1stdibs.com for similar



In the studio, antiques like these antlers mix and mingle with the designer's bold geometric paintings.

A HANGING BIKE IS LIKE ANOTHER PIECE OF ART.



A changing gallery is pinned with inspiring postcards, clippings, and photographs.



Upholstered mattresses serve as both seating and sleeping quarters in the den.



this page, left CHAIR Jerry Johnson, vintage 1960s chrome sling, \$675, 1stdibs.com for similar TABLE "Crate," white oak and brass \$1,200, communedesign.com **THROW PILLOWS** reclaimed kilim covers, \$500 each, commune design.com **RUG** (similar to shown) wool kilim, 6 ft. 4 in. x 10 ft. 5 in., from \$3,999, abchome.com for similar **PAINT** (on walls) custom blend of Chrome Green #PM-10 and Pacific Sea Teal #2049-10, benjaminmoore.com **this page, below** SIDEBOARD (similar to shown) "2-Position Credenza with 1 File," Florence Knoll, pearwood, from \$5,994, allmodern.com **TABLE LAMP** (similar to shown) "Driftwood Twisted," National Geographic Home Collection, \$130, bedbathandbeyond.com **opposite page** BEDSPREAD (similar to shown) "Featherstripe" in Madder Red, linen, \$281, brahmsmount.com **BLANKET** "National Park" collection, wool, from \$178, pendleton-usa.com **RUG** (similar to shown) sheepskin, 6 ft. x 7 ft. 5 in., \$969, neimanmarcus.com

DEN AND MASTER BEDROOM

● The den (*above*) is a burrow drenched in rich teal paint—the trim, too—and covered in old kilims ("I'm obsessed with them," says Johanknecht), pillows, art (including some of his own paintings), and books. Two double mattresses upholstered in Belgian linen anchor the room, which also houses overnight guests. The credenza (*right*) acts as another revolving gallery for the designer to change things up. The master bedroom (*opposite page*) is the one room he renovated completely. "This is a haven, and I've aggressively gone after that feeling," Johanknecht says. The wall-to-wall Belgian cashmere carpet signals the theme: "I liked the idea of coming into a soft space," he says. He also chose "low" items for the room that would fit comfortably within the sloped parameters, and he surrounded the far window with bookshelves.



A rotating display of objects and pictures all live happily on the credenza.

Carefully placing the bed beneath the sloped ceiling ensures the best use of the space—and fewer bumped heads.



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