



# Full Spectrum

INTERIOR DESIGN: DAVID DESMOND

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The highly influential color theorist and artist Josef Albers once called color "the most relative means of artistic expression." Its comparative influence is continually at play in the home of designer David Desmond and writer Andrew Myers, who recently rejuvenated a labor of love in the Hollywood Hills: a 1925 Mediterranean-style lanky hillside house that shimmers and rambles over many levels. Central to the rebirth was a love story told in several dozen hues by color scientist Gillian Rose, who introduced what she calls "a harmonious flow of colors from one space to another."

"After buying this house, we decided to live in it before remodeling, something I always advise my clients to do if they can," Desmond says. "You want to see how the sun moves through the house, where you want to sit and have coffee in the morning, what time of day the terrace is shady and cool." This is when the paint selections with Rose began. "We used over 30 different colors, which sounds like a lot, but when you see the house, the colors are sequenced in a way that feels energizing rather than jarring."

That sequence begins in the entrance hall, outfitted in a Blanche Dubois Rose. Here, against a wall of glass, a pair of early 19th century Qing Dynasty Shanxi scholar's cap chairs flank a Chinese Qing Dynasty late 18th century demilune console table holding a blanc de chine Quan Yin statue and an abstract painting by Jason Fitzmaurice; reflected in the mirror on the opposite wall is a 1967 Brian Rice Op Art serigraph. The entrance hall steps down to the living room, where subtle horizontal stripes capture the changing light. "I gave Gillian a photo of a library Peter Marino designed for Giorgio Armani in Milan with a hand-painted grid pattern in tones of ivory, inspired by Jean-Michel Frank's parchment-clad dining room for Marie-Laure de Noailles," Desmond notes. "She reinterpreted this image with wide horizontal stripes in off-white in our living room. The room glows day and night. It feels amazing."

From the far end of the living room, a perfect view sets up through the dining room and into the hall and study beyond. Against the latter's light green walls is among the couple's most favorite works of art: a Zuber scenic wallpaper, *Le Combat des Grecs*. "We found the panels in New York and got them for Andrew's birthday, then mounted them on board and framed them," Desmond says. "It is a dramatic scene with a ship on fire. The colors look amazing when seen from the lavender dining room, looking through a robin's egg blue hall into the study." This wallpaper treatment is repeated in the dining room, the framed scene's gradated sky mirroring how the room's lilac light changes from one end of the room to the other. A collection of mismatched antique dining chairs surrounds a Saarinen table topped with Carrara marble; atop an antique Chinese red lacquered cabinet is a pair of 19th-century blue and white porcelain vases from JF Chen. The couple's beloved antiques are balanced by modern pieces like a monkey lithograph by Banksy in the living room—a birthday gift from Andrew to David, who is exceptionally fond of all things simian. It hangs, he says, "in solitary splendor over the antique Chinese altar table."





The dining room's picture window and living room's terrace look out over the city and its storied past: Director George Cukor's house, where Katharine Hepburn and Spencer Tracy bunked up in the poolhouse, is just around the corner. Nearby is a house John Elgin Woolf designed for actor Paul Lynde. The house itself has its own Hollywood story, with past residents including Tony award-winning Broadway composer-lyricists Robert Wright and George Forrest. But it was simply the house itself, and its place within L.A.'s natural beauty, that made it home. "The view of the city all the way to Catalina wowed us," Desmond says. "For a Mediterranean-style house from the 1920s, it has particularly high ceilings, almost 11 feet, which gives the rooms a feeling of openness and a grand sense of scale."

The private spaces are as intimate as the public ones are lofty. The primary bedroom, in a light icy lavender called I Do, is nestled in the treetops. "The color contrasts so well with the Verdure Bois de Chene fabric from Old World Weavers on the bed and the green of the landscape seen through the windows," Desmond says. "The wall color envelops you and leads the eye outdoors." With much care and attention to detail, the house will continue to be built upon in the years to come. There are plans in the works with architect Richard Manion to add an elevator and swimming pool, and some reconfigurations that will happen over the wonderful maze of five floors (in which this writer, the soothing creak of century-old wood beneath her feet, gets lost every time). "The design for the new house is all about using what we have: placing the furniture and art we have collected over many years within these beautifully painted rooms," Desmond says. "We have been living in the house for almost a year and imagining what it will become." ■ *David Desmond, daviddesmond.com*



