

Mood Swing

Shifting away from the light tones she's known for, an L.A. designer's own home renovation experiments with deep hues and complex patterns.

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Interior Design: Annette English, Annette English + Associates Home Builder: Jeff Martin, Martin-Stephan Builders, Inc. Landscape Architecture: Patricia Benner, Benner Landscape Design



One of the most beloved items in designer Annette English's Los Angeles home is a 1940s French Art Deco cerused sideboard holding court in her dining room, purchased from 1stdibs. Atop it sits vintage artwork framed by Voilal Framing.

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oug Willmore was so struck by the first glimpse of his fully renovated home that only a one-word review would do: “*Wow.*” Not that he was surprised by the stunning result. He was already well-versed in

the talents of his designer, Annette English—she’s his wife. But he hadn’t set foot inside their house since she’d embarked on a three-month-long redesign during which she kept nearly all of her decisions covert. “The only things Doug approved were two green chairs in our living room,” English says with a laugh. “His one request was, ‘just give me some comfortable seating with legroom.’” Which she did, along with a whole lot more.

Known for designing bright, bespoke homes awash with light and natural colors for her clients, English, who worked with general contractor Jeff Martin for the interior overhaul, chose a different approach for her and Doug’s home. Walls painted moody immersive shades, vintage furniture, plenty of art and patterned wallpapers make for cozy spaces and unexpected moments. “I wanted to explore who I am and how I’ve evolved as a designer,” English states. “The result is very eclectic and unique. It has so much personality. And I still see it as timeless and comfortable too.”

Building off the living room’s verdant chairs, she decided to celebrate their color, coating the walls, baseboards, ceiling and even the fireplace in Farrow & Ball’s Green Smoke. This deep hue envelops the room and allows certain bold touches, such as a Cloud chandelier by Apparatus, to shine. For continuity, she flowed the same shade along with a statement floral wallpaper into the dining room, a space which still feels unique thanks to vintage dusty-orange velvet chairs and a modern custom table. They’re joined by an unexpected mix of art and a striking 1940s Art Deco cabinet—“my favorite piece,” English says of this deeply personal purchase made in honor of her mother after she passed. This concept of creating cohesiveness throughout while curating different experiences in each room was at the heart of her design scheme. “It’s tough to say what my most cherished space is,” she reflects. “I can go into any room and have a special moment.”

Doug concurs, noting that they spend a lot of time in every area now, whereas before they tended to congregate in only one or two. A room he especially gravitates toward, though, is the kitchen. “It’s so cozy,” he says of it and its adjoining breakfast nook, “whether we’re cooking, entertaining the cook or hanging out with our guests.”

That feeling of comfort makes sense: English rethought the entire kitchen, ensuring it would work exactly the way she and Doug needed, and then added some flourishes. In collaboration with Martin, she resurfaced the counters, installed new floors and refaced the cabinets in a shade of green that looks nearly black. “They’re so rich and deep,” the designer swoons. “Then I added this beautiful brass hardware that I love.” Beyond the prep area, a built-in banquette, custom table and chairs are paired with a hide rug and vintage light fixture from Sweden for an intimate ambiance that encourages lingering. “It’s rich and delicious,” English notes of the room’s visual appeal.

The same could be said for the bedrooms, with the primary one painted a deep grape which is set off by vintage pieces. One of these is a rug, another item the designer bought in remembrance of her mother. Meanwhile, the cocoon-like guest room is painted a warm mahogany that, as English observes, ensures that visitors “sleep soundly.”

And it’s not just the interiors of this house that exude coziness. To create a private enclave, the couple decided to add a motorized gate to the front yard and a gym in the back with French doors and windows overlooking the landscaping. The fountain, olive trees and lush foliage that define the exterior—under the eye of landscape architect Patricia Benner—could have been lifted from an Italian estate.

English’s entire approach to the abode was different from how she works with her clients. “I do full-blown mock-ups of rooms and very intensive presentation boards for them,” she explains. “It was a more organic process for my own home. It just evolved.” Though right from the get-go she didn’t know what the result would be, she did know one thing for certain: It would represent her. “Especially as a designer, when you enter your own space, it should be a reflection of who you are,” she says. **L**



Right: In the work space tucked in a living room alcove, a built-in desk by Pacific Fine Millwork is joined by a chair designed by English and fabricated by Emiliano & Associates. Farrow & Ball's Green Smoke blends the desk and cabinetry with the walls.

Opposite: "Our Cowtan & Tout wallpaper is the one thing we kept the same," notes English of her home's dining room. Vintage chairs from Gallery L7 in a Kravet velvet gather around a rift-sawn oak table she designed. The draperies feature a Holly Hunt fabric and the drum pendant is Ironies.





Above: To make the most of a cozy breakfast nook, English tapped Pacific Fine Millwork to craft a built-in banquette with storage and bespoke cushions. Custom chairs covered with a Keelen Leathers hide provide additional seating. Below is a Saddlemans cowhide rug.

Opposite: General contractor Jeff Martin refaced the kitchen cabinets and used brass knobs and pulls from Liz's Antique Hardware to create drama. Hexagonal cement floor tiles by Arto Brick balance the room's darker hues: Farrow & Ball's Studio Green and honed-granite countertops.



Walls coated with Farrow & Ball's London Clay complement vintage and vintage-inspired pieces in the primary bedroom, including a Lawrence of La Brea rug and Stilnovo bedside lamp. Linen draperies featuring a leafy pattern from Fine Draperies add a verdant touch. A pendant from Little Paris Antiques hangs above.



Right: One of the designer's clients gifted her a French Art Deco armchair from Adesso Imports, now styled with an ensemble of vintage artworks. The antique stone table is from Paul Marra Design. Curtains by Fine Draperies complete the vignette.

Opposite: Walls of Mahogany by Farrow & Ball add richness to a guest bedroom. English chose a bed by Mario Grimaldi International upholstered in a Kelly Wearstler fabric, topped with Parachute linens and paired with a table from T.L. Gurley Antiques.



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Since she was a small child, English has loved gardening—and her passion grew while working with landscape architect Patricia Benner to reshape her home's yard. She and her husband even traveled to Visalia to personally choose three mature olive trees for their backyard.