

TOPSPIN

*EVERY HOUSE TELLS A STORY, AND THIS ONE ORIGINATES WITH A
DESIRE TO PLAY TENNIS WITH A HOME-COURT ADVANTAGE*

TEXT **NANCY A. RUHLING** PHOTOGRAPHY **ROGER DAVIES** INTERIOR DESIGN **MLK STUDIO** ARCHITECT **McALPINE HOUSE**



BRENTWOOD PARK, CALIFORNIA



A PRIVATE, PAVED COURTYARD WITH FORMAL LANDSCAPING LEADS TO THE ENTRANCE OF THE HOUSE, WHICH IS A MODERN COLONIAL DESIGNED BY THE McALPINE HOUSE ARCHITECTURAL FIRM. THE HOME'S FRONT DOOR, WHICH IS OVERSIZE AND MADE OF STEEL AND GLASS, WELCOMES VISITORS. A PAIR OF BLACK METAL SWINGING DOORS LEAD TO THE COURTYARD. THE TENNIS HOUSE, WHICH LOOKS LIKE A HISTORIC BARN — MADE OF RECLAIMED WOOD PAINTED DRIFTWOOD GRAY — IS ACCESSED VIA SLIDING BARN DOORS.



"THE CLIENT PREFERS A MORE MONOCHROMATIC APPROACH, SO I INTRODUCED COMPLEMENTARY COLOR WITH ART, THROW PILLOWS AND FLOWERS. I ALSO ADDED CONTRAST BY EMPLOYING FURNITURE OF DIFFERENT WOODS." MJ



When interior designer Meg Joannides' clients noticed a property with a tennis court come on the market in Los Angeles' smart Brentwood Park neighborhood, they snapped it up. The couple knew they would have to tear down the existing house – an unremarkable one-story, 1940s ranch – so they consulted Joannides, principal of MLK Studio, who had worked with them on a previous project.

Joannides interviewed a dozen architects before proposing they visit a residence Bobby McAlpine's firm had designed in Napa Valley. After the couple saw the home, they commissioned McAlpine's team to design a three-story, modern Colonial that would be both bold and beautiful. Joannides and the wife then brainstormed ideas and created a Pinterest page of possibilities.

"Bobby studied the neighborhood and saw this house as a big brother or big sister to the home next door," Joannides adds. "He also envisioned it being what he called 'as warm and inviting as a box of puppies.'"

The home the couple ultimately decided upon – a 10,000-square-foot, H-shaped residence with brick painted a discreet linen white in homage to neighboring properties – reads as an ode to classical symmetry. And it is, indeed, as welcoming as the pack of playful puppies McAlpine envisioned.

On the street facade, the home announces itself, sotto voce, with a private courtyard. Oversize, triple-hung steel windows in the sleek style of 1920s industrial factories, romantic balconies, peaked roofs, and a modern steel beam that anchors the gate to the courtyard create a poetic balance that adds a bit of modernity.

The property's other structure, a clever barnlike tennis house that sleeps six, was designed to look as though it had been built long ago and recently renovated. Painted driftwood gray, it's made of reclaimed wood and is set in a garden that drinks in the heady perfume of night-blooming jasmine. The lounge is made for lingering; it's the husband's hangout, a perfect après-match retreat.

In a grand slam gesture, the main house spreads its arms to embrace the large-scale events Joannides' clients are known for hosting. The open floor plan, along with strategically placed pocket doors and expansive banks of steel windows, blur the boundaries between indoor and outdoor spaces. "We wanted to make the walls go away," Joannides explains.

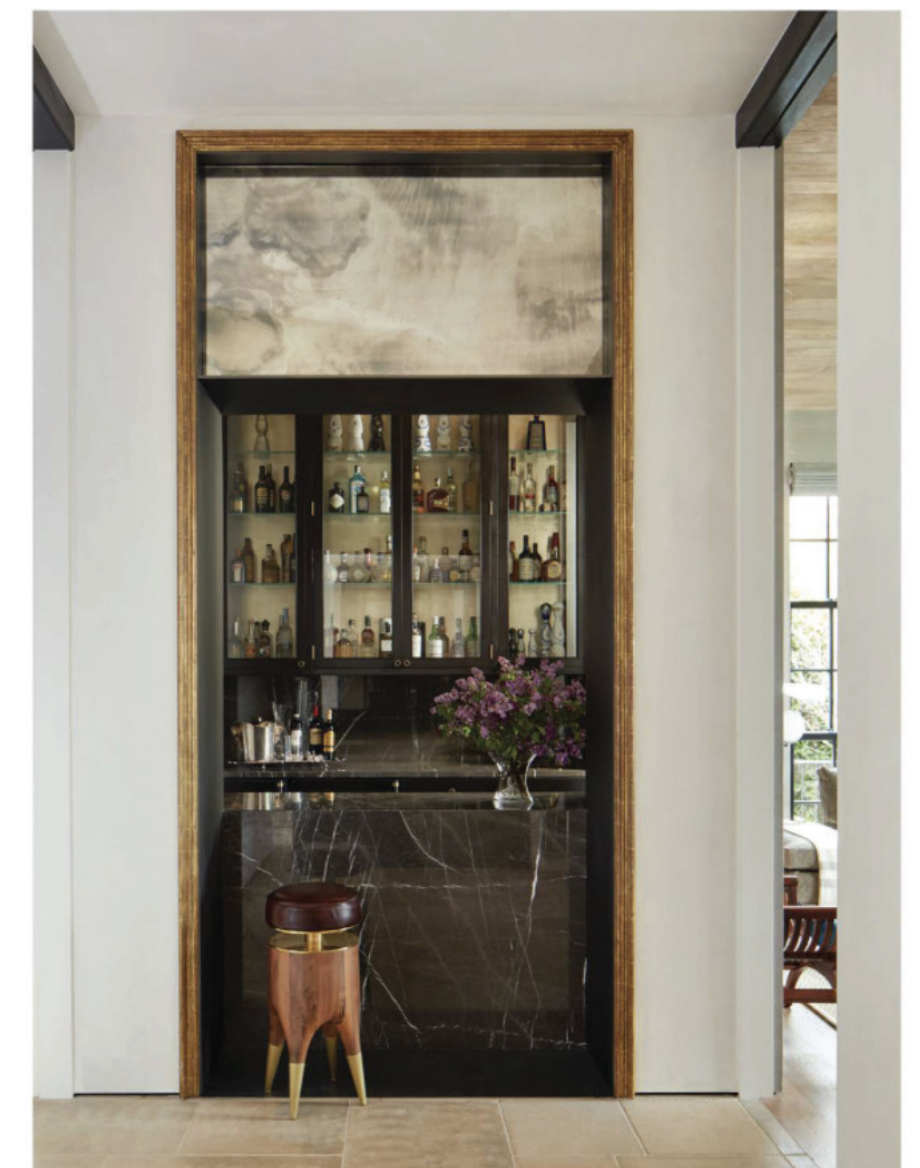
They don't so much recede as dissolve blissfully into the distant scenery. The crystal chandelier over the circular dining table shimmers in the sunlight and sparkles with the stars. Wooden floors and ceilings ground the grandeur; intimate groupings of furniture set the stage for cozy conversation; and a neutral color palette and walls plastered in what Joannides describes as a "chalky matte finish" add an air of subtle sophistication.

"The client prefers a more monochromatic approach, so I introduced complementary color with art, throw pillows and flowers. I also added contrast by employing furniture of different woods," states Joannides. Indeed, the success of the residence's interior design is in the details. "They are what matters."

And the husband, a passionate player, confesses that he loves the house as much as he does the tennis court.



AN ORNATE CRYSTAL CHANDELIER FORMS A COUNTERPOINT TO THE SLEEK, CIRCULAR DINING ROOM TABLE.



THE BAR, WHICH IS MADE OF GRAY MARBLE, IS DESIGNED TO SHOWCASE THE CLIENTS' COLLECTION OF BOTTLES. THE COUNTER WATERFALLS TO THE FLOOR, AND THE BACK OF THE CABINET IS GILDED WITH SILVER LEAF TO ADD SPARKLE.



THE FOUR-POSTER BED IN ONE OF THE GUEST BEDROOMS IS DESIGNED TO COMPLEMENT THE STEEL-AND-GLASS WINDOWS. THE ANTIQUE ROCKING CHAIR IS A FAMILY HEIRLOOM, AND THE NIGHTSTANDS WERE DESIGNED BY MEG JOANNIDES OF MLK STUDIO FOR THE CLIENTS' PREVIOUS HOME.