

A WEST SIDE HYBRID

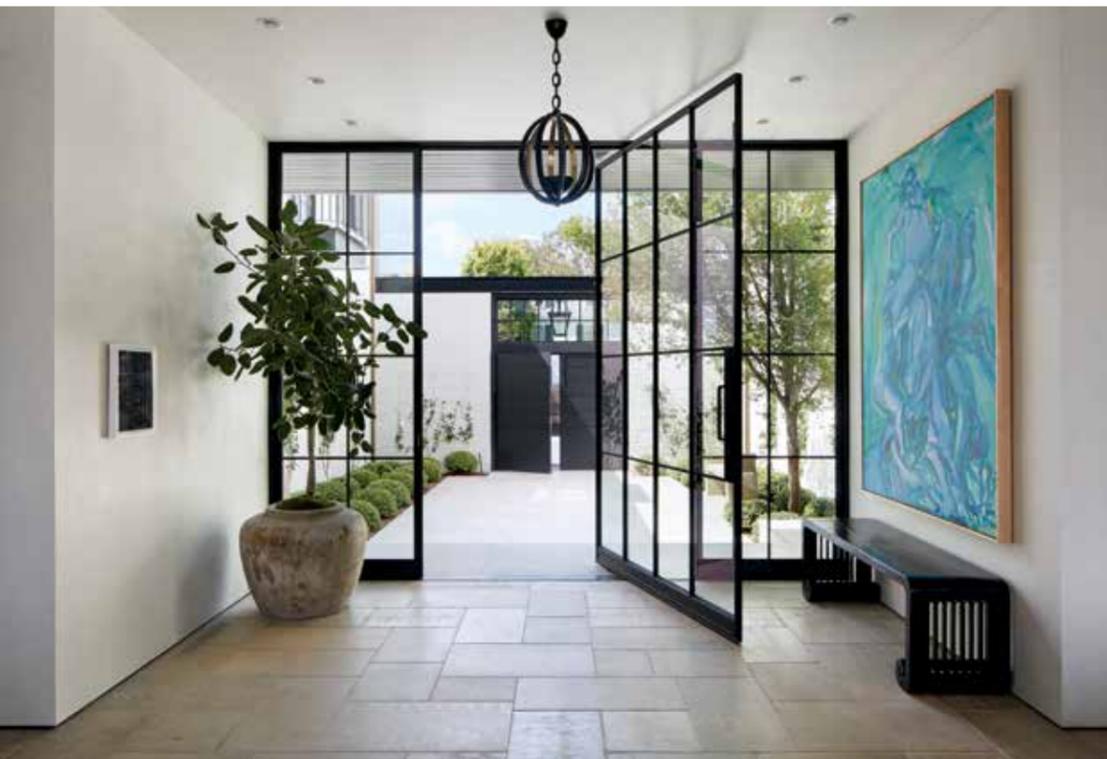
A LUMINOUS HOUSE BY MLK STUDIO AND MCALPINE ARCHITECTS OFFERS AN UNEXPECTED BLEND OF CONTEMPORARY AND TRADITIONAL ELEMENTS

It's true what they say about appearances. From a distance the white-brick West Side house seems right at home amid the neighborhood's older dwellings, but look closer and it's clear there's something else afoot. Oversize triple-hung windows punctuate the front gables while a horizontal steel beam frames the entrance to a courtyard, where a third gable rises above a 7-by-11-foot steel-and-glass pivot door. But the real surprise comes once you step inside, where expansive floor-to-ceiling windows open the entire rear of the house to the backyard. The experience is both unexpected and utterly inviting. And that's just what architect Bobby McAlpine and interior designer Meg Joannides had in mind.



Left: For a house on the West Side of Los Angeles, Alabama-based McAlpine architects, led by Bobby McAlpine and project architect John Sease, balanced traditional gable elements with large steel-and-glass windows and an open floor plan.

Above: "Creating an entry courtyard buys you a little time and prepares you for the transition from a somewhat colonial reference to a more contemporary glass pavilion," says McAlpine, who collaborated with Los Angeles designer Meg Joannides of MLK Studio.



Opposite: A pivoting steel-and-glass front door opens to the entrance hall, where an artwork by Elaine de Kooning hangs above a vintage bench by Charles Jacobsen. Stone flooring from Exquisite Surfaces; Herve Van der Straeten pendant from Ralph Pucci.



Below: In the living-dining area, MLK Studio sofas covered in Holly Hunt linen flank Boca do Lobo coffee tables. Floor lamps by Caste. Troscan cane-back chairs are paired with a Holly Hunt metal side table. Silk-and-wool rug by Minassian. *Right:* The entire space opens up to the back yard. At right, a Christian Liaigre slipper chair, Daniel Pollack side table and Holly Hunt coffee table. Abstract artwork over the fireplace by Robert Standish.



Joannides, of West Hollywood's MLK Studio, had designed the couple's previous Cape Cod-style residence, but when a new property came on the market that gave them a tennis court and the chance to do a ground-up build, they decided it was time for a change. "Their house was beautiful but very monochromatic," says Joannides. "They needed to mix things up." Working closely with the wife, she put together a wish list that included an open floor plan for entertaining, steel-and-glass windows, pitched roofs and a place to hang out after tennis. "The new house wasn't going to be ultra-modern or an English Tudor," says Joannides. "It would be a sort of hybrid."

Their search for an architect who clicked with their vision stalled until Joannides suggested Montgomery, Alabama-based McAlpine. He wasn't local, but she was confident his talent for creating homes that mingle romantic historicism and modern lines was the perfect fit. The couple visited a retreat he'd done in the Napa Valley and were sold. "I fell in love with it," the wife recalls. "Bobby's houses just kind of hug you."

McAlpine, who'd never worked in Los Angeles, was equally intrigued. "They wanted something comfortable and conservative on one hand but ultra-liberal and modern on the other," he says. "It seemed appropriate to temper the house with a colonial aesthetic and turn it into a glass pavilion on the rear. We could have done a modern house, but it wouldn't have been nearly as fun as something that's genteel in feeling but in fact a little outrageous." With McAlpine's colleague John Sease on board as project architect, the team expanded to include builder Richard Holtz and landscape designer Christine London.

For the interiors Joannides began as she always does—with the shell. "I can't do the furnishings until the walls, floors, baseboards and moldings are set," she explains. In keeping with a house that didn't feel brand new, she and the architects specified reclaimed wood posts and beams, a fireplace of board-formed concrete, and planked ceilings. Walls with a reveal rather than a baseboard introduce a distinctly modern note, which Joannides balanced with a Venetian plaster finish by her longtime plasterer, Peter Bolton. "The materiality is subtle," she says. "There's nothing loud."



Left: In the study, a Minotti sofa and chairs by Holly Hunt (left) and Mattalano surround a Holly Hunt coffee table. Anna Karlin sconces. A Christian Liaigre desk and bookcase complement Josef Hoffman chairs. Conrad shade; Phillip Jeffries wallcovering.

Above: Kelly Wearstler chairs at a MLK Studio table. Holly Hunt leather on banquette; Lindsey Adelman pendant. *Top:* Lindsey Adelman pendants in the kitchen; Calacatta Lincoln marble countertops, Nanz hardware and Dornbracht fixtures. Farrow and Ball cabinet paint.



Opposite: In the master bedroom, a Holly Hunt bed and nightstands complement a Gregorius Pineo sofa and a Formations coffee table. Fortuny pendant.

Opposite below: A Maxalto bed, Rug Company carpet and Christian Liaigre lamps in a guest bedroom. Phillip Jeffries wallcovering; pillow and throw from Pat McGann.

Right: A pendant by Gabriel Scott and sconces by Articolo in the master bath. The tub is from Waterworks. The petrified-wood table is from The Apartment by the Line.

Below right: A custom MLK Studio bed, Rug Company carpet, Serge Mouille chandelier and B & B Italia sofa and tables in a guest bedroom. Blanket and throws from Harbinger.

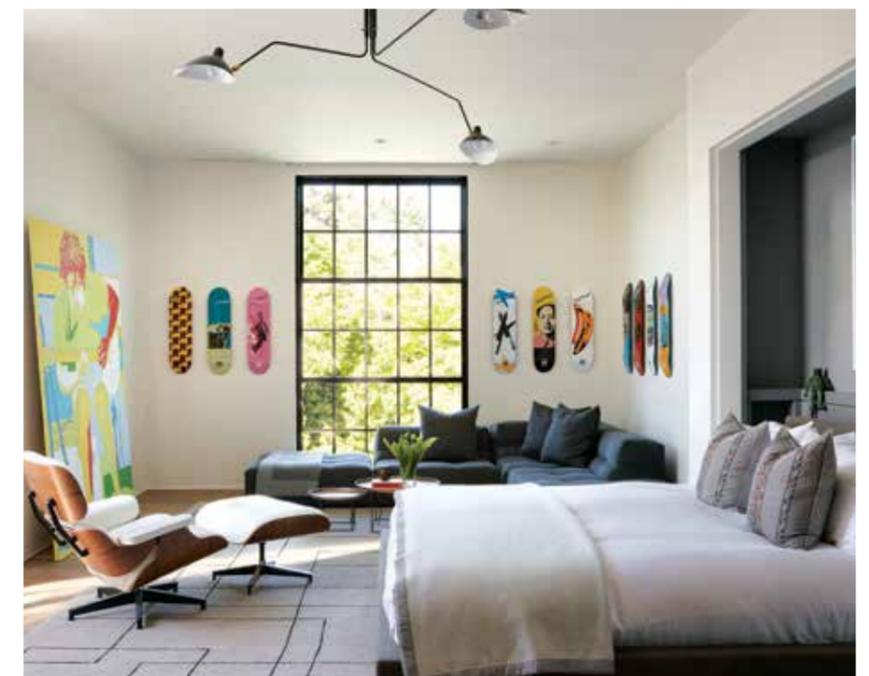
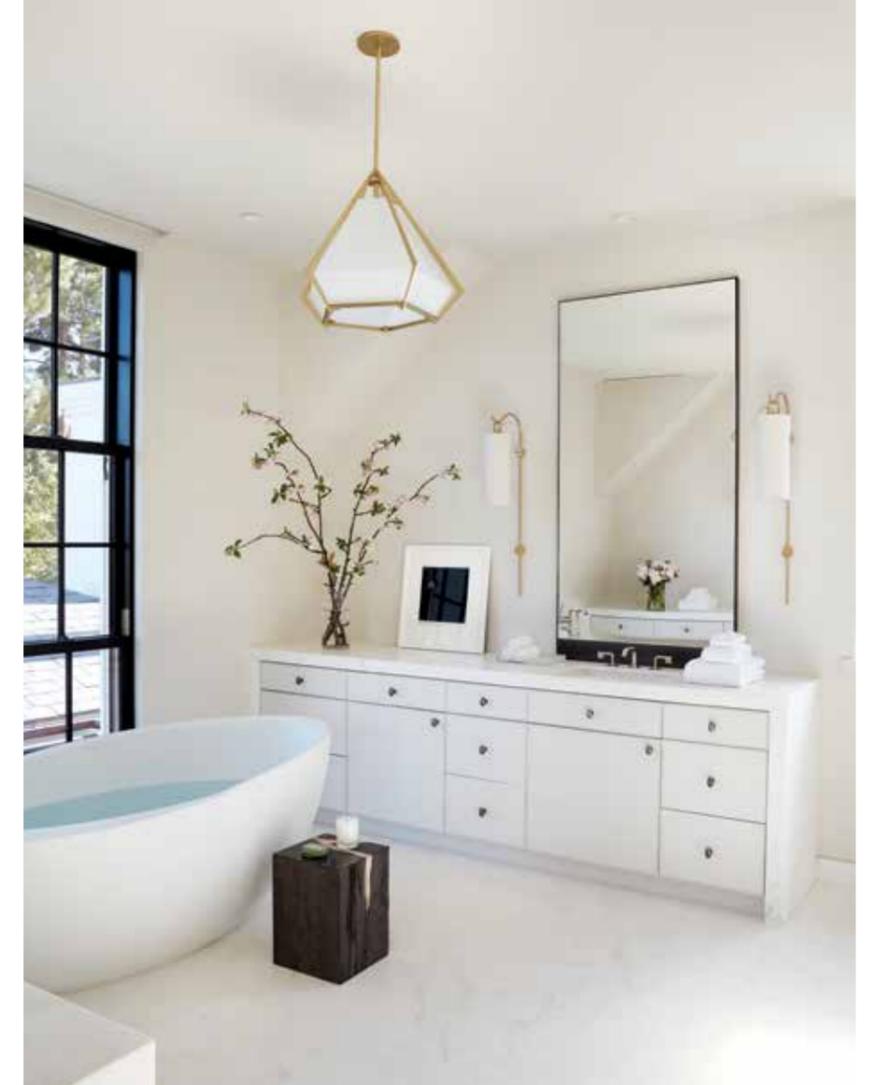
is displayed in the breakfast area alongside a table Joannides crafted from a wood slab.

The play of textures extends to the kitchen: honed Calacatta Lincoln marble counters and backsplash, wide-plank floors and pendants by Lindsey Adelman, whose work turns up elsewhere. “I didn’t want this to be another white kitchen,” Joannides says. “It has an old-world feel, but it’s modern at the same time.”

Her “contemporary eclectic vibe” continues upstairs, most notably in one son’s bedroom, which doubles as a guest room. There are skateboards adorned with Andy Warhol screen prints and a work by Los Angeles artist Paul Rusconi (his rendering of a hummingbird is downstairs). It’s testament to Joannides’s ability to pull disparate elements together that an iconic Eames lounge chair and ottoman feel right at home. The master bedroom is more serene, with a bed and nightstands by Holly Hunt, a Persian Malayer rug and a Fortuny pendant, and contemporary artworks by Hen Coleman, Christopher Haun and Robert Standish.

The couple entertain often, and the brick-and-steel dining pavilion off the kitchen is a favorite hangout. “It’s got those indoor-outdoor elements,” says Sease, “but they’re dressed up. It’s more relaxed than the main facade, but there’s a formality and a symmetry to it.”

Then there’s the tennis guest house, with its slouchy Ligne Roset lounge chairs and built-in bunk beds. London’s treatment of the landscape, which transitions from tailored foliage to borders of white *stephanotis*, hydrangeas and



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As envisioned by McAlpine and Sease, the ground floor is a series of luminous open spaces. The entrance hall, where a canvas by Elaine de Kooning hangs above a vintage bench from Charles Jacobsen, flows into the living-dining area, which spills out to the rear terrace. Throughout, Joannides combined custom furnishings by her own MLK Studio with a mix of vintage and showroom pieces. Beside the fireplace, her clean-lined sofas join tree-trunk-inspired tables by Boca do Lobo. Nearby, Holly Hunt’s stone and forged-iron cocktail table complements slipper chairs and a sofa by Christian Liaigre. A photomontage by Ilit Azoulay



jasmine, and apple and oak trees, makes the outdoor areas a destination in their own right. "It was about seamlessness," she says, "a balance between classical and contemporary and beautiful but functional living spaces."

"Only in California could you do something like this," McAlpine observes. "It's got some free thinking. But if you can combine that indoor-outdoor sensibility with a sense of how wonderful it is to be inside and an architecture that's referential and intrinsically warm, you've got both things. You don't have the mad teenager at the dinner party, you've got somebody with a strong base but a liberal heart." •



Opposite top: The guest house is enhanced by Christine London's landscaping. *This page:* Lounge chairs by Ligne Roset, a wood table by MLK Studio and a jute-and-wool rug from Woven. Tripod tables, The Lollipop Shoppe; Lindsey Adelman chandelier.

Opposite bottom: The outdoor dining pavilion features chairs from Janus et Cie; the custom swing and limestone dining table are by MLK Studio. "We call it the living porch," says John Sease. "It has a strong relationship to the kitchen and breakfast room."