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VIEW FROM THE TOP

A HUSBAND AND WIFE
ENLIST A DESIGN TEAM TO
BUILD A HANDCRAFTED AND
SUSTAINABLE HOME ON A
LOS ANGELES HILLSIDE.

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ARCHITECTURE / GRANT KIRKPATRICK AND DUAN TRAN, KAA DESIGN
INTERIOR DESIGN / TIM CLARKE, TIM CLARKE INTERIOR DESIGN
HOME BUILDER / JIM DAVIS, DAVIS DEVELOPMENT GROUP
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE / JERRY WILLIAMS, KAA DESIGN



Once a couple in the entertainment industry bought their starter house in a Los Angeles canyon, they knew they wouldn't sell it until they were ready to build their dream home. Fourteen years later, it was time. They purchased a property on a hill with sweeping views from downtown to the Getty Center with the goal of creating a light-filled and sustainable dwelling. "It's symbolic of them," says Duan Tran, who, with Grant Kirkpatrick, made up the architectural team on the three-year project. "They're both at a point in their careers where they are taking the next step up. Building a house of this caliber at the top of the hill—it has a lot of meaning."

Designer Tim Clarke, who had worked with the couple on their first home, brought the architects on board. "We got along very well," Clarke says of the homeowners. "And they said, 'We promise someday we're going to build our dream home, and when we do, you're our guy.' I've heard that a million times, but it actually worked out." Clarke

understood this project came with the responsibility to create a place that his clients would love for many years. "I knew these people weren't just going to live there for 10 years and move on," the designer says. "This is it."

Clarke, along with Tran and Kirkpatrick, developed a village-like concept with a guesthouse and motor court focused around the main house, which is dominated on the first floor by a double-volume great room where the kitchen, dining and living areas flow together. "I really love that room," Clarke says of the central area. "I love this concept of big public spaces that everyone hangs out in together." From there, a wall of glass doors opens to the backyard filled with panoramic views.

The couple wanted the residence to embrace its surroundings. "We also wanted it to be flexible—intimate for a couple or to expand for a fund-raiser of 200 people," the wife says. And unlike other clients, having many bedrooms wasn't a priority for the homeowners. Rather, since they both work from home, it was important their home offices reflect

Architects Grant Kirkpatrick and Duan Tran selected mahogany and stone for the façade of their clients' village-like Los Angeles residence, carefully integrating the home into its hilltop setting. The entrance leads into the central living space, while the homeowners' offices branch off to either side.



The cantilevered roof provides continuous coverage for those who desire some shade on the terrace below. Others can soak in the sun on the Serene chaise lounges from Henry Hall Designs on the pool deck. The cushions are covered in a Perennials stripe from David Sutherland.

Right: Indoor-outdoor living was one of the key design goals for the residence. The glass doors of the great room lead to an entertaining area that is spacious enough for hosting large parties but is arranged so there are separate areas to have intimate conversations. For one, a pair of Sutherland chairs with cushions outfitted in Perennials fabric join a table from Mix Furniture.

Opposite: The great room brings together the living room, dining room and kitchen. A rocker from Amsterdam Modern and a Minotti chair, ottoman and sectional, grouped around a Baker coffee table, provide comfortable spots for lounging in the living area. Accenting the space are the deep tones of a silk-and-wool rug from J.H. Minassian & Co. and a Fuse Lighting chandelier from Thomas Lavin.



their personalities. So, the team pulled their work spaces off the central axis in different directions—hers, a Zen-infused space on the first floor, and his, a cantilevered volume on the second level. “I wanted to see earth and water when I looked out my office window,” the wife says. “My husband loved the feeling of a floating aerie.”

Steering down a different path than the typical glass box at the top of the hill, the team used board-formed concrete and mahogany to create a warm environment. “The concrete really allows the wood and stone to stand out,” Kirkpatrick explains. To ensure the home was built with the skills of an artisan, the architects enlisted general contractor Jim Davis, who brings his experience as a furniture maker and woodworker to his endeavors. “He’s one of the few true craftsmen left,” Kirkpatrick says. “He puts together a house by hand.” Case in point: the showstopping spiral staircase that Davis created. “There’s an interpretive

process of taking the architect’s plans, disassembling them and then figuring out how to put them back together,” Davis says. “As much as I love the beauty of it, there’s a massive amount of effort that went into that staircase.”

For his part, Clarke was challenged to push the envelope in terms of color. “We wanted it to be warm,” says the wife, “no Guggenheim-type cold modern.” She nixed any neutrals, Clarke says. “It’s very easy to create these houses with a great view and warm wood and keep it monochromatic and contemporary,” the designer says. Instead, he veered in a different direction, using strong, vibrant colors. “The backdrop of that beautiful wood really lends itself to teal, purple and pink tones,” he says.

Landscape architect Jerry Williams was charged with finding a balance of openness and seclusion. “There is no question that the view is the primary feature of the site,” he says, “but the way the house is tucked into





In the dining area, a custom Fuse Lighting brass-and-cracked-glass chandelier from Thomas Lavin hangs above a custom Holly Hunt table surrounded by linen-dressed Minotti chairs. Beneath is a wool-and-silk carpet from Woven. Set into a niche is a custom cabinet. The Ruzika Company handled the lighting design.



Polished-chrome counter stools by Allermuir pull up to one of the kitchen's two islands. Inset into one is a Waterworks faucet. In the other, topped with stone from Walker Zanger, is a Wolf cooktop; behind is a Sub-Zero refrigerator. The draperies gathered at the window are in a Great Plains fabric from Holly Hunt.

Right: Throughout the home are thoughtful moments that provide stunning views of the surroundings. This small perch sits atop a spiral staircase that rises above the gardens designed by landscape architect Jerry Williams. Louvers shade some of the windows, offering privacy while still allowing light to flow inside.

Opposite: Below the husband's office, which hovers above the hillside, is another sitting area for the couple to relax with their guests. Woven Janus et Cie seating features cushions in a Perennials fabric. Builder Jim Davis brought with him a sense of craftsmanship to enhance the project.



The master bedroom is a prime example of designer Tim Clarke's decision to use jewel tones throughout the home. The silk-and-wool rug is from Woven. The Artemide bedside lamps ensure easy nighttime reading, but the owners may easily be torn away from their books—one of the home's best views can be seen from the bed.



the hillside provides many opportunities to craft more intimate spaces.” An exploration of the property reveals discrete outdoor areas that allow the owners to escape with a good book, sip a cup of tea or take a moment for reflection. Williams created a blend of native plantings and flora from similar climates, creating a rich tapestry of color and texture.

For all the effort to design a beautiful home both inside and outside, the driving force was always to create a sustainable residence. “The whole roof is essentially one big solar panel,” Tran says. “It is at a 15-degree angle that maximizes the solar production of the house and almost puts it at net zero.” Designing for natural ventilation, incorporating drain-water systems, and using FSC-certified woods and insulated glass all played a role in achieving this goal. The final realization is a home of elegance and sustainability that pays homage to nature. “The house doesn’t feel like it came from somewhere else,” Clarke says. “It has a sense of place, like it could’ve come from the earth.”

Draperies of Clarence House sheer linen in the master bathroom are the gauzy backdrop for a sculptural Waterworks tub and faucet. A silk-and-wool rug from Woven adds a cozy touch. The large-format floor tile is from Cavendish Grey.

An infinity-edge pool runs through an opening in a board-form concrete wall. Above it is a roof garden. Below, a succulent garden emphasizes the idea of sustainability found throughout the home.



On the pool deck sits a Sutherland sofa covered in Perennials outdoor fabric. The powder-coated resin wicker chairs are from Janus et Cie; the hand-carved cocktail tables are from Mix Furniture.