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# cultural fusion

A globe-trotting California couple carefully choreograph vistas inside their contemporary canyon home to showcase treasured travel mementos.

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The living area of the Mandel home sets up contrasts that repeatedly generate visual interest throughout the house: Lights play against darks, classical elements juxtapose primitive ones, and clean-lined forms set off ornate pieces of art. Flexibility for entertaining was another priority, exemplified by avoiding the traditional couch. The Mies Van der Rohe longue joins two pairs of chairs—one in mohair, the other in leather—around a coffee table by the same designer.





Cydney Mandel integrated the living room fireplace into the architecture, mixing wood and granite display surfaces. Sleek rift oak forms the overmantel as well as a series of pedestals showcasing sculpture at the foot of the stairs in the hall beyond. Coarse stone pillars flank the fireplace, providing textural contrast.



When in Rome, Paris, Burma, or another exotic locale, shoe designer Cydney Mandel likes to dig her heels into the local history and culture by shopping for regional art and antiques. Husband Gary shares her passion, and together the globe-trotting couple have filled their Los Angeles home with treasures ranging from contemporary Vietnamese art and 17th-century Italian sculpture to Parisian Art Deco furniture—successfully mixing contemporary pieces with antiques. “Picking up mementos as we travel is just more special than furniture shopping here, which we never have time for anyhow,” Cydney explains.

The family home has undergone a series of renovations over the years, gaining square footage as each of the couple’s two children was born. But Cydney found that after 20 years of traveling and gathering she needed more display space—especially since previous renovations had traded wall expanses for light-inviting banks of windows. She also wanted changes that would complement frequent entertaining. “The kids are gone,” Cydney explains, “and it was time to remodel for our lifestyle, which is about the art and entertaining.”

The postrenovation architecture is contemporary, spare, and no match for clutter. Each room, each vista has been orchestrated with Cydney’s favorite pieces in mind. Using her architectural training, she planned a series of ledges, pedestals, niches, and freestanding partitions to showcase art. Some display areas, such as the blank granite pedestal in the dining room and the free-floating oak panels, are striking architectural details in their own right.

The result is a lighter, brighter home ready for display and guests.



TOP and RIGHT: A Burmese Buddha sculpture reigns over an intimate sitting area. Modern elements, such as the parchment-veneer Art Deco coffee table, contrast with older pieces, including the 16th-century Austrian carved armchair. ABOVE: The lower ceiling, a muted green accent wall, and an area rug lend softness to the dark woods of an antique Korean chest in this gathering space. Cydney occasionally uses the Chinese game table to serve dessert during parties.





TOP and LEFT: A curved birch kitchen countertop echoes the rounded glass brick wall of the adjoining dining room. Often used for dining, the counter stands several inches above the food preparation area and in front of a wall storage unit displaying silver and crystal tableware. Stools are contemporary, while the lamp at the far end is a rare, signed French Art Deco piece by House of Daum. ABOVE: A simple lawn and lap pool set the stage for tranquil interiors.







Topped with a solid piece of rough-grained elm, the antique English table contrasts with the sleek lines of the dining room and juxtaposes Art Deco pieces such as the parchment-veneer sideboard by Leluc and chairs salvaged from an old parliament building in Paris. A suspended oak panel serves as a backdrop for the self-portrait by Californian artist Sam Francis (1923–1994) flanked by a baroque candlestand from an Austrian castle and a carved Buddha.