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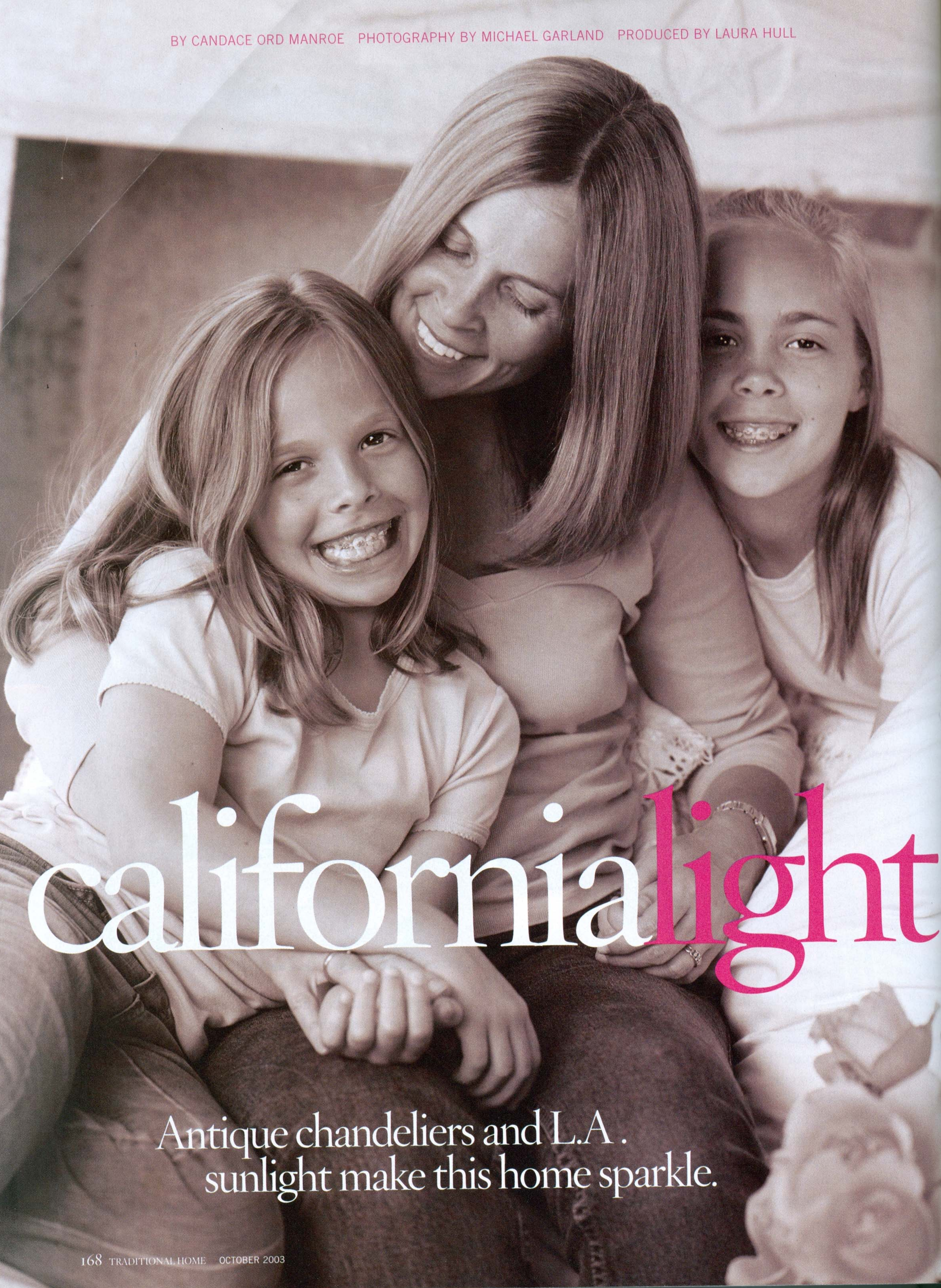
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10 inspiring homes
from across the country

a new twist on toile tableware
gardens designed to soothe the soul



california^{light}

Antique chandeliers and L.A.
sunlight make this home sparkle.



Opposite: Carol Lott and her daughters Ariana, 12, and Carina, 9, love their Los Angeles house.

This page: The landing at the top of the stairs is personalized with family photos, many taken by Carol.



An antique crystal chandelier and an antique Moroccan bench covered in yellow velvet introduce elegance in the Lotts' entry. **Opposite top:** New moldings and an antique fireplace surround enhance the architecture in the living room. Slipcovers on the custom sofas, modeled after antiques, are both pretty and practical. **Opposite bottom:** The only formal room, the dining room sports green plaster walls and furniture brought from New York.



Traditional design is more than a decorating style

for Carol Lott. It's the constant that keeps her world grounded when a sea of change throws a tidal wave her way.

Five years ago, Carol's husband, Roy, accepted a position as president of Capitol Records. The native East Coasters chucked their fast urban lifestyle in New York City's Greenwich Village—where they'd lived happily in stately, circa-1900 apartments for the past 21 years—for the traffic-clogged pace of Los Angeles and their first real house. With their two young daughters in tow, the Lotts relocated to a quiet neighborhood of 1930s-vintage homes on acre-plus lawns in the Los Angeles suburbs.

"It was our first time in suburbia. The hardest adjustment was getting used to having to drive everywhere," says Carol. Plus, their Federal-style house, "new" by their standards, didn't have the architectural charm of their older apartments in the city. And while they could give up walking to restaurants or thumbing a cab for shopping or business that took them farther from home, they refused to sacrifice the traditional ambience they both loved in their personal living spaces.

"The house didn't have any of the rich moldings of our apartment," Carol explains. So they lived in the guesthouse while architect Clive Bridgwater imbued the house with







such character-building elements as antique salvaged fireplaces and elegant millwork and also reshaped rooms into a configuration that is more family-friendly. "He moved the dining room to what had been the kitchen, then he moved the kitchen to the back of the house and opened it to a family room that he created by combining several smaller rooms," Carol says.

Still, something was missing. Designer Sue Balmforth filled the void beautifully with a collection of antique chandeliers from her Venice, California, store, which is aptly named Bountiful. "These provide the touch of elegance that was missing," says Carol. "She had the most incredible collection of chandeliers I've ever seen in one place."

Now, Carol could say the same of her own home. Exquisite French and Italian chandeliers dress nearly every room of the house, including the children's bathroom. They provide a theme that repeats with enough variation to make it a pleasure to anticipate the next space.

While still in New York, Carol had admired Balmforth's work in a magazine and clipped the article. "When I went to her store, I fell in love with everything in it. I could've moved right in. We have exactly the same taste, but Sue sees how to put things together in a way that I can't." Balmforth also understood that while Carol champions traditional elegance, she

Opposite, clockwise from top left: The Lotts' collection of antique chandeliers adds sparkle to nearly every room, including the kitchen, in hallways, and just outside the girls' bedroom wing.

Above: Yellow, Carol's favorite color, wraps the family room in sunshine. A crystal chandelier adds the "touch of elegance" she wanted, while the oversize clock adds informality—a nonnegotiable part of a design that puts family comfort first.





Left: To inject the master bedroom with the feeling of old New York style the couple had grown to love while living in the city, they covered the floor in tiny black and white porcelain tiles and dressed the room with old-fashioned fixtures and antique furniture instead of built-in cabinets. **Above:** To add character, the master bedroom's fireplace was re-dressed with a 19th-century French limestone mantel.

winces if it evolves into a look too decorated or the least bit pretentious. "I knew that I didn't want the house to end up looking like a showpiece," Carol explains succinctly.

More than that, she wanted it to be as functional for the girls as for the grown-ups. "I wanted a family home with some elegance, but one the kids could run around in." Daughter Ariana, 12, chimes in, "So we could have fun!"

Carol agrees. "Our entertaining centers around our kids," she explains. "Ariana just graduated from sixth grade, and we had her class party here. Our other daughter's [Carina's] Brownie sleepovers are held in the backyard. Everybody brings their tent and camps out. The kids were very much a factor in how this house was put together."

The girls were certainly in mind when Carol and Roy asked Bridgwater to add a porch complete with a wood-burning fireplace onto the back. "We all wanted to enjoy California's indoor-outdoor lifestyle. Because of the fireplace, we stay out there year-round, even when it's chilly. I have to say, the porch is my favorite room"—for more than just functional reasons. Its big antique French garden table, brightly painted in the happy colors Carol loves, is her favorite furnishing.

"Along with all the chandeliers. And the [painted Italian] corner cupboards in the living room. And the Moroccan settee in the entry," she laughs. All of those favorite antique furnishings were found by Balmforth. But at least a portion of the home's comfort emanates from pieces recycled from the



Lotts' New York apartment. The dining table and chairs, the master bedroom's bed and armoire, and the end tables in the family room all moved to California from New York when the Lotts did. They blend seamlessly with newer purchases.

"It was very hard to leave," says Carol, "so we tried to bring some New York style with us." Like the old-fashioned look in both the master bathroom and the girls' bathroom. "We redid both spaces with small tiles like the old ones in our apartment." Instead of built-in cabinets, the master bath has antique furniture; the girls' bath has an armoire instead of a closet.

Imbuing the home with a more venerable character made the transition to trendsetting California smoother for the family. "I grew up with traditional style in upstate New York," says Carol. "No matter where I am, I have to be comfortable at home, and to me, traditional style is comfort. I can look at modern design and appreciate it, but I can't live with it. A style has to be cozy for me to feel like I'm home."

This one must do just that, because Carol doesn't want to leave. And that's despite the fact that Roy is now the president of Virgin Records and his offices are—guess where?—back in New York.

"He commutes," Carol laughs sheepishly. "It's hard, but we're hoping we can stay. We love it here." And why wouldn't they, in a home full of California light and East Coast tradition? ■

Architect: Clive Bridgwater **Interior designer:** Sue Balmforth

For more information, see the Reader's Resource on page 218.

Right: The entire family's favorite room, the new porch enables an indoor-outdoor California lifestyle. Thanks to its outdoor fireplace, the space can be enjoyed all year long.

Above: An antique painted French garden table combines the informality and shapely design that Carol appreciates.



