

California dreaming

West Coast laid-back luxe was the brief for this 1950s house – Melinda Mandell was just the person to realise the look

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SITTING ROOM
Giving the brickwork a whitewash ensured the striking ceiling is the star. Eichholtz Nio coffee table, £3,880, House of Isabella, would work here. Vanice rug in Grey, £459, Rug Vista, is an alternative. Try the Lima occasional chair in Emporio Grey, £1,364, Furnish



HOME TRUTHS

THE PROPERTY

A single-storey
detached 1950s house

ROOMS

Sitting room, dining
room, family room,
kitchen, three
bedrooms, four
bathrooms, two offices

LOCATION

California



'In neutral schemes, interesting furniture shapes can provide a good hit of decoration and character'

WHAT WAS THE OVERALL GOAL? The couple, who are from New York, loved the mid-century look of the architecture and wanted us to create an interior that was 'elevated and cool, but not unfriendly'. An overall goal was to make it feel lighter, more spacious and create furniture plans within the existing walls that had flow and functionality. With two large rescue dogs and a baby on the way, they wanted durable and easily cleanable fabrics.

WHAT WERE THEIR BIGGEST PRIORITIES?

The biggest concern was making the reception spaces work for both everyday life and entertaining. We had to solve functional problems (the dining layout was awkward and too small for their needs), as well as create visual flow, connection and harmony between spaces.

HOW DID YOU CHOOSE THE COLOUR

PALETTE? They wanted to infuse cool tones throughout. The scheme carries threads of sophisticated blues and neutrals across the spaces, only deviating in the guest suite and wife's office, where we introduced apricot and cocoa tones. As the couple wanted to invest in an art collection, we planned locations for the art pieces, sent our clients to our favourite galleries and artists, provided size guides, helped curate during the selection process and created mock-ups.

WHAT WORK WAS DONE? Working with NuVision

Construction, we tore out carpet and installed oak hardwood in the private wings of the home, wired in new light fixtures to define spaces and changed the stain on the ceiling beams. To create continuity with the outside, we painted the exterior beams to match the interior beam stain. Part of recreating the dining space meant adding an 'invisible' jib door on the awkwardly placed pantry.

HOW DID YOU CREATE FLOW AND

COHESION? As well as the serene colour scheme, we sourced crisp sculptural light fixtures and created a new axis for the dining and living rooms. The furniture shapes and profiles feature sharp geometric lines (that angular dining table, the oak built-in bookcase) combined with radii (barrel back chairs, the sconces flanking the guest bed). Last but not least is the variety, interest and balance created in the materials we used, such as marble, wood and glass in various forms and finishes.

WHAT IS YOUR ADVICE FOR CREATING A

SUCCESSFUL SCHEME? Choose colours, textures and materials that – independently or in combination – make your heart leap. My favourite tip is to play with contrasting warm and cool tones. This is a gentle way to create interest and complexity. 

melindamandell.com

DINING ROOM

The pendant worked around the beams and is a statement piece.
Art by Tom Lieber, Dolby Chadwick Gallery. Divine dining table, price on request, Keith Fritz. Lariat pendant light, price on request, Apparatus

KITCHEN

Sculptural pieces of furniture are a key theme in the house.
Round stone dining table, £1,032.70, Litfad, is an alternative. Try Bowness slate floor tiles, £72sq m, Unbeatable Bathrooms

KITCHEN

A dropped worktop has been incorporated here to accommodate a desk area.
Try the Walnut Ladbroke kitchen, from £161 for a 297x553mm door, Naked Kitchens

PATIO

A covered area off the kitchen is perfect for alfresco entertaining.
Try Calligaris Duca ceramic table, £1,217, Lime Modern Living. Sag Harbor dining armchair, price on request, Sutherland Furniture





BEDROOM

‘We used apricot, cocoa and russet hues here and designed fun pillows,’ says Melinda. Artwork by Lisa McCutcheon, Dolby Chadwick Gallery. Cushion in Oak Oyster Blue, £210m, Molly Mahon

MAIN BEDROOM

Tones of muted blue, grey and white create a restful sleep space. Arcadia side table by Lawson-Fenning, price on request, 1stDibs. Bolster in Skye linen fabric, £174m, Imogen Heath Interiors

NURSERY

‘We looked at lots of wallpapers, and the husband ultimately chose the jungle design,’ says Melinda. Jungle Dream wallpaper, £174 a roll, Aimée Wilder. Caravan cot, from £1,150, Kalon Studios

BATHROOM

Marble and walnut finishes add a luxurious touch to this space. Try Clamp LED bathroom wall light, £89, Moonlight Design. Crosswater MPRO three-hole mixer tap, £289.99, Drench, has this look

