

Endless Inspiration IN OUR DALLAS SHOWHOUSE

TRADITIONAL HOME

May/June
2018

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FURNITURE,
FABRIC,
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& MORE

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BACKYARD
BEAUTY
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GARDEN
ROOMS



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best of both

IT'S A TALE OF
TWO COASTS
FOR ONE FAMILY
AND THEIR NEW
PACIFIC PALISADES HOME

In 2010, Matt and Sue O'Connor faced a sudden move from Boston to Los Angeles, two coastal cities that couldn't be more different. One coast welcomes the bright start of every day, and one ushers it into the dark each night. One boasts densely populated urban areas with soaring skyscrapers, and one dazzles with sunshine and movie stars. When it came to design, the O'Connors assumed their rooted-in-history antiques wouldn't fall into place within the funky vernacular of California style. Or would they?

"Moving to Los Angeles was not in our plan," Sue says. "We had both lived on the East Coast our entire lives and had just completed our dream home—a 1740s farmhouse that we renovated and added onto to accommodate our growing family. When Matt was presented with a job opportunity in Los Angeles, we decided to

take the risk, but weren't ready to leave the Boston area behind. So we brought a lot of it with us."

The move took the soon-to-be family of six (Sue was pregnant with Evie, now 6) and their truckload of furniture—chosen for its suitability to the 18th-century abode they were leaving—to a Pacific Palisades, California, spec property full of generic appointments that didn't display a speck of the family's personality.

Unexpectedly, the O'Connors found their design solution on the sidelines of a soccer field. That's where they met Lara Fishman, the mother of one of their daughter's teammates and, more important for the look of their home, an interior designer.

"Sue knew exactly what she wanted," Fishman says. "She has traditional taste but likes a little bit of edge and a lot of color. Making the house comfortable and livable for the kids—using materials that weren't too precious—was a top priority. It was a great collaboration."





Living room The pale blue-and-white living room finds spirited contrast in its orange accessories that include artwork, pillow fabric, and a piece of pottery.

Preceding pages Designer Lara Fishman refuses to design by rote. "I want to give my client that moment of 'Had I never hired a designer, I wouldn't have done that,'" she says. "It's my job to offer something more." In the dining room, a turquoise, blue, and gold rug delivers intense color. Enhancing the room's drama, five single pendants hang at varying heights.





The traditional part was easy. The furniture that trekked across the country was traditional indeed. The edge Sue wanted was missing, but Fishman knew she could modify the existing pieces into new forms that were imaginative and appropriate for the light and modernized vibe of California design.

One example of an A-plus transformation: the French farmhouse dining table that was adorned with intricate embellishments. Fishman removed the trimmings, stripped its distressed finish, painted its base black, and shellacked the top in a durable high-gloss white finish. Teamed with Louis chairs manufactured in contrasting materials—four are acrylic, and two are covered in striking white lacquer and orange geometric fabric—the look is cool, current, and California.

Another brave move paid off on the living room armchairs. In their former life, they wore burgundy velvet and dark nailheads. Fishman's fanciful vision saw them mixing leather, a light blue plaid, and shiny silver nailheads that hint at the glamour of Los Angeles. "The pairing of fabric and leather creates great tension," Fishman says. "It's sharp but doesn't try *too* hard." Arranged with the matching chairs, a settee is covered in an oversize chevron pattern, a white cocktail table features a smoky mirror top, and a seagrass rug can manage the traffic of four kids.

In the kitchen, Sue and Matt trusted Fishman to nudge them out of their comfort zone. First, a bold turquoise beaded chandelier adds a colorful jolt above the banquette. There, a zinc-top table with over-scale rivets is the foundation for new spindle chairs that were yanked

out of their traditional origins and cushioned in shiny yellow patent vinyl. "I like how the zinc patinas and does its own thing," Fishman says. "I would never present this material to clients who want everything perfect. It's not what zinc is about."

Throughout the house, spaces convey the playful attitude that Sue and Matt wanted for their children. In the family room, the clan piles on the sectional, covered in a forgiving blue velvet, to watch movies. Outside, seating by the fireplace and pool pops with colorful accessories. A clutch of wicker orb pendants, found by Sue, dangles with textural charm above a chair swing on the porch.

Officially settled into their home, the O'Connors have proved that you never have to completely leave your beginnings behind.

"This house is cheerful, bright, different, and makes us proud," Sue says. "Not only did we switch locations, we switched cultures, too. Part of our former life happily joined us here—the things we chose, the things we hunted for. Now, they have a California eye." ■

Interior designer: Lara Fishman

For more information, see sources on page 135

Kitchen Natural light filters through the kitchen's bamboo shades, the converse of the dark and weighty fabrics that dressed the windows in the O'Connors' Boston home. **Family room** Yellow snakeskin-look vinyl and silver nailheads blast high-wattage energy onto the ottoman, one of the family's repurposed pieces. **Girl's room** Daughter Abbie's chic bedroom mingles a tufted headboard, groovy rattan chairs, and a wire table. **Bunk room** Ten-year-old Matthew's planet-theme bedroom features a geometric-covered ceiling that lets him imagine the stars. **Porch** Vintage wicker chairs shine in a new blue finish. Vibrant pillows extend the orange accent that weaves through the house.



Fireplace area. Electric-orange tables contrast the neutral wicker seating of the patio, where Sue and Matt O'Connor enjoy time with their children: Abbie, Evie, Caroline, and Matthew. **Pool area.** After Sue and Matt bought their new Pacific Palisades, California, home, they added a pool and sleek lounge chairs topped with tangerine-trimmed pillows. **Porch.** A mix of colorful cushions lifts the spirits of a chair swing while durable turquoise fabric peps up a cube-style table.





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—homeowner
Sue O'Connor

