

# CALIFORNIA'S *Golden Reign of Glamour*

From a modern ranch redo in Napa to an Elmer Grey masterpiece in Los Angeles, America's illustrious frontier loves a good reinvention. First, meet **NINE DECORATING TITANS** forging seminal new legacies for the West.



A Southern California living room by DISC Interiors channels the natural hues of the landscape (with notes of a chic Paris cocktail lounge) in its terra-cotta tiles, cane coffee table by Charlotte Perriand, and curvy velvet sofa in a deep sunset shade.

PHOTOGRAPH BY SAM FROST.

## DISC INTERIORS

**M**IES VAN DER ROHE HAD it right in his observation that simplicity of design is the hardest kind, say Krista Schrock and David John Dick. “Restraint can be difficult,” says Schrock, “but many of our clients come to us because they don’t want something overly decorated.” Since establishing their Los Angeles-based firm, which includes forthcoming furniture for Lawson-Fenning along with the release of their 2021 book *Portraits of Home*, the pair

has found enduring inspiration in the dichotomy of two regional architectural triumphs: Arts and Crafts’ ingenious layering of materials (Pasadena’s Gamble House, for example) and California’s early missions. The latter’s “monastic simplicity—of space and form, of plaster texture and elemental ironwork—has such a beautiful minimalism,” notes Dick. Still, the pair is not pursuing nostalgia. “We’re looking forward. We want our spaces to feel fresh,” says Dick. Schrock adds, “Not of-the-moment, but always current.”



### DRESSING UP CALIFORNIA CASUAL

“I think ‘California casual’ can actually be quite formal when it’s pared-down, less fussy, with those raw cottons and linens mixed with elegant forms,” says Meier. In this 1930s Presidio Heights townhouse, for instance, she covered a pair of wood-framed Roman Thomas chairs in a linen velvet “that sounds formal, but the texture feels very relaxed.”



“People are becoming more intentional in design and materials, on editing and strengthening sense of place.”

—AMY MEIER

### THE POLISHED NATURALIST

## AMY MEIER

**O**NE CONVERSATION WITH the native Midwesterner and it’s hard to imagine her anywhere but Southern California. “There is something so peaceful about what sunshine can do to wash out a landscape,” says the designer, who moved to Rancho Santa

Fe 12 years ago, where her eponymous village boutique exudes the same classically modern ethos as her interiors and product designs (look for new launches of window and wallcoverings with Hartmann & Forbes this spring, along with a Jonathan Nesci lighting collaboration). “I like things that look authentic and real, like they came from the land a house was built on. I’m in love with the palette here, the myriad subtle shades of the same colors. This is what excites me.”

DAVID JOHN DICK AND KRISTA SCHROCK: PORTRAIT, SAM FROST; AMY MEIER: PORTRAIT AND INTERIOR, SHADE EGGS.

INTERIOR, FRANCESCO LAGNÈSE; PORTRAIT, PATRICK CLINE. BACKGROUND, PAÏN SONGNON/GETTY IMAGES.



### A QUIET BOHEMIAN BEAT

“I’m drawn to female realist painters, and Paula Rubino’s work is beautifully graphic,” says Weiss of the oil on linen she layered atop an Indian block-print fabric in this California guest room. “There’s almost a Matisse quality. Her coloring is rich and complex, and sometimes odd, so there’s nothing sweet and saccharine about it.”

### THE NONCONFORMIST

## PALMER WEISS

**T**WICE THE FORMER investment banker enrolled in courses to study color theory—and twice she dropped out within a week. But something about this felt purposeful, says the San Francisco-based designer. “I didn’t want to learn rules. I wanted to train my eye to what is relevant and important to me.” And she wasn’t starting completely from scratch: Her mother is the Charleston,

South Carolina, designer Kathleen Rivers, who modeled their childhood beach house on the tenets of the late California designer Michael Taylor. Today, one could argue Weiss is swimming in the other direction than Taylor did, weaving Southern and English influences into the West Coast vernacular. “California offers sort of a wholesome approach to contrarianism—there are so many productive ways to be rebellious here.”



# LANDED INTERIORS

THE JOY OF BEING a classicist on the West Coast is that there's an inherent understanding of its foundations and principles, says Landed Interiors founder Lynn Kloythanomsup, "but it remains open to interpretation, which is so California. You can play with proportions and create new languages." The Los Angeles native, who heads up the Berkeley-based firm with lead designer Heather Menegat, credits frequent cross-country trips of her youth with fostering a deep appreciation for classic American design. "In the Bay Area, there are so many fine examples of Victorian, Craftsman, farmhouse, and mid-century modern homes, and we are proud to be a part of the movement to enhance and preserve this architecture while making them work for modern families."



## THE FALL OF BEIGE

"My design friends around Europe used to refer to California design as simply 'beige'—a desert land, they called it," recalls Baradaran. "But now everything has changed, and today's design places much more focus on materiality and color." In this **1929 Spanish Revival home in Brentwood**, a layered, neutral palette serves as a splendid stage for vibrant hues: in original hand-painted tilework, vivid art (left, a Robert Minervini acrylic; right, a David Korty silkscreen), and an aubergine velvet sofa.



## THE MASTER OF CRAFT

# NATASHA BARADARAN

FEEL MORE THAN ever that Los Angeles has become an artistic melting pot of natives and transplants coming together to create a unique voice," says Natasha Baradaran. And she should know: Her residential design business morphed out of an early tenure on the hospitality side, which yielded a valuable perspective on innovation and craft. "When you have a 1,000-room hotel, you don't start in a showroom. You go to the creative

side—the workrooms, the third-generation upholsterers and woodworkers, the factories with new, cutting-edge innovations." They were, it turns out, powerful springboards for her own furniture collection, which in the seven years since it debuted has expanded into textiles, from performance velvets to a forthcoming line of vegan leather. "Creativity here is especially abundant because of an openness, a tradition of working together rather than competing."

INTERIOR, ROGER DAVIES/OTTO; PORTRAIT, STEPHEN BUSKEN.

PORTRAIT, SEN CREATIVE; INTERIOR, HARRIS KENJAR.

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 "There is so much innovation in craft happening right now, new possibilities that are in our grasp. I see this and think, 'OK, what can I do with this?'"

—NATASHA BARADARAN



## CHASING THE LIGHT

"I always try to bring in the light," says Kloythanomsup. "Here, we're obsessed with it. It's the most important thing." In this **Arts and Crafts home in San Francisco's Richmond district**, she moved the kitchen to the rear of the house,

a strategy that not only expanded access to sunlight but also allowed for a generous bookcase-lined pantry hall. An historic William Morris wallpaper and Harlequin-style checkerboard wood flooring help make the space feel as if it existed when the home was originally built in 1914.



### GOLDEN ERA OUTDOOR LIVING

On a veranda in Hancock Park's historic Fremont Place, Woodson and Rummerfield capture the essence of the home's early mid-century DNA with a Regency barkcloth from the same era and a vintage Salterini garden dining set. "The home was built by 1940s architect Clarence J. Smale, who was known for his brickwork and plaster-finished estates and movie theaters, including the Loyola Theater on Sepulveda Boulevard," says Rummerfield.



*"This is Hollywood, and there is nowhere else like it. You can turn the volume up or dial it down, but there is room for eccentrics and creativity. And if you don't tap into that, you're missing out."*

—JAIME RUMMERFIELD

WOODSON & RUMMERFIELD EXTERIOR, KARYN MILLET; WOODSON & RUMMERFIELD PORTRAIT, MICHAEL ALLEN; FRANCES MERRILL PORTRAIT AND INTERIOR, LAURE JOLIET.

### THE CINEMATIC ALCHEMIST

## REATH DESIGN

**I**F YOU CAN create *The Wizard of Oz* on a soundstage, then there really are no rules." Beneath Frances Merrill's warm, multicolored originalism lie strong crosscurrents of old California: a prospector's spirit with strong shades of 1930s architect Julia Morgan, and indeed, the boundless innovation of Hollywood's early days of cinema. "Those set designers left a mark, a legacy that anything is possible," says the Los Angeles-based founder of Reath

Design. "I love taking that imaginative ethos, then adding quality to make it last and feel good to live in." What she calls "breaking the story"—unlocking the livability challenges of a house—feels like an extension of this experimental algorithm, as is her embrace of craft and workmanship. "I love the tactile, human feeling in things that are handmade," she says. "If someone spent an absurd amount of time making something with their hands, then I am probably going to love it." ♦



### DECORATING IN TECHNICOLOR

"My recipe is test, test, test, try, try, try...then take a flying leap," says Merrill, who grounded this Altadena living room in a warmly exuberant berry shade (custom rug, Stark) that deepens in the trim. "There has to be a moment when you try it. Otherwise everyone ends up with the same, safe thing. There's a lot of hard work that comes before it, but ultimately, you have to take that leap." The sofa is by Nickey Kehoe, and a custom chaise is covered in a golden yellow linen floral by Rose Cumming.

### THE NEW PRESERVATIONISTS

## WOODSON & RUMMERFIELD'S HOUSE OF DESIGN

**H**IS FATHER WAS a jazz bassist who played with Sammy Davis, Jr., and Ella Fitzgerald, among others. She's a descendant of Lucky Baldwin, best known for establishing the early agricultural town of Monrovia and Santa Anita Park. But Ron Woodson and Jaime Rummerfield stand at the precipice of their own seismic legacy. Atop a portfolio of design projects from Malibu to London, in 2016, the pair launched the nonprofit Save Iconic Architecture (siaprojects.org) to help stymie a rash of demolitions across their native Los Angeles. With support from the community, they've saved notable structures by Richard Neutra, Donald Wexler, and Robert Farquhar. "We're creating awareness, education, and landmarks for these important spaces so they are here for generations to come," says Woodson.