

At Kathryn M. Ireland's live-work compound in Santa Monica, a studio building designed in the 1970s by the firm Koning Eizenberg serves as both an office and entertaining area. The vintage Willy Guhl fiber-cement chairs and planters are from Inner Gardens.

Culture Club

After 25 years in Santa Monica, the English decorator Kathryn M. Ireland settles down in a small compound there, where she lives, entertains, and works amid her own boho splendor—complete with a garden straight out of a Moroccan riad.

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In the living room, the custom sofa is in a linen velvet from Ireland's fabric collection, and the armchairs are covered in an Otis Textiles linen slipcover (left) and a fabric purchased in Marrakech (right). The rag rug is from Amadi Carpets, the steel-framed sliding doors are by Chateau Domingue, and the wall hanging is a 19th-century suzani. OPPOSITE: Artworks by Hugo Guinness, Martin Mull, Thomas Hart Benton, and others hang above a Mexican console.



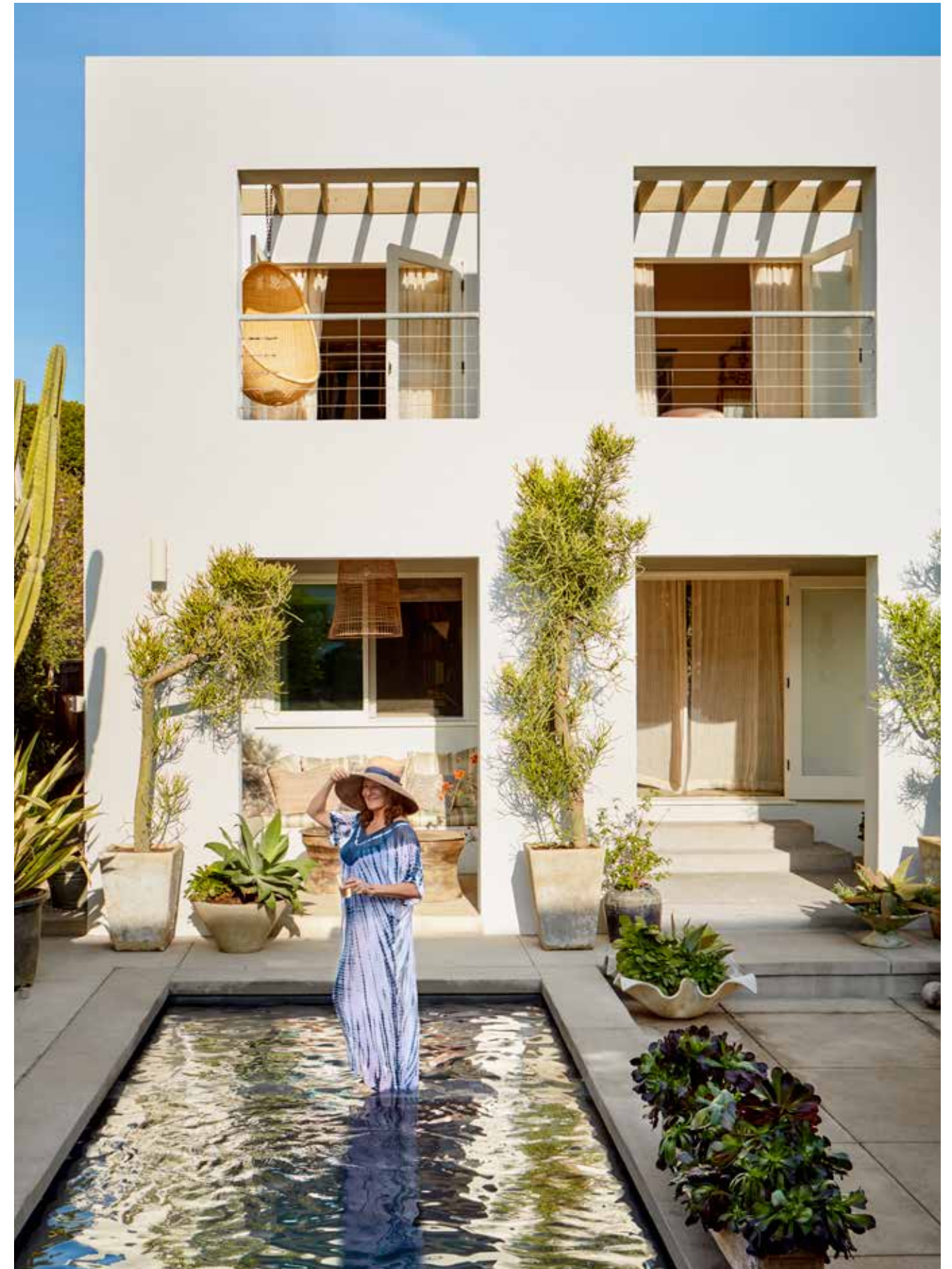
“I SPENT so much time going to work when my kids were younger that the only person who got to enjoy my house was my housekeeper,” quips British-born designer of textiles and interiors Kathryn M. Ireland. After 25 years in Santa Monica, California, she has finally committed to the city’s work-from-home ethos with her new micro-compound, purchased last year from the actor Tobey Maguire. “I wanted to be able to cross the courtyard to go to the office,” she explains.

Known for her boho spirit and exuberant use of color, Ireland has warmed up the 1920s Spanish main house and made it feel more cohesive with the property’s two other structures—a guest cottage and a modern back studio. And she’s done it using a “mishmash” (as she likes to call it) of her brand’s signature textiles, English and French antiques, patchwork rugs, and eclectic accents, from a hand-painted Sicilian table to the whimsical photograph of a horse having tea that hangs in one of two kitchens. (“Yes, I use them both,” she says.)

The former *Million Dollar Decorators* star—her clients include Julia Louis-Dreyfus and Steve Martin—turned the courtyard into an oasis. The outdoor lounge, with its wicker pendants and striped banquettes, is now the perfect vantage point for watching watercolor sunsets. Newly planted succulents and a freshly installed swimming pool create, she says, an “Ibiza-meets-Luis Barragán” vibe.

She hosts dinner parties in the back studio, roasting chicken in her cherry-red AGA stove. Instead of cabinets, she uses her own textiles as curtains to disguise shelves of pots and pans. Defining the dining area is a monolithic, floor-to-ceiling 18th-century English wooden cabinet that’s filled with design books, several of them written by Ireland herself. The table, which seats up to 26, is also antique and “very important,” she observes, adding, “I like to use that word when an antique’s good.”

The built-in stucco sectional in the outdoor lounge is topped with cushions in a custom Kathryn M. Ireland outdoor fabric. The table is from her French Finds collection, and the chairs are by Consort. **OPPOSITE:** Ireland cools off in her pool, framed by the back of the main house, a 1990s addition by architect Ruben S. Ojeda to the original 1920s Spanish-style cottage.





Ireland designed the hand-hammered-iron canopy bed and the sofa in the master bedroom. The cocktail table is African, and the bed-curtains are in one of her fabrics.

Keeping watch over guests is a photo of Ireland in the style of an odalisque taken from an old Scalamantré advertising campaign. “It’s kind of cheeky,” she says. There’s also a piano (“because someone can always play”), and when she’s ready to scamper off in her Birkenstocks across the courtyard to bed, the revelry will often continue into the night.

When it’s just her, she eats in the combined kitchen and TV room in the main house. Under a vivid landscape of the Santa Monica Pier by photographer Stephen Wilkes, she settles into the oversize L-shaped sofa, which is topped with pillows in beach-glass hues. The stonewashed linen fabrics are from her son Otis Weis’s new textile line, Otis Textiles, which he describes as “a contemporary collaboration of both our tastes.” (Also launching this spring is her new online site, the Perfect Room, which will offer room bundles curated by Ireland and other designers, including Michael S. Smith, Barry Dixon, and Beth Webb.)

In the living room, a 19th-century Uzbek textile hangs over the red linen-velvet sofa as a symbol of Ireland’s design empire. “This I bought many years ago, and it was the inspiration for my Safi Suzani print,” she says of her iconic textile pattern. “You mix things up with old and new,” she says in a room where the furnishings include 17th-century French chairs, an 18th-century Mexican console, and a cocktail table from her furniture line. The latter, a simple wood piece, is covered with objects both precious and not. “I’m always picking things up,” she says, “whether it’s an Indian cowbell, a flea-market Buddha, or that little tartan chair in the corner. Things just speak to me.”

The powder room is covered in a pale paisley wallpaper, and in her son Louis’s bedroom, Indian blankets from the Santa Monica flea market reflect Ireland’s lifelong love of needlework. “I won a prize when I was seven years old for my patchwork quilt,” she muses. “I used to do perfect hexagons, but now you can do it so rustically.”

Upstairs, there’s a reading nook with an upholstered chair and ottoman in a new pattern—her first foray into digital printing—inspired by a summer trip to Maine. “I’ve always been a hand printer, but when my mentor, Robert Kime, said he was doing digital and I realized what it could do, especially this painterly look, I had to try it,” she says. “There’s a movement back from beige and plain to color and pattern again—whether it’s on fashion models or on the walls.”

The raffia sheers floating around her iron canopy bed are another of her designs, and the bedspread is an antique Indian textile in vivid oranges and reds, a pair of hues (“They are just so uplifting”) that recur throughout the compound. By contrast, the master bath—which sports a contemporary look with its quartz floors and modern glass shower—might just be the most understated room in the whole place. “I like to hide the loo, so I’m a big believer in a little pony wall,” she says.

Back to Ireland’s reality in the bedroom, where a quirky red Sicilian mirror has a prominent place. “It’s Persian candlesticks living well with Chinese nightstands, an African table, and a French piece,” she says, describing her beloved mish-mash. “If only people could live so effortlessly together.” ■



In the powder room, the sink and stand are by Kreoo, the fittings are by Fantini, the mirror is by Arteriors, and the wallpaper is from Ireland’s line. **BELOW:** Ireland’s Barley Twist bed is topped with Indian bedding from her collection. The pillows and curtains are in her fabrics, the chair is by Sika Design, the lamp is from Hollywood at Home, and the rug is by Woven. For details, see Resources.

