



AD

SHONDALAND!
AT HOME IN
LOS ANGELES WITH
TV HITMAKER
SHONDA RHIMES

CITY LIVING
FAMILY STYLE
IN MIAMI, NEW YORK,
LONDON,
AND STOCKHOLM



painting that once belonged to Maya Angelou hanging in my front hall. I keep it there to remind me that there is always a way to be a better writer and a better woman. Some of my favorite books are tucked all over the house—I'm a big believer in books. You can never have too many.

One part of the property that did not need much change was the grounds. The house is perfectly placed on more than an acre of stunning land in the heart of metropolitan Los Angeles. The ugly behemoth I bought sits on a work of art. Smooth lawns flow into a sport court; a pool stretches over to wide bougainvillea-covered trellises; fountains bubble along winding paths revealing the entrance to a secret rose garden. When you stand on the back patio, the views of towering trees and wide lawns and garden make it easy to imagine the house is somewhere in wine country instead of five minutes from Hollywood. Stephen Block of Inner Gardens made subtle but impactful changes in the landscape design—adding paths, reshaping beds. The pool and the sport court were resurfaced. He and his team worked to heal the larger trees that had not been well cared for in the backyard. One great change they made was to swap out many of the plantings and trees in the front with choices that give the house a more warm and welcoming view from the street.

Renovating a house in real life is not like it is on TV. On TV, the home renovation takes place during a clever 30-second montage while a Stevie Wonder song plays. The actor playing TV Shonda holds up swatches and nods, peers at tiles and nods, uses a sledgehammer on a wall and smiles . . . and never loses patience or the will to live.

That is not how a renovation works. This was no 30-second montage. There are a lot of change orders. There are permits. There are delays. There is still tile arriving from Morocco, broken, that has to be sent back.

When we began, I had a baby on each hip. Now those babies are in kindergarten and first grade, and the little girl who held my hand as we stood at the curb is driving. It took five years to transform this house into my family's home.

But the story . . . I was right. This house tells good story. Or it *will* tell good story. My girls will grow up here, become women here. Life will happen here. Laughter will happen here. Love will live here. Wrong and ugly judgments have given way to a deep and lasting bond. I love this house. As hard as the house was to renovate, I love it here. We have been on a journey. Weaving our way into the story of this house has been the trip of a lifetime. This formerly wrong and ugly house and I, we are family now. We are home. ▀