

luxe

INTERIORS+DESIGN®

LOS ANGELES





Rising Aspirations

Masterful juxtapositions of classical and contemporary styles define a Bel Air hillside villa envisioned as a Mediterranean-inspired oasis.

WRITTEN BY JESSICA RITZ | PHOTOGRAPHY BY MANOLO LANGIS

Architecture: Robert Sinclair, Sinclair Associates Architects Inc. **Interior Design:** Errol DeJager, DeJager Design Inc.
Home Builder: Dara Mir, The Mir Group **Landscape Architecture:** David Squires, Aroundyou, Inc.

LUXESOURCE.COM



White oak panels and plaster walls wrap the formal living room with warmth. An Enne sectional and coffee table, velvet Randolph & Hein armchairs and a Donghia chair rest beneath a Henge chandelier from Mass Beverly. The painting is Gyula Sági, the two large wood artworks are from Accessory Preview Inc. and a Salvador Dalí sculpture sits on the table.

The idea of living in Bel Air was a longtime dream during the years Dara Mir spent growing up in West Los Angeles. As an adult—and determined to turn that fantasy into reality—he’d drive up and down the area’s storied streets, studying the possibilities.

So when the entrepreneur-turned-developer spied the Bel Air hillside property that now holds his multitiered, contemporary Mediterranean-inspired residence, he was more than ready to move forward into the future he’d imagined. What followed—10 years from conception to final construction and furnishing; proposing to his wife, Lilly, at a gazebo on the property; factoring her and, eventually, their two children into the house—“has felt like a dream ever since,” he muses.

The steep site helped define the parameters of that dream, recalls architect Robert Sinclair. “The concept was about light and views, expanses and intimacy,” he says. Working hand in hand with Mir himself (who oversaw construction) and interior designer Errol Dejager, Sinclair first created the home’s expansive central courtyard, around which the main public spaces are placed, then stepped additional stories and courtyards up the hill. “I really liked the homes in Santorini, where one person’s roof is another person’s deck,” he explains of how the structures are overlapped, staggered and stacked. “Then we got carried away with a modern Santorini idea, with flat roofs and outdoor stairs that connect the courtyards and roofs. It flows like a Grecian hillside village.” Plans for the architectural envelope came together within the first week as Sinclair and Dejager, who are frequent collaborators, lobbed ideas back and forth with Mir.

The material palette as well as certain details became more defined after Mir and Lilly returned from a stay in Ravello off the Amalfi Coast. “It had such a quintessential Italian old-town feel, and so many buildings had vaulted ceilings and beautiful stonework—we asked, ‘how can we bring that feeling back to our own home?’” remembers Mir. One direct result is a long axial outdoor passageway that incorporates vaulted ceilings and lanterns; otherwise, textured limestone clads the exterior and continues into certain sections of the interior, honed travertine flooring evokes

that of the Getty Center and clay-plaster walls add softness and depth. These classic design elements are punctuated by contemporary moments—steel windows, linear chandeliers, sculptural furnishings—but none so much as the main level’s automated sliding glass doors and windows. “All the doors and windows pocket into the walls; the house becomes a glassless open floor plan at the touch of a button,” says Dejager of how the entry foyer, great room, dining room and lounge area all interact with a tranquil central courtyard. The space’s symmetry is underscored by four mature olive trees in a grid and a soothing water feature composed of rhythmic cubes. “It’s an amazing experience, as if you’re living outside, but with a cover,” the designer continues. But the spatially fluid concept did present its own challenges, Dejager notes, “because how do you create formal spaces out of what’s essentially one large loggia?”

That was solved, though, in the course of the project. “We wanted each space to be grand but also have everything in proportion and create moments of intimacy,” notes Mir of the care he and Dejager employed in choosing furnishings and finishes that transition effortlessly from, say, the courtyard through the living room and out to the pool deck. Textures are subtle and the materials earthy, while the bold lighting choices, contemporary furnishings and accessories are fittingly glam. And there’s a degree of meticulous attention to detail evident throughout, from the floor-to-ceiling panels of the kitchen to the shadow play of the entrance’s deep eaves and teak-slat covered windows.

Landscape designer David Squires devised a specific tree selection and plant palette to soften the architecture and “give it a home,” he says. He envisioned the house as being nestled within an olive orchard, placing groves into the hillside and an edible orchard at the higher reaches of the site. Deciduous ginkgo trees line the driveway approach and, after a few years of growth, will eventually form a canopy.

Mir continues to make tweaks, aiming to get the lighting, the automation, the plant palette just so. “He has a discerning eye, as well as the courage to say, ‘If we’re not going to do it right, let’s not do it,’” concludes Dejager. “And there’s not a corner of this house that compromises quality.” ■

In the family room, which opens to the pool deck, a Minotti sofa and lounge chair take in the views. The fireplace surround is clad with Matrix Jet granite from Stoneland USA. Large-scale art by Matthew Dibble grounds the tableau.





Above: The kitchen's rift-sawn white oak cabinetry and integrated millwork create a paneled look complemented by countertops, shelving and a backsplash of leathered Taj Mahal quartzite sourced from Topanga Stone. The appliances are by Gaggenau and the faucet is Dornbracht.

Opposite: The same stone is featured on the kitchen's double islands, the first of which boasts display shelving at one end. The door to a walk-in pantry and butler's kitchen is subtly tucked into the paneling. Limestone cladding, also used on the exteriors, provides continuity inside.



Central to the main level sits an inner courtyard around which public spaces are configured in a square. Pocketing doors from Riviera Bronze allow for a seamless indoor-outdoor flow. The chairs are Minotti and the Boulder Fire Table is from Stone Yard, Inc.



Right: A marble table anchors the formal dining room with Walter Knoll armchairs from Luminaire. Il Pezzo Mancante chandeliers, via Collectioni, light its expanse. The credenza is Olivya Stone and the custom rug nods to an abstract painting from Ebanista.

Opposite: A geometric water feature by Water Studio and four olive trees placed in a grid enhance the courtyard's symmetry. In the background lies the formal dining room, positioned directly across from the entrance hall on the courtyard's opposite end.





When the primary bedroom's doors pocket away, the glass balcony walls nearly disappear into their surroundings. Designer Errol DeJager designed the bed and floating nightstands and matched them with a Holly Hunt bench. The rug is Martin Patrick Evan and art is by Angela Gebhardt.

Sustainable louvers by Geolam form the screens that enclose the pool deck at the main level. Multiple seating vignettes by Harbour and a roomy outdoor bar offer ample space for entertaining.

