


JULY-AUGUST 2008

# VERANDA





A woman in equestrian attire, including a dark cap, a black long-sleeved shirt, light-colored breeches, and tall black boots, stands next to a dark-colored horse. They are positioned on a light-colored gravel or dirt path in front of a two-story house. The house features a prominent section of rough-hewn stone masonry with a central wooden door and a small balcony above it. To the left of the stone section, there are tall, slender cypress trees. To the right, a large, leafy tree with a thick trunk stands behind the horse. The sky is blue with scattered white clouds. The overall scene is well-lit, suggesting late afternoon or early morning light.

OCEANSIDE IN MALIBU

# LEADING WITH STYLE

INTERIOR DESIGN BY MADELINE STUART ARCHITECTURE BY STEPHEN GIANNETTI LANDSCAPE DESIGN BY JAMES YOCH  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY DOMINIQUE VORILLON PRODUCED BY MARY JANE RYBURN TEXT BY DEGEN PENER



ONE UNSHAKABLE IMAGE SPURRED THE CREATION OF THIS HEART-STIRRING MALIBU COAST HOME: "WHEN I FIRST MET THE OWNER, SHE SHOWED ME A PICTURE OF HORSES GRAZING IN A PASTURE with the ocean in the background," recalls interior designer Madeline Stuart. "Everything we did from that point on was about realizing the purity of that image."

Owners Dan and Luana Romanelli—he's a former Warner Bros. executive, and she's a dressage enthusiast—began with a rare find: six acres of land overlooking the Pacific Ocean. "It was such a phenomenon to find an undeveloped piece of property out here," says Luana. But despite their initial luck, the project barely got off to a trot. It took five years to prepare the land and complete the four-bedroom home, inspired by traditional residences in the South of France and complemented by stables for six horses, riding trails that lead down to the Pacific Coast Highway and, yes, those verdant pastures. "There are so many problems when you acquire a raw piece of land," says Dan. "But we made something we are all proud of. It's a jewel that was honed and shaped."

Almost every room features French doors that open to blue infinity. Accordingly, the colors are subdued. Throughout, a warm neutral suffuses the plaster walls. "Let's face it," says Stuart. "What are you going to do to the interiors that's more compelling than the

OPENING PAGES: In Malibu, Luana Romanelli leads Argento, a Belgian Warmblood, at the home she shares with husband Dan. BELOW: French antique gym bench. Sofas by Madeline Stuart & Associates in Bergamo linen. Pillows in damask and stripe by Claremont and in Hollyhock linen. Dachshund John Henry. French terra-cotta lamp, c. 1880. Dagmar Design iron lamp. Italian 1940s table. OPPOSITE: Triptych by Gracie; third panel conceals door to downstairs bowling alley. Kangxi-era chairs. Antique candlestick as lamp. French table, c. 1800, and scone. Oushak rug.





In living room, Chinese coffee table, c. 1820.  
Custom chairs in Scalamandré linen-velvet with backs in Castel silk.  
Art by Ashley Collins over antique limestone mantel.  
Custom nickel fire screen by Reborn Antiques.  
Spanish silverplate lamp and Italian bed-crown chandelier, both antiques. Italian 18th-c. sconces. Draperies in hemp by Hemp Basics.  
Bokid woven rug.





majestic beauty of nature outside of the house? The decor defers to the oceanfront site."

The home's interiors speak to the rustic and refined qualities of equestrianism. Coarse linens and hemp cloth, fibrous abaca rugs and hand-scraped oak floors add raw elements, as do pieces such as a French cowhide chair, an Italian eighteenth-century carpenter's table used as a sideboard and a pair of somewhat rusted French antique doors. Originally created for exterior use, the doors now lead into the master bedroom.

"The doors still have a mail slot in them," says Stuart. "The contractors wanted to spiff them up, and the men were so convinced that the doors were going to be repainted that they started writing directions on them about how to hang them. We had to have an artist come in and carefully erase all those markings."

Stuart's choices in lighting are just as playful. An Italian antique bed crown was fashioned into an eight-arm chandelier for the living room, while one of the two breezeways—architectural touches that marry the ocean and ranch sides of the property—has a ceiling fixture resembling a vintage umbrella frame. "Much of the house is animated by the lighting—interesting and unusual pieces that add a note of humor or drama," Stuart says.

In the master bedroom, a side table with a chunky limestone top and a gracefully carved and gilded wooden base captures the home's interplay of roughness and beauty. But then again, so do its horses. Two works by a Malibu artist depicting horses hang above antique limestone fireplaces, while a panel in a triptych of horses, inspired by a Chinese artist's work, conceals a door leading downstairs to the home's big surprise: a bowling alley.

Says Stuart with a sense of satisfaction, "I've never seen two homeowners, four dogs and six horses so happy in one place." □

BELOW LEFT: Italian chandelier, c. 1830. Antique French doors with mail slot. Custom railing by Antique Ornamental Ironworks. BELOW RIGHT: Chinese console, c. 1780. Bowl by Formations. Plaster lamp, 1940s, and early 20th-c. ebonized wood and cowhide chair, both French. OPPOSITE: Custom-cut stones elevate Italian 18th-c. sideboard. Antique altar candlesticks as lamps. French 19th-c. Directoire mirror. Dining chairs in Travers linen. Walnut table. Antique Genovese chandelier. Hand-scraped oak floors. Flowers throughout by The Velvet Garden.







ABOVE AND OPPOSITE: Custom bed with headboard in Travers linen, bed panels in Gastón y Daniela linen and TV-lift ottoman in Rose Tarlow-Melrose House leather. International Down & Linen bedding. Formations lamp. Painting by Alfred Munnings. Draperies in Rogers & Goffigon linen. Pillows in Manuel Canovas silk-velvets. Custom chairs in Rogers & Goffigon linen; pillows in Travers silk. Iron lamp, giltwood and stone table and Italian sconces, all antiques. French 19th-c. ottoman. Art by Ashley Collins. Custom mantel by Exquisite Surfaces. Sam Kasten rug.





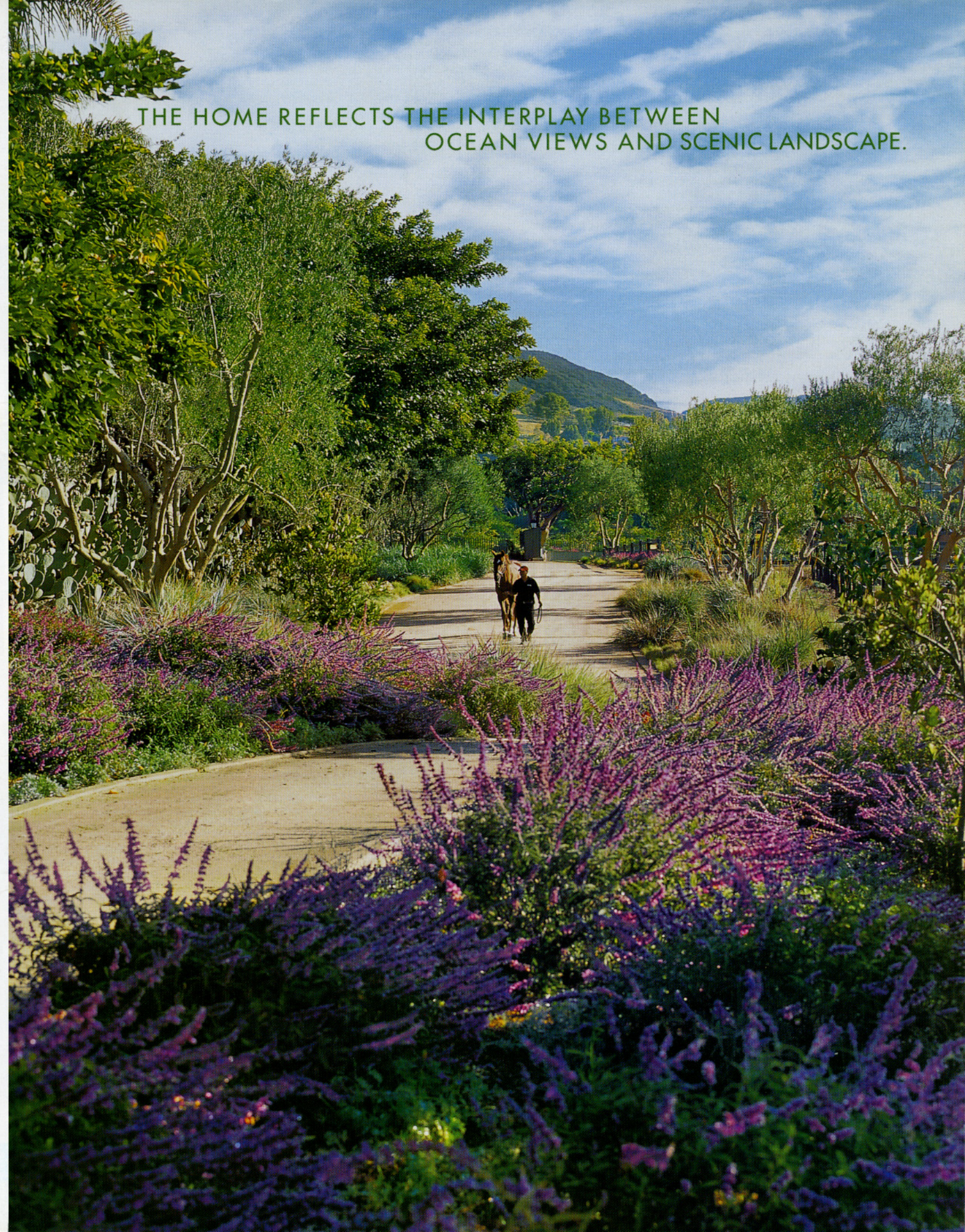


COUNTERCLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Mirror, c. 1850, and 18th-c. marble sink, both Italian; Compas faucetry; Hollyhock towels. Breezeway with French mid-20th-c. rattan chair; marble-top table, tall Ming pot, vase and iron chandelier, all antiques. In bath, custom vanity and steel doors; Niermann Weeks sconce; Florentine 18th-c. chandelier; antique French stool; stone floor and countertop by Compas; Waterworks faucetry. TOP RIGHT AND OPPOSITE: In guesthouse, French 19th-c. doors. Custom bedding in Nobilis fabric. Bolster in Kathryn Ireland linen. Antique French coffee table. Custom sofa in Travers linen with pillows in Claremont stripe, Mokum floral and Christopher Farr Cloth linen. Custom headboard in Nobilis linen and canopy in Rogers & Goffigon linen. Starburst mirror, chest, lamps and Italian chandelier, all antiques. Irish abaca rug.





ABOVE: View of Pacific Ocean from kitchen. McGuire laced-cowhide chairs. Swedish 19th-c. farm trestle table. Mahogany slat stools with metal frames, c. 1950. Paul Ferrante cone light fixture over limestone countertop by Compas. Santa Barbara sandstone floor. Custom cabinetry. OPPOSITE: Landscaping, installed by New View Landscape, includes olive and coral trees, salvia, Santa Barbara daisies, rosemary, Spanish lavender, meadow sedge, lyme grass and wild rye. *For a story about the home's downstairs bowling alley, see page 172.*



THE HOME REFLECTS THE INTERPLAY BETWEEN  
OCEAN VIEWS AND SCENIC LANDSCAPE.



THE LAST WORD

# STRIKING

The Romanellis' home entertainment area in Malibu has a neon-lit bowling alley and a mural of family history.



INTERIOR DESIGN BY MADELINE STUART ARCHITECTURE BY STEPHEN GIANNETTI  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY DOMINIQUE VORILLON TEXT BY LINDA SHERBERT

Autobiography can play a major role in the decoration of home interiors, reflecting not only the owners' personal interests but also family history. That was what Dan and Luana Romanelli had in mind when they hired designer Madeline Stuart to help them create a new home in Malibu.

While Luana's horse-riding would inform the decor upstairs, Dan wanted an entertainment area downstairs. He also envisioned a mural showing his parents' native Venice, Italy, and his path from Brooklyn boyhood to Burbank career—Dan was founder and president of Warner Bros. Worldwide Consumer Products. Now semi-retired, the former merchandiser of Bugs Bunny, Batman, Harry Potter and other Hollywood icons says, "I'm just a big kid at heart."

These days, Dan enjoys his home theater's 108-inch screen, Super Shot basketball games and the pièce de résistance: a two-lane bowling alley. "Many home bowling lanes look too Jetsons," Stuart says. "We wanted it to look like a '40s bowling alley."

Architect Stephen Giannetti located maple lanes from an old bowling alley that had been torn down. Stuart adds, "We used board and batten to accommodate acoustical panels. And someone in my office found a beat-up sign in a

*Continued on page 168.*





- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 pound shrimp, peeled, cleaned and cubed
- 1 large brown onion, peeled and finely chopped
- 2 tablespoons finely chopped parsley
- ½ cup olive oil

Preheat oven to 150°.

In large bowl, combine all ingredients except olive oil, stirring with rubber spatula until well mixed. Let batter rest about 20 minutes at room temperature.

Over medium heat, cover bottom of large frying pan with about ½" oil. When oil is smoking, drop batter by tablespoonful into oil and fry until golden on both sides, about 3 minutes. Remove pancakes from oil, and drain on paper towel. Remove from paper towel, place on baking sheet and keep warm in 150° oven. Continue with remaining batter, adding oil as needed. Keep pancakes warm in oven until ready to serve.

#### **PORK TENDERLOIN WITH PEDRO XIMÉNEZ SHERRY AND**

#### **CABRALES CHEESE (LOMO DE CERDO CON PEDRO XIMÉNEZ Y CABRALES)**

*Makes 15-20 pieces*

- 4 tablespoons olive oil
- sea salt
- freshly ground black pepper
- 2 pork tenderloins, about 1½ pounds each
- 1 cup Pedro Ximénez sherry
- 1 baguette, sliced and lightly toasted
- 15-20 flat-leaf parsley leaves
- ½ pound Cabrales cheese or other mild blue cheese, cubed

Pour oil into large frying pan over medium heat. Heat until smoking. Season pork with salt and pepper. Brown thoroughly, turning frequently, about 10 minutes. Reduce heat. Add sherry. Cover and simmer until sauce thickens and pork is cooked through, about 10-15 minutes. Remove from heat, and let pork rest so sauce can be absorbed. Slice tenderloins into ¼"-thick pieces.

#### **TO SERVE**

Dip baguette slices in pan juices and arrange on serving platter. Top each slice with piece of pork, and garnish with parsley leaf and cube of cheese.

*Continued from page 172.*

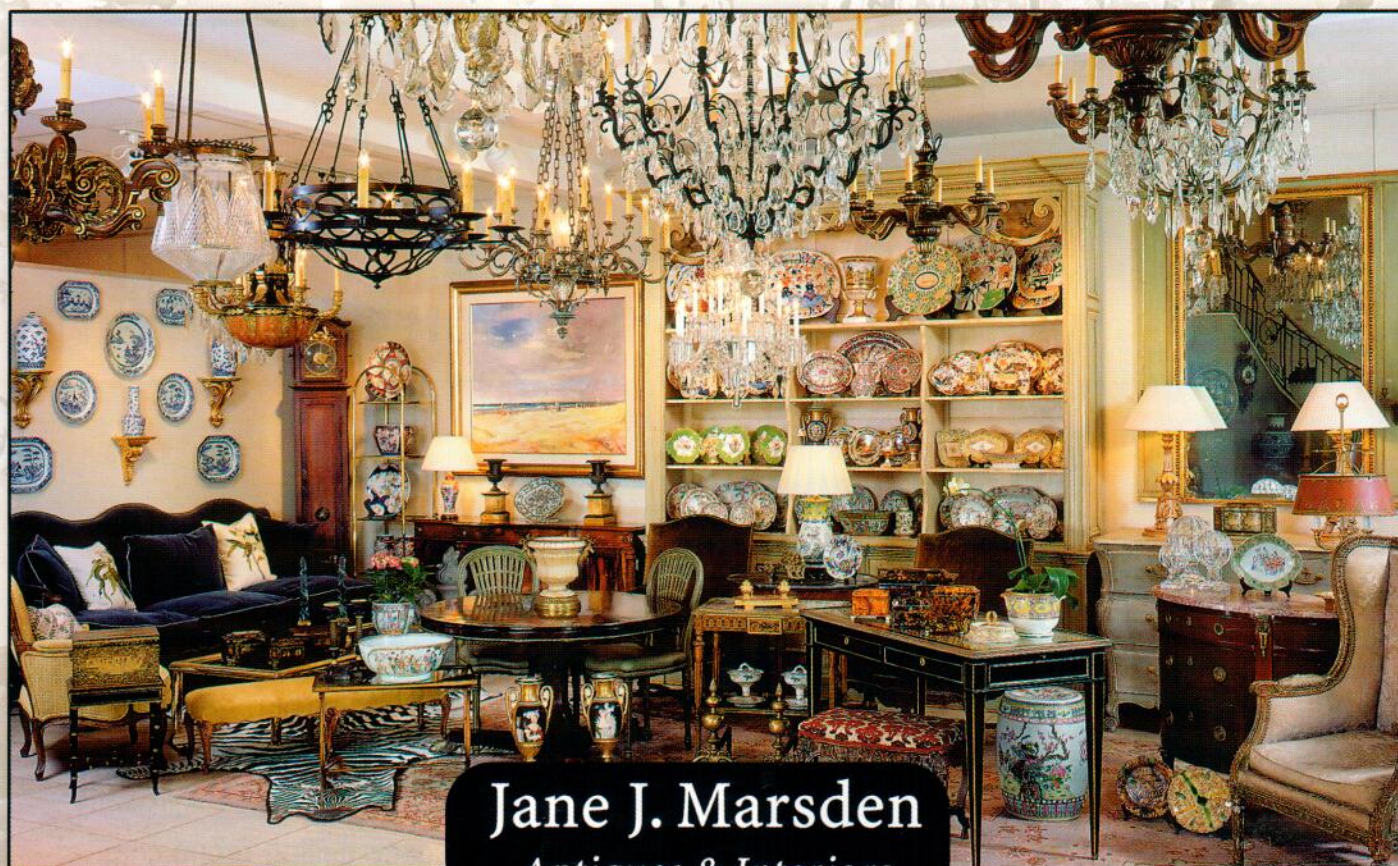
funky store in Santa Barbara that says 'BOWL.' We hired a neon artist to relight it. We were thrilled." The sign now blazes, its neon brilliance reflected in polished wooden lanes. Looney Tunes critters appear on most of the bowling balls.

A mural by Ed Strang of Warner Bros. Studios is painted in the style of a 1940s WPA mural, Stuart says. "It starts in Venice and follows Dan from New York to Arizona, where Luana lived, then travels to Warner Bros. and finally to this house in Malibu."

Recalls Dan, "When I was a boy in Venice, we went down to the lower level of my uncle's palazzo on the Grand Canal and played foosball. When I go downstairs now, I think of my youth." Says Stuart, "It's a different universe and goofily charming. It's fun without being kitschy."

Any future grandkids may find Dan downstairs or in his home office, where they can rap on the door with his Bugs Bunny brass knocker. □

For more about the house, see page 92.



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