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#### GREEN GLORY

The house dates from 1935 and was built in an English Tudor style. With the help of local landscape architect Scott Shrader, the gardens have been redesigned in a more European style to suit the spirit of the home.

# HEAD FOR THE HILLS

French interior designer Jean-Louis Deniot has mixed the old and the new in transforming this historic home with generous gardens into a blissful hideaway from the chaos of the city.

WORDS IAN PHILLIPS PHOTOGRAPHY STEPHAN JULLIARD

#### FINE DINING

Although the home's original dining room was in a "sort of garden shed" attached to the main house, the stylish new space is a delight to enjoy a meal in. The table was designed by Piet Hein Eek, while the white chairs were designed by Jacques Adnet and have been reupholstered in fabric from Bisson Bruneel.





**PERSONAL TOUCH**

The home features many items Deniot has collected over the past 15 years. The vintage bronze coffee table was designed by Philip & Kelvin Laverne, while the sofa is a part of Deniot's furniture collection for Baker. The globe in front of the windows was designed by Gio Ponti. It is made from opaline glass and bronze.



**NICE & NEUTRAL**

Deniot favoured a neutral palette throughout the house; utilising tones of ivory, straw and black as well as natural materials to pull together disparate elements – as seen here in the cosy tableau under the stairs. The armchair is early 18th-century American, and has been reupholstered in raffia from Indonesia.



## HOMES HOLLYWOOD

### LET IT GROW

Although not often a fan of indoor plants, Deniot has used greenery to add life to the sitting room. Rising up to the 17th-century Spanish chandelier fitted with raffia shades created by Anne Sokolsky, the plants frame the space beautifully. The mirror on the left-hand wall and the golden stool were both designed by Deniot's friend, Hervé Van der Straeten.







Renovating a 1930s residence, Jean-Louis Deniot drew from the home's original character to create a luxurious, fairytale abode.



When French interior designer Jean-Louis Deniot first visited Los Angeles about 20 years ago, West Hollywood was not the place to be. "It was a rough area," he recalls. "Nobody even talked about it."

Things have changed significantly since. The locality has become hip and happening, and it is where Deniot has his Californian bolthole – on a winding street up in the hills. "In Los Angeles, you really want to be up high so you can catch a glimpse of the ocean by day and the city by night," he says. "And it feels a bit more European up here. With all the cypress trees and Mediterranean-style roofs, you could almost be on the outskirts of Florence."

Deniot spends time in the city for a number of reasons. His life is very much centred on work, and he currently has several residential commissions in Hancock Park, Beverly Hills and Los Feliz. For him, LA is also the perfect escape from his main base in Paris. "It provides a real breath of fresh air," he says. "It's difficult to find two more different cities."

Deniot acquired his West Hollywood home a decade ago, and initially just gave it a quick paint job, imported a truck-load of furniture from Europe, and left the garden to grow slightly wild. Built by a set designer in 1935, it is a bit of an aesthetic mish-mash, with an English Tudor exterior and a more Hispanic-style interior. Previously, the dining room was housed in what Deniot calls "a sort of garden shed" attached to the main structure. "It worked alright for a while," notes Deniot. "But, after some time, its kookiness turned into awkwardness." That was the moment he decided to do something about it.

He chose to extend the house from 185m<sup>2</sup> to 275m<sup>2</sup> and to completely revamp the garden with the help of

#### FLIGHT OF FANCY

*Clockwise from top left:* Deniot in the garden, flanked by two 1880s French eagle sculptures sourced from a Paris flea market; A view from the dining room towards the sitting room. The French oak console table was designed by Jean-Charles Moreux and dates from the 1940s; In the sitting room, the oak sideboard was designed by Jean-Michel Frank. The plaster wall lights date from the 1930s and were designed by Serge Roche. On top of the sideboard is an



#### CROSS PATHS

Classic criss-cross leaded windows help bring natural light into the kitchen – an inviting space with countertops made from Carrara marble. The custom cabinets are covered with a wallpaper from Artee, and the artwork on the wall is a collage bought in a Los Feliz consignment store.



"You sleep in a tower ... in a gilded bed and look out over the city through leaded windows. There's something almost surrealist about it."

#### SLEEP IN STYLE

Lucky visitors to the house get to stay in this opulent oval-shaped guest room, sleeping in a 19th-century bronze Etruscan-style colonial bed, under a chandelier designed by Tony Duquette. The decorative pillows are from Jim Thompson and the cashmere bed cover is from Kelly Wearstler.



ended up lasting three years. The new wing Deniot added now contains a stylish dining room on the ground floor and a spacious master bedroom up above. The former master bedroom was located at the back of the house on the ground floor. "When it was built in the 1930s, the house didn't face the city because back then Los Angeles was simply a series of vile warehouses," explains Deniot. "I more or less had to rotate the layout of the house to favour the views."

On the outside, he attempted to make the new addition look as seamless as possible – and inside, he eschewed anything too modern. "I wasn't going to create a contemporary scheme because it wouldn't have gone with all the criss-cross leaded windows," he explains. Instead, he favoured light woods to brighten up the interior and opted for a neutral palette largely dominated by ivory, straw, raffia and black tones. He also chose to integrate a number of ethnic pieces – such as a 19th-century Ethiopian leather shield and a 17th-century iron sword from Zaïre.

The downstairs rooms in particular are replete with objects Deniot has collected over the past 15 years. "It's not the same as when I do a project for a client," he says. "I have a particular, sentimental connection to each of [the items] here." They include an African braided wedding hat from Tangier, where he also had a house; an 18th-century boat fragment from India, where he is currently completing several residential commissions; a smattering of creations by his French designer friend Hervé Van der Straeten; an abstract artwork unearthed in a Los Feliz consignment store; and a collection of crystal balls that were once in Coco Chanel's suite at the Ritz Hotel in Paris. For one party at the house, Deniot invited a psychic with her own crystal ball to perform readings for his guests.

His luckiest friends get to stay in the glamorous oval-shaped guest room located on the first floor. "It's like a sort of fantasy," says Deniot. "You sleep in a tower under a Tony Duquette chandelier in a gilded bed and look out over the city through leaded windows. There's

something almost surrealist about it." For once, he was also keen to incorporate plants into several rooms. "It's not something I do very often," he admits, "but the windows here are so small that you need to add some life. Otherwise, it could be a little claustrophobic."

The same could not be said of the garden, which is remarkably spacious. Indeed, the house's primary asset is almost certainly the fact that it sits on a triple lot. Part of Deniot's brief to Shrader was that he didn't want typical Californian plants. "I thought palm and banana trees would not go at all with the spirit of the house," he says. The result is a more European-style garden with very little colour. "I don't like flowers," Deniot says. "I find them kitsch, fussy and ugly."

Amongst all the greenery are numerous areas for outdoor living and entertaining, and guests who pass through the house often say they find it "exotic." "What I love is that it's outside of time, detached from the chaos of the city and from the hype of the movie industry," Deniot explains. "You have the impression you're in some kind of bubble. It's my very own little Chateau Marmont." ■



#### LET THERE BE LIGHT

**Left to right:** The light-filled master bathroom is a study in luxury, with the Aston Matthews bathtub set right in the large windows for a view over the garden. The chandelier is French 1940s and was bought from Galerie Yves Gastou in Paris; An outdoor seating area is the ideal spot for rest and reflection. The vintage mirror was bought from a Paris flea market, the wall lights were designed by Scott Shrader, and the table top is a former millstone, bought at Big Daddy's Antiques in LA.