

DESIGN & REALTY  
home



# LIGHT TOUCH

Interior designer Cari Berg updates a family's new Beverly Hills home with an emphasis on modernity and ease.

By Maile Pingel // Photography by Karen Millet

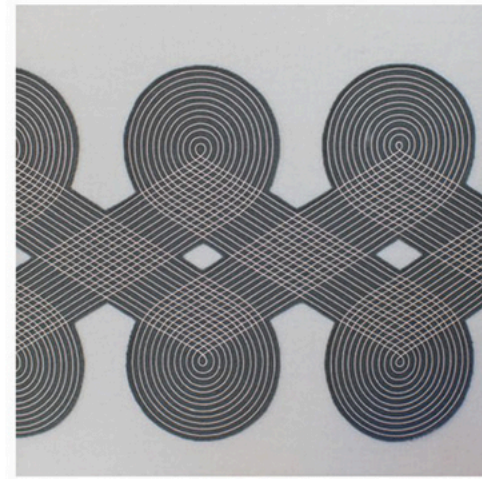
"You walk in and it feels fresh," says designer Cari Berg (cariberginteriordesign.com) of an old-time Hollywood estate she recently refreshed for a family in Beverly Hills. The clients had been looking for a new L.A. home and found the perfect one—in near perfect shape—just off Benedict Canyon. The 1934 property had already been renovated to exacting standards; the family just needed to make it their own. "They saw a project I'd done and liked the vibe," adds Berg, who is currently working on a home in Jackson Hole, Wyo., as well as myriad local projects. Her goal with this particular one was to make the interiors "just a little

more livable," she says. "It's a great house but it was very formal, so we dressed it down," she says. Working with Michael Murphy of MJM Builders in Culver City, the designer, whose eponymous firm celebrates its 20th anniversary this year, refinished the kitchen island and darkened the hardwood floors. She then set out to craft interiors that were sophisticated but accessible—rooms that could withstand teenagers and the family dog. She also paid special attention to replacing nearly all of the home's uber-traditional crystal chandeliers with notably contemporary designs.

Throughout the main floor, Berg



From top: The living room, awash in cool neutrals, features custom and found pieces, including a petrified wood side table from Mix Furniture; the home's cozy, casual dining nook.



maintained a neutral palette and opted for furnishings that would create a synergy between the spaces. In the living room, gently curved sofas and chairs designed by Berg pair with an angular accent chair found at Gregorius Pineo. Above them is a chandelier from Bourgeois Bohème—a design that speaks directly to the Lindsey Adelman fixture that hangs in the dining room. There, Berg placed a custom table and chairs that echo the silhouettes in the living room.

The gray and cream color scheme of the common spaces continues throughout the home, lightening ever so slightly in the master bedroom and deepening in the downstairs family room with the addition of a caramel hue. "It's a fun challenge to create nontraditional seating," says Berg, who anchored the lower level with a custom, two-sided sofa. She took that same nonconformist approach with the room's pool table, a sculptural concrete work by James De Wulf, whose pieces have been used by Albert Hadley and Frank Gehry. And though the owners left most decisions to Berg, it was the husband who suggested the Alison Berger pendants that illuminate the table. "He spotted those," says the designer happily. "It's a tricky ceiling, and they really worked."

Photographs taken by the wife and blown up to large-format prints add a familiar warmth to the design scheme. "Artwork is about creating meaning for a home," says Berg. "She showed me the images and we selected them together." The designer also incorporated artworks by Isabelle Maynard, Tim Forcum, Lori Cozen-Geller and Tom Corbin.

"The house just feels younger and more playful for the owners now," concludes Berg. "It's the same great quality and scale as it was before; it just feels more like them." ■



Clockwise from top left: A detail of an upholstered bench in the homeowners' master bedroom; a pendant by Alison Berger hangs above a concrete pool table by James De Wulf; the family's pup lounges in the living room.