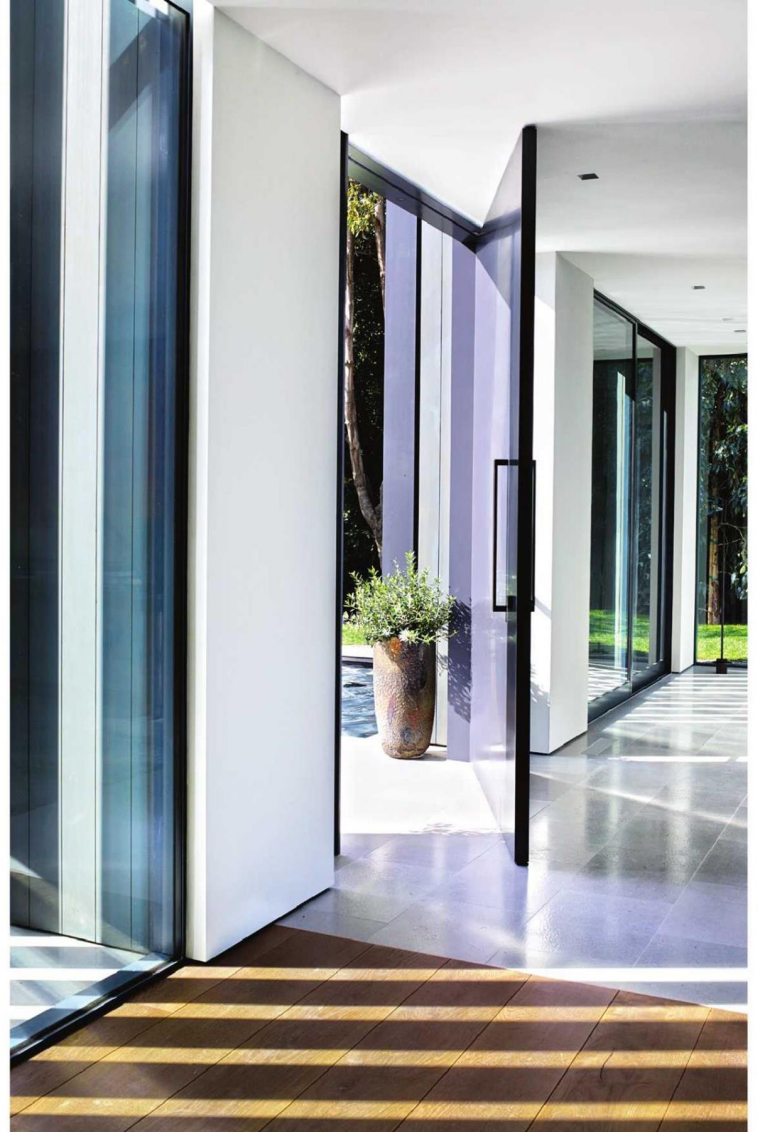# HOLLYWOOD

REMAKE

OSCAR-WINNING PRODUCER BRIAN GRAZER ENLISTS ARCHITECT
MARK RIOS AND DESIGNER WALDO FERNANDEZ TO REINVENT A CLUNKY
SANTA MONICA MANSION AS A SLEEK CONTEMPORARY GEM

TEXT BY ROB HASKELL   PHOTOGRAPHY BY RICHARD POWERS   PRODUCED BY ANITA SARSIDI

Film and TV producer Brian Grazer transformed a
rambling and eclectic mansion in Santa Monica, California,
into a crisply modern retreat for his family. Mark Rios
of Rios Clementi Hale Studios oversaw the architectural
work, and Waldo Fernandez of Waldo's Designs
masterminded the interiors. For details see Sources.

H ollywood mogul though he may be, when it comes to the way he lives, Brian Grazer defies typecasting. For years the prolific spiky-haired producer of such big-screen hits as *Splash, Apollo 13,* and *Frost/Nixon* resided in the reclusive upper reaches of Los Angeles's Pacific Palisades neighborhood, in a 1930s Cliff May ranch house that was decorated in a fairly traditional style. But five years ago, after a divorce, he sold the place—to Jennifer Garner and Ben Affleck—and resolved to make a significant change. "The goal was pretty simple," Grazer says. "Give me the opposite of what I had."

A 12,000-square-foot behemoth in Santa Monica initially seemed anything but promising. Created in smorgasbord fashion, the rambling structure featured sections in a mélange of styles, from English manor to Art Moderne. Crossing the kidney-shaped pool in the backyard was a bridge that led to a faux mini-Matterhorn with waterfalls descending from its summit. Grazer's trusted advisers did not encourage him to buy. Still, he was captivated by the nearly two-acre

site, just a mile from the ocean and with infinite views over the storied Riviera Country Club golf course out to the majestic Santa Monica Mountains. Grazer saw potential in the generous spaces, which he envisioned as flexible enough both for hosting the parties he regards as an occupational hazard and for spending quiet time with family, who now include his fiancée, Veronica Smiley, and his four children from previous marriages. "I enjoy being around people and energy, and yet I don't always want to socialize," the producer says. "In this house I can entertain a crowd or open the gate and ride my bike to the beach."

Grazer's friend Brad Grey, chairman of Paramount Pictures, introduced him to architect Mark Rios, founding principal of the L.A. firm Rios Clementi Hale Studios, who saw in the long, central volume at the heart of the existing hodgepodge the makings of a sleek contemporary barn. That design conceit, however, wasn't an easy sell. "To Brian, the word *barn* wasn't positive," Rios recalls. "It sounded too country. Then I showed him some Swiss houses

Clockwise from above: A Richard Prince painting hangs in the main stairway, overlooking a Hans Bellmann table, a Rick Owens chair, and a 17th-century Spanish iron grille. Grazer is seated near a stainless-steel sculpture by Joel Morrison and a painting by Gerhard Richter. Modernica chaise longues cushioned in a Sunbrella fabric line a terrace, with the pool and yoga platform beyond.
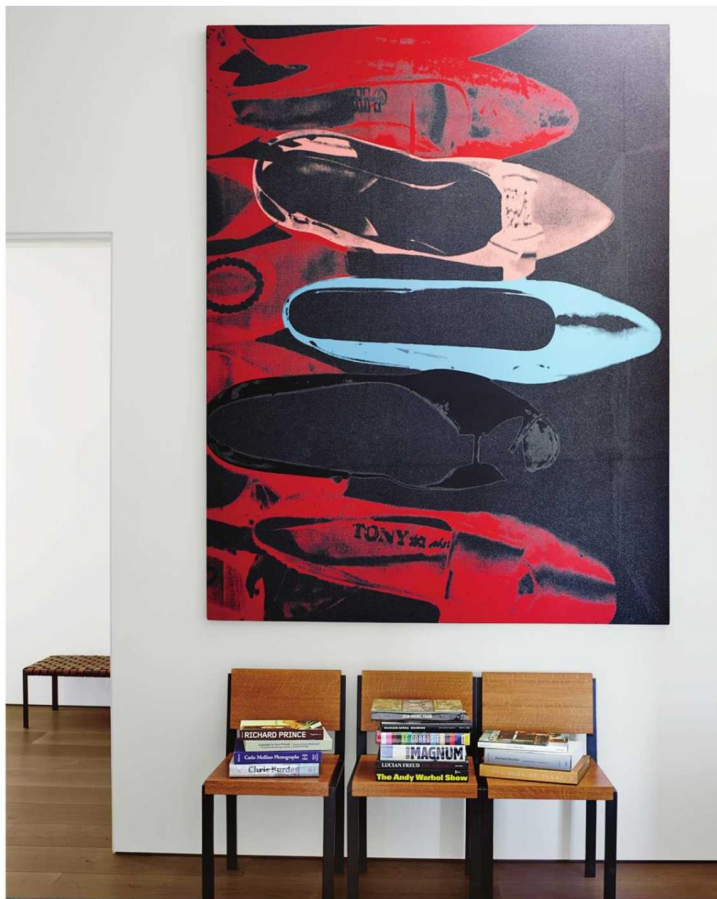
that are tied to that vernacular but are very modern, and gradually he came around."

Rios streamlined the main body of the house, removing a number of unnecessary and visually disruptive architectural protuberances, skimming dormers and clerestories, and staining the cedar façade a color that matched the slate roof to achieve a crisp, harmonious whole. "I wanted the house to have a tailored quality," says the architect. "Self-assured without being grand."

He also made sure there were abundant terraces for dining or relaxing and installed glass walls that can be opened wide for the breezy plein-air quality Grazer sought. "I had gone to George Clooney's house, and it had this wonderful indoor-outdoor feel," Grazer says. "I told Mark that was a feeling I really liked."

On the grounds, Rios added a basketball court and a yoga platform, and he converted an existing guesthouse into an artist's studio, where Grazer paints in his free time. Replacing the kitschy swimming pool is an über-minimalist rectangle that almost disappears into the expansive lawn. "I love big lawns, where my kids can play," Grazer says. "When I was a kid I always wished for a bigger one." →

A walkway leads to Grazer's office on the mezzanine level; hanging in the living area, below, is a canvas by Ed Ruscha. *Opposite, from top:* Triangular chairs by Rick Owens face the living room fireplace, which features a surround of chiseled limestone; the painting at right is by Richard Prince, and the carpet is by Woven Accents. A work by Andy Warhol is mounted above a trio of vintage chairs at the entrance to the master bedroom.

For the interiors, Grazer worked closely with L.A. designer Waldo Fernandez, a favorite among Hollywood's elite, to fashion comfortable, sophisticated spaces that would showcase his remarkable art collection—a trove that encompasses works by Richard Prince, Gerhard Richter, Ed Ruscha, and Andy Warhol. Fernandez blended furniture of his own design with choice vintage pieces by modernist masters such as Jacques Adnet, Jean Prouvé, and Jean Royère, all in the controlled palette that is his signature.

"I said to Waldo, 'Do what you do, but make it warm,'" Grazer remembers. To that end, the designer combed the French oak floor planks used throughout with a wire brush to open up the wood grain and create a more rustic surface; in an otherwise cool kitchen, he gave the leather seats on the barstools a timeworn patina; and in the dining room, he buffed out the hard gleam of a magnificent 1950s Boris Lacroix brass chandelier, rescued from a casino in Cannes.

The collaboration between Fernandez and Grazer, it turns out, was a marriage of kindred obsessives. In an alleyway behind Fernandez's West Hollywood studio, the designer would set out chairs, stools, benches, and sofas, and Grazer would drop by during a free moment to sit or sprawl on each one to test the buoyancy of the cushion, the depth of the seat, the pitch of the back, the height from the ground. Everyday scenarios were thoughtfully considered: If he were eating dinner with his kids in front of the family room television, for example, would they comfortably be able to reach their plates and glasses on the cocktail table? "My guess is that's the way he makes movies," Fernandez says. "There isn't a detail he's not interested in." →

Above: A large artwork by Jack Pierson presides over Grazer's office, where a plush sofa and chair and a wood cocktail table—all vintage pieces by Jean Royère—are joined by midcentury armchairs from France (left) and Italy; the rug was custom made by Mansour Modern.

A circa-1950 Boris Lacroix chandelier graces the dining room, which also showcases an Andy Warhol painting and sculptures by Ritsue Mishima (left) and Lauren Booth. ***Below, from left:*** The breakfast area is outfitted with an Osvaldo Borsani light fixture and a Jean Prouvé table and chairs; the painting is by Takashi Murakami. Another work by Murakami hangs in the kitchen, which is equipped with a Bulthaup island and cabinetry, Caesarstone countertops, a Wolf range, and stools from Duane Modern.

One of the sons' rooms is furnished with a custom-designed bed upholstered in a Pierre Frey fabric and a vintage Danish swivel chair. *Above:* Vintage Franco Albini wall lights offset a custom-made mirror in a powder room.
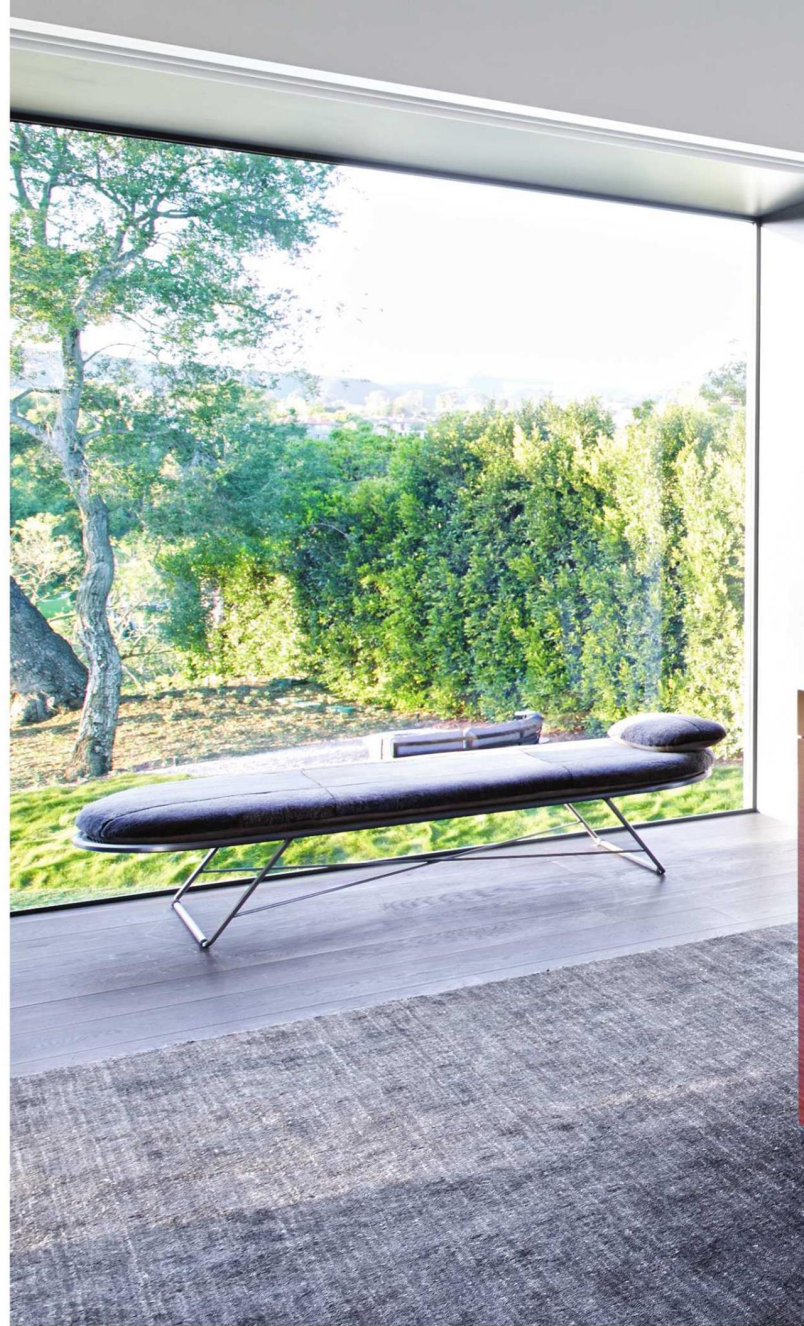
That obsessiveness extended to fabrics, an area where Grazer gravitated toward the cozily luxurious: bouclé mohair and silk on the living room sofas and shearling on a Jim Zivic daybed in the master bedroom. For the second-floor office, Fernandez redid a rare Royère Ours Polaire sofa and chairs in long-haired alpaca dyed a golden hue that happens to match the nearby best-picture Oscar the producer shares with his longtime business partner, Ron Howard, for the 2001 film *A Beautiful Mind*. The duo's latest project, the 19th-century whaling epic *In the Heart of the Sea,* comes out March 13. And in April, Grazer is releasing his first book, titled *A Curious Mind: The Secret to a Bigger Life* (Simon & Schuster). Cowritten with best-selling author Charles Fishman, it chronicles what he

calls his "interesting people meetings," conversations he's had with leaders in fields different from his own.

It promises to be a busy spring for Grazer, who clearly relishes downtime in the comfort of home, "to chill, have a drink, watch a game," as he puts it, or to enjoy a movie in his spectacular new screening room, outfitted with sumptuous fabric-clad walls, giant throw blankets, and reclining chairs customized with cup holders found on a poker website. The adjacent bar not only has shelves stocked with the producer's preferred tequilas but also features jars filled with his favorite movie-theater candies.

"I've ended up with a house that completely services my emotional needs," Grazer declares. Would a Hollywood mogul settle for less? □

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