

THE CURATORIALIST

Oliver M. Furth assembles a contemporary collection in a Venice Beach home



Lukas Peet's Rud' pendants, from The Future Perfect, and cabinetry resurfaced in zebra wood with a striking pattern, bring sculptural beauty to the kitchen's simple layout. The patio chair and low table were found at A+R.

By ABIGAIL STONE
Photos by ROGER DAVIES



When a couple made the leap from a '60s-style home in Los Angeles' Silver Lake neighborhood to a more modern space in Venice, they called on interior designer Oliver M. Furth to guide their style transition. The smart layout, soaring 25-foot ceilings and central courtyard created the ideal envelope to showcase the vibrancy of the art and design movement that Los Angeles is currently experiencing.

"With this house, we really wanted to tell an L.A. story," says Furth who, as chair emeritus of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art's Decorative Arts and Design Council, is perfectly positioned to narrate it. "I'm probably visiting an artist's studio once a week," he says.

Easing his clients into the new tenor their decor would take, Furth began his work with the lighting. "It's always a good place to experiment," Furth explains. "Because the function doesn't need a comfortable seat or a flat surface, it just needs to illuminate somehow."

In the entry, a braided piece by Korean lighting designer Kwangho Lee does more than that. Its design adds a playful counterpoint to a Paul McCobb sideboard and a vintage lounge chair by Carl Malmsten. "That's a shape that didn't exist a decade ago," says Furth of the fixture's intricate knotwork. Lee's work was recently acquired by Paris's Musée des Arts Décoratifs, a testament to Furth's well-honed collector instincts. "It helps to be one step ahead of the museum world," he says.

In the dining room, a chandelier by Venice M, whom Furth discovered at Salone del Mobile in Milan three years ago, dangles overhead. A limited-edition sconce by Lindsey Adelman, created by blowing glass into vintage C-clamps, brightens the powder bath, while Lukas Peet pendants, which hang over the



OPPOSITE PAGE, TOP: The Furth-designed sofa, covered in slate blue linen by C&C Milano sits in front of a custom coffee table fabricated from Negro Marquina marble. **BELOW:** A Limited edition Lindsey Adelman Clamp light, found at The Future Perfect, illuminates the powder bath.

THIS PAGE: A light by Kwangho Lee, whose work hangs in Paris' Musée des Arts Decoratifs, dangles over a vintage Paul McCobb sideboard from Wright Auction.



Eames' Eiffel Tower chairs, covered in felt by fiber artist Tanya Aguiñiga, surround a walnut Slab dining table by BDDW that sits below a chandelier is by Venice M. A resin console is by Ross Hanson sits below lithographs by Ed Moses.





CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: The home wraps around the pool; A majestic brass bed by Bernhardt, flanked by side tables from Lawson Fenning hold ceramic lamps by Stone and Sawyer that set the glamorous tone the clients requested; The bathroom, washed with a custom green Benjamin Moore paint features the Cloud Hanging Lamp by Hive, discovered at Twentieth, hanging over the bathtub, while Tom Dixon's lights, also from Twentieth, light up the double sink. The window shade's custom hand-painted fabric is by Porter Teleo.

kitchen island, shed light on a bowl from MQuan Studio.

With the lighting in place, Furth moved his attention to the furniture selections. He culled from the clients' collection of mid-century furniture, tagging those with a West Coast pedigree. Pieces by Paul McCobb, Greta Magnusson Grossman and Charles and Ray Eames all made the final cut, interspersed with pieces created by some of Los Angeles' most exciting makers as well as choice international picks. "We took the existing mid-century pieces they owned and made them more exciting by adding a lot of contemporary collectible design," Furth says.

For an example, look no further than the dining room. The Eames Eiffel Tower chairs, which cluster around a table by BDDW, were reimaged by fiber artist Tanya Aguiñiga.

"I didn't think the chairs were enough for the direction in which the house was moving," Furth recalls. "But I liked them as they had a lot of sentimental value for the client, so I wanted to find a way to use them." Furth helped engineer LACMA's purchase of one of Aguiñiga's felted Eames chairs for inclusion into the permanent collection, so he turned to her for insight on how best to repurpose the chairs.

"A lot of decorating is problem solving. These makers and artists are people who I often ask for help to find solutions," says the designer. "What can we do to jazz up these chairs? She felted them and now they're outstanding. They're comfortable, they're cleanable, they're just super cool—and each one is a little bit different."

The dining room's console is another example of a risk that paid off. Created by Ross Hansen, (one of L.A.'s emerging designers), it is made by molding colorful plastic clay around forms to create a piece that is both beautiful and functional. "He just got nabbed by Volume Gallery in Chicago and he's about to have his first show," says Furth.

A resin mirror by artist Elyse Graham reflects the sculptural stairs that lead to the home's private rooms. A custom-mixed grass green paint by Benjamin Moore covers the walls in the master bedroom and bathroom, bringing the outdoors in. This is confirmed by a cloud fixture from Hive that hangs over the bathtub. A majestic Bernhardt brass bed, flanked by end tables from Lawson-Fenning, create the cool yet glamorous style the couple wanted in the bedroom.

Furth adds, "I want to create beautiful environments for people to live in that also push the dialogue forward. I applaud my clients for taking the risk."