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THE DAME

THE HOME OF INTERIOR DESIGNER JAIME RUMMERFIELD, ONE HALF OF DESIGN POWERHOUSE WOODSON & RUMMERFIELD, PROVIDES A DRAMATIC BACKDROP FOR HER ELEGANT STYLE

STORY BY ABIGAIL STONE | PHOTOGRAPHY BY JOHN ELLIS

THE SPLIT-LEVEL POST-AND-BEAM HOME that Jamie Rummerfield resides in feels surprisingly rustic given the petite blonde's distinctly glamorous aura. It's only when Rummerfield explains the home's provenance—it was designed by James Allen Walter, an under-the-radar modernist architect—that the pieces start to fall into place. Nothing about Rummerfield is common; like Ron Woodson, her business partner at the design firm Woodson & Rummerfield, she exudes an urbane sophistication that's reflected in the pair's elegant rooms.

If interior design hadn't worked out, Rummerfield would have been an actress. But Plan B never even had a chance of gaining a foothold. In contrast to Woodson, who detoured into corporate life before recognizing his calling, Rummerfield knew she wanted to be an interior

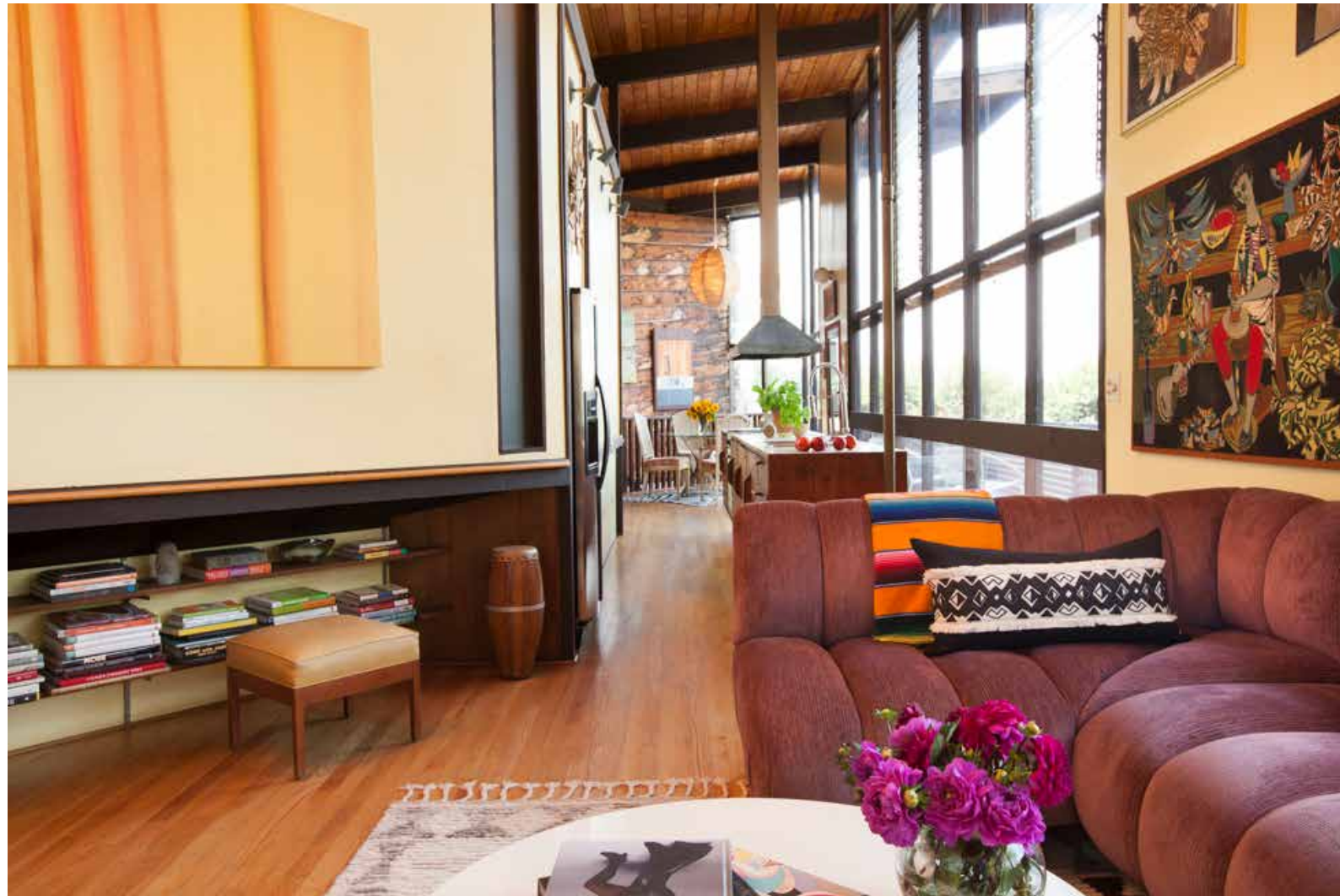
designer from an early age and she pursued her dream with fierce determination. "When I saw one of my friends recently she remembered me saying, even as a kid, that I was going to be an interior designer." After high school, she studied design before heading to Arizona State University, enrolling in their exclusive design program.

Rummerfield, who comes from a long line of Angelenos on her mother's side, knew she wanted to return to California after graduation. After a stint in San Diego, she moved back to Los Angeles, quickly establishing herself as a designer to watch. Like Woodson, she wasn't looking for a partner when they met. Business was booming and there was the new house she and her then-fiancée (now husband) had found to decorate.

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The home builds on anticipation. A nondescript gate, which hides it from the street level, opens to a startling view of the surrounding hills. A long line of rough wooden steps leads down to the weathered redwood structure, and it's not until you step inside that the full impact of Walter's unsung genius is revealed. Light pours in through floor-to-ceiling windows that seem to blur the distinction between indoors and out. "He was a really experimental architect who designed a lot of homes in the area—Mount Washington, Pasadena—and each home was one of a kind. I actually met him. He knocked on the door one day and explained who he was and my husband let him in."

The house has its many quirks: there are a dearth of right angles; it has two entrances; the rooms are long and narrow with high ceilings; apart from that one wall, there are few windows; and it's three levels, which was a challenge when Rummerfield's children were young. But the hallmark of a good designer is the ability to organize a space so that the obstacles recede and all that remains are a home's best features. Here, it's



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“IT’S ABOUT THE DELICATE BALANCE OF MIXING THE OLD WITH THE NEW”



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the dramatic 12-foot-high windows and the textured wooden walls that become the focal point. Carefully chosen and unexpectedly glamorous pieces provide a sharp contrast with the rough water-stained wood. There's the voluptuous lavender Steven Chase sofa and a white lacquered coffee table from Twentieth in the living room. Tall tongue-and-groove ceilings with exposed beams are given even more drama by a quartet of George Nelson's hanging pendant lamps. The Platner table seen in Ron Woodson's home makes an appearance here, in Rummerfield's dining room, positioned atop a zebra-patterned hide rug. The chairs around it are upholstered in the same fabric as the ones gracing the cushions around its twin in Woodson's den.

Another designer might have painted the walls white or replaced the original kitchen that occupies the center of the main floor with new cabinets and modern appliances. Not Rummerfield. The home's patina is part of its charm for her. "It's about the delicate balance of mixing the old with the new so that it's not a time capsule but so that it pays homage to noteworthy high-design pieces," she says, explaining the philosophy that guides the firm. That tension—



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between glamour and simplicity, old and new—is a key factor in both her own home and in the interiors she creates with Woodson. “I think the art of the unexpected is really important to us, so that the design not predictable and so people can have their own original space and know that it’s individual to them and that nobody else has it.”

Refraining from making changes to the home is also at the heart and soul of another passion close to Rummerfield’s heart: historic preservation of the many architecturally important structures in Los Angeles, from Neutra houses to blocks of Spanish-style homes to Google buildings, that, too often, find themselves under the wrecking ball. “Ron and I have started a nonprofit. It’s a foundation called Save Iconic Architecture. There’s so much rapid change happening and everyone’s upset after the fact. They assume that there are already measures in place to protect these structures and that’s often not the case. So our biggest goal is the simple process of landmarking.” Rummerfield has some experience with this; she applied for and was granted landmark status on her own home. “It’s actually an easy process if you know how to do it.”

Certainly this home deserves its accolades, as much for Rummerfield’s ability to highlight its charms as for its ingenious construction. At once

open to the outdoors and cozy, it defies logic, twisting and turning in an effort to hold onto its steep foundation. An interior staircase, one of the few changes that Rummerfield made, leads

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down to the lower level’s master bedroom and bright den. Once again, her synchronicity with Woodson reveals itself. The layering of rich textures and saturated colors, its high-low mix, the wash of vintage charm that is at once nostalgic and decidedly modern, the balanced proportions that add up to rooms that are elegant while also being comfortable and livable. “For us, the common denominator is quality,” Rummerfield explains. “There have to be noteworthy elements to the space, either the furnishings come from somewhere interesting or the artwork has some sort of pedigree.” It’s that mantra that has endeared them to clients ranging from The House of Versace to Christina Aguilera, entertainment reporter Suzanne Marques, and the Ritz-Carlton Residences at L.A. Live, as well as homeowners across the globe. “We take them on a magic-carpet ride on this journey of design,” Rummerfield says. All aboard!

