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# peaceable kingdom

**Working with Belgian architect Vincent Van Duysen, L.A. tastemaker Jenni Kayne crafts a tranquil home that gathers strength from the poetry of light and space**

TEXT BY **MAYER RUS** PHOTOGRAPHY BY **STEPHEN KENT JOHNSON**

JENNI KAYNE AND RICHARD EHRLICH BY THE POOL WITH THEIR CHILDREN, TANNER, RIPLEY, AND TROOPER; THEIR GOATS, RADISH AND RUTABAGA; AND MINI HORSE JELLY. LANDSCAPE DESIGN BY CHRISTINE LONDON LTD. VINCENT VAN DUYSSEN CHAISE LONGUES BY SUTHERLAND FURNITURE IN PERENNIALS FABRIC.



“I’m a modernist, heart and soul,  
and I’ve always been inspired by  
the particular kind of modernism  
that emerged in California,”  
*Vincent Van Duysen* explains.

A MASSIVE WALL OF SLIDING GLASS  
PANES OPENS THE CAPACIOUS LIVING  
ROOM TO AN ADJACENT HILLSIDE.  
SLIPCOVERED SOFAS AND CHAIRS IN  
LARSEN AND DE LE CUONA FABRICS  
BY MOLLY ISAKSEN INTERIORS. VINTAGE  
SLIPPER CHAIRS BY GÖSTA JONSSON,  
COCKTAIL TABLES BY SVEN LARSSON,  
AND CARPET BY MANSOUR. PAINTING BY  
MARY CORSE THROUGH KAYNE GRIFFIN.  
LIGHTING DESIGN BY SEAN O’CONNOR.

MARY CORSE.





The serene Los Angeles house that fashion designer and lifestyle guru Jenni Kayne created with Belgian architect Vincent Van Duysen feels like a mission statement articulated in three dimensions. It tells you everything you need to know about her aesthetic

sensibility, her priorities, and the DNA of her brand. With its spare, soulful volumes and its eminently calm, neutral palette of natural materials, the structure neatly encapsulates Kayne's Cali-centric vision of gracious, effortless living. It's a bravura performance, delivered sotto voce.

More than anything, though, the house is a proper home, a refuge Kayne shares with her husband, luxury real estate maven Richard Ehrlich; their three children, Tanner, Ripley, and Trooper; and a small menagerie of two dogs, goats, rescued mini horses, and a mini donkey named Walnut. "I learned so much building this place with Vincent—how I want to live, what matters to me, what makes the most sense for my family," says Kayne, whose new book, *Pacific Natural at Home*, a love letter to great California houses and the women who

created them, hits bookstores this month. "The house feels like a more grown-up version of me," she adds.

Kayne's adventure began when she and Ehrlich decided to decamp from their home in Beverly Hills (*AD*, October 2012) for greener pastures. "I described my dream property to Richard, a place with lots of trees and breathing space, somewhere you wouldn't feel like you're in L.A. anymore," Kayne recalls. Ehrlich located the ideal plot of land, replete with soaring oaks and sycamores, discreetly tucked away in a canyon on L.A.'s far west side. In short order, the couple reached out to Van Duysen and set up a meeting in New York City. "Honestly, it felt like a nervous first date," the designer says, "but by the time it was over, we were fast friends."



**ABOVE** VAN DUYSEN DESIGNED THE HOUSE AS A RHYTHMIC COMPOSITION OF SHIFTING PLANES AND VOLUMES OF LIME-WASHED BRICK PLOTTED IN RESPONSE TO THE SITE'S TOPOGRAPHY. **OPPOSITE** A SCULPTURAL STAIR OF TEXTURED PLASTER AND OAK LEADS TO A HOME OFFICE.

For Van Duysen, the commission afforded a welcome opportunity to explore the intersection of his own highly distilled, Belgian-born architectural language with the lingua franca of an entirely different culture and climate. "I'm a modernist, heart and soul, and I've always been inspired by the particular kind of modernism that emerged in California. I was interested to see how I could participate in that history and still remain true to my own work," the architect explains, characterizing Kayne's home as a "beautiful synchronization of a midcentury attitude revisited by a Belgian attitude."

The house indeed nods to the spirit of midcentury California architecture, particularly in its complex interweaving of indoor and outdoor space and its intoxicating

pas de deux of shadow and light. Van Duysen, working with project architect Humberto Nobrega, plotted the structure as a series of interconnected solids and voids that pinwheel around a central courtyard garden. The most dramatic gesture of interior/exterior blurring unfolds in the lofty living room, where a massive window wall of sliding glass panes opens to the outdoors, inviting an adjacent hillside peppered with glorious California oaks into the heart of the home.

Still, the house is no ordinary exercise in L.A. indoor/outdoor living. In terms of massing and materials, Van Duysen also paid homage to the style and substance of classic European modernism. "There is a saying that 'Every Belgian is born with a brick in his stomach.' It's a testament to the



“I learned so much building this place with *Vincent*—how I want to live, what matters to me, what makes the most sense for my family,” says *Jenni Kayne*.



IN THE DINING AREA, PIERRE JEANNERET CHAIRS FROM GALERIE HALF SURROUND AN OAK TABLE FROM DIENST + DOTTER ANTIKVITETER.

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CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE THE KITCHEN FEATURES A LA CORNUIE RANGE, WATERWORKS SINK AND FITTINGS, AND DOUG MCCOLLOUGH ROPE STOOLS. TROOPER'S BEDROOM HAS A SERGE MOUILLE STANDING LAMP, A VINTAGE DANISH CHAIR, AND A JENNI KAYNE RUG. VIEW INTO THE LIVING ROOM AND HALLWAY TO THE PRIMARY BEDROOM.





significance of brickwork in our culture,” the architect says of his deftly arranged composition of volumes and planes that shift vertically and horizontally, inside to out. “The white lime wash softens the brickwork, but you still feel the strength and solidity,” he continues.

**FOR KAYNE, THE LIMITED PALETTE** of interior materials—including Dinesen oak, textured plaster, and French limestone—offers relief from the unavoidable visual stimulation of her work. “I am constantly surrounded by color and texture, so when I walk into this quiet, neutral home, it feels like a blank slate. I can start to see and think clearly again,” she insists. The palpable mood of tranquility extends to the interior appointments, which Kayne orchestrated in collaboration with interior designer Molly Isaksen. In addition to finely tailored seating slipcovered in linen, the rooms are sparingly outfitted with vintage Scandinavian furnishings and other midcentury pieces that share a similar economy of form and unpretentious bearing.

The one folly, if you can call it that, is the voluptuous spiral stair that leads to the house’s only second-floor space, a relatively compact home office that Van Duysen describes as “an ivory tower, a place of contemplation for both work and rest.” Kayne confesses, “The room is really just an excuse for the stair. We loved the idea of a single-story house, but a Vincent staircase is like a piece of art.” Ultimately, the same could be said of the entire house, an object lesson in the art of living well, where life and style dance to the same seductive beat. Welcome to the world of Jenni Kayne. ▲



ERIN SHIRREFF: HAIR AND MAKEUP BY ERICKA VERRETT USING R+CO BLEU AT A-FRAME.

**CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE** THE POOL PAVILION IS OUTFITTED WITH VINCENT VAN DUYSSEN TEAK SEATING BY SUTHERLAND FURNITURE. A VINTAGE BERTIL BRISBORG PENDANT LIGHT HANGS ABOVE AN URBAN ARCHAEOLOGY TUB WITH WATERWORKS FITTINGS IN THE PRIMARY BATH. THE DEN HAS A BRUNO MATHSSON CHAISE LONGUE, A SERGE MOUILLE SCONCE, AND AN ARTWORK BY ERIN SHIRREFF.

