

IN THE LIVING ROOM OF SUZANNE RHEINSTEIN'S MONTECITO HOME, A BESPOKE COCKTAIL TABLE LACQUERED IN FARROW & BALL'S MOUSE'S BACK STANDS IN FRONT OF A CUSTOM SOFA UPHOLSTERED WITH VICTORIA HAGAN LINEN. THE 18TH-CENTURY FRENCH CHAISE LONGUE IS COVERED IN A CLAREMONT FABRIC WITH SAMUEL & SONS TRIM, AND THE SLIPPER CHAIRS WEAR A FABRIC BY CAROLINA IRVING TEXTILES. AT REAR, CUSTOM WALL LIGHT BY STUDIO GIANCARLO VALLE. FOR DETAILS SEE RESOURCES.

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With an assist from Bories & Shearron Architecture, doyenne of L.A. decorating *Suzanne Rheinstein* crafts a getaway in Montecito

TEXT BY MICHAEL BOODRO PHOTOGRAPHY BY LAURA RESEN

LOUNGE CHAIRS FROM ANTHROPOLOGIE, PAINTED IN FARROW & BALL'S INDIAN YELLOW WITH CUSHIONS OF A NOMI FABRIC, LINE UP ALONGSIDE THE CUSTOM-COLORED POOL. LANDSCAPE DESIGN BY NANCY GOSLEE POWER & ASSOC.

For *Rheinstein*, a passionate gardener, the outside was as crucial and considered as the inside.



IN THE PRIMARY BEDROOM, A CUSTOM IRON BED FRAME IS DRESSED WITH FABRICS BY ROSE TARLOW AND CLAREMONT. BEDDING BY JULIA B. LINENS; THROW BY JENNI KAYNE; LOUIS XVI SETTEE IN A HAZELTON HOUSE PRINT. OPPOSITE SUZANNE RHEINSTEIN ON A VINTAGE WROUGHT-IRON CHAIR IN THE GARDEN.

N

o one would ever accuse designer Suzanne Rheinstein of being a minimalist. Her work merges a love of English country style, the gracious hospitality of her native New Orleans, and the laid-back attitude of Los Angeles. In her store, Hollyhock, for three decades she shared her passion for painted furniture, George III mahogany, blue-and-white porcelain, and plush upholstery. Her fabric line for Lee Jofa is full of fresh interpretations of florals, paisleys, and ikats.

And yet the getaway that she recently created for herself in Montecito is pared down, serene, and almost startling in its simplicity. Rheinstein had long been hoping to find a house in the area, even before the death in 2013 of her husband, Fred,

an influential television entrepreneur. “I had been trying for years to convince Fred. But he always thought I was trying to put him out to pasture,” she says with a laugh.

Her desire intensified when, two years after her husband’s death, she suffered an accident that shattered her left foot and elbow, required two major surgeries, and left her virtually immobile for months. “I was in the hospital, coming out of surgery and still anesthesia-addled, when I saw photos and a floor plan of this house,” she says. “It hit the market on a Friday, and that Monday I put in a bid without even seeing it.”

The house, built in 1971, “was in pretty horrible shape,” she admits. “But it had fantastic views of the Santa Ynez mountains.

The property was sad and overgrown, but it had a huge backyard with a circular pool—I joked it would be great for senior synchronized swimming.”

She turned for help to the AD100 team of Bories & Shearron Architecture. “From the outside, the house had a kind of 1970s Fire Island aesthetic,” says James Shearron. “It was totally of its moment, but it also had a kind of abstract, sculptural quality.” Adds Richard Bories, “The more we looked at it, the more we realized that it related to the early Montecito Spanish vernacular. There was real form underneath all that fashion of its moment. Now the house looks and feels shockingly different, even though we kept the building envelope.”

THIS WAS A VERY PERSONAL PROJECT, so Rheinstein could adjust the layout to reflect exactly how she wanted to live. What had been the dining room became a reading room—“One thing I knew for sure about this house was that I wasn’t about to be giving any formal dinners,” she says. The main bedroom and the guest room switched roles. “Now I can lie in bed and see the mountains.” The kitchen chairs are on wheels because her three granddaughters like to scoot around the room on them.

The reading room is centered by a tall mattress she refers to as her “‘Princess and the Pea’ bed,” where she sprawls with her granddaughters, who share her love of reading. “I think

RIGHT IN THE READING ROOM, THE OVERSIZED LOUNGE CHAIR WEARS A FABRIC FROM RHEINSTEIN'S COLLECTION WITH LEE JOFA. CUSTOM BOOKCASES INSPIRED BY THOSE OF HUBERT DE GIVENCHY. ON WALL, PLATES FROM ROBERT KIME; VINTAGE RATTAN CHAIRS FROM WILLIAM LAMAN.



LEFT IN THE KITCHEN, A 1960s RESTAURANT LIGHT FIXTURE HANGS OVER A TABLE FROM MARCH AND CHAIRS FROM WILLIAM LAMAN. ISLAND OF BASALT STONE; WATERWORKS SINK FITTINGS. ABOVE A METROSIDEROS TREE GROWS IN THE GRAVEL-COVERED COURTYARD.

KINUKO IMAI HOFFMAN. © 2021 RICHARD SMITH / ARTISTS RIGHTS SOCIETY (ARS), NEW YORK.



ABOVE RATTAN PIECES FOUND ON CHAIRISH AND ETSY SIT UNDER THE PERGOLA. CUSHIONS OF NOMI AND PINDLER FABRICS. RH COCKTAIL TABLES.



ABOVE A FREESTANDING LAUFEN TUB FORMS A STRIKING CONTRAST WITH ANTIQUES IN THE BATH. CUSTOM-PLATED WATERWORKS TUB FILLER.

of that room as my cabinet of curiosities," she says, full as it is of Morandi prints, Japanese brush pots, and Indian architectural fragments. Of the den, she admits, "It's the first time in my life I have hung a TV above the fireplace. But it's the place I spend time alone in the winter." The custom banquette is perfect for lounging languidly, she points out.

The furnishings throughout are a worldly mix, including boldly sculptural Portuguese furniture, antique Italian mirrors, African spears, and Etruscan wine vessels. Everything stands out against the simple planes and pale monochromatic walls, and small details take on large import, so she could justify splurging on hand-cast brass hardware and iron latches by van Cronenburg, a foundry based in Ghent, Belgium. But she also happily points out light fixtures from Pottery Barn: "I always say, go Rolex or go Timex. It's the middle of the road that is the kiss of death."

RHEINSTEIN IS A PASSIONATE GARDENER, and as a board member of the Garden Conservancy she has toured many of the world's most famous gardens. For her, the outside was as crucial and considered as the inside. She sought the advice of her friend

"I always say, go Rolex or go Timex," *Rheinstein* observes of her high-low mix. "It's the middle of the road that is the kiss of death."

the garden designer Nancy Goslee Power, and looked to two favorite landscape designers, Piet Oudolf and Álvaro de la Rosa, for inspiration.

The retreat has taken on even more importance since Rheinstein was diagnosed with cancer in 2019. "But life is good now," she says. "My cancer is stable, and I am having fun." She finds herself spending more time at the house than she expected, sometimes staying for two weeks at a time. The place, like a Matisse cutout or a late Joan Mitchell drawing, stands as a distillation of Rheinstein's art, a reflection of her hard-won knowledge of who she is, what she loves, and how she wants to live. It is the work of a master who has nothing to prove, and only the joy of her creativity to express. ▀



ABOVE RATTAN CHAIRS BY PALECEK SURROUND AN 18TH-CENTURY FRENCH IRON TABLE IN THE GARDEN. BELOW IN THE GUEST ROOM, ANTIQUE ITALIAN SIDE CABINETS FLANK A CUSTOM BED UPHOLSTERED IN A ROSA BERNAL FABRIC. BEDDING BY JULIA B. AND DEBORAH SHARPE LINENS; ROOM & BOARD THROW.



design notes

THE DETAILS THAT MAKE THE LOOK



OUTFITTED WITH A GRANITE SINK AND ZINC COUNTERTOP, THE FLOWER ARRANGING ROOM OPENS OFF THE GARDEN.

KICK PENDANT WITH REEDED SHADE; \$448. JAMB.CO.UK



ASSISI FLAT SIDE PLATE; \$85. ILBU.CO

AMALFI GOLDENROD PILLOW; FROM \$125. HEATHERTAYLORHOME.COM



CHINOISERIE TABLE BY SUZANNE RHEINSTEIN FOR THE LACQUER COMPANY; \$1,250. KRBNYC.COM

BOLINAS LOUNGER; \$898. SERENANDLILY.COM



THE HONEYSUCKLE-COVERED PERGOLA CONNECTS INDOORS AND OUT.



INTERIORS: LAURA RESEN
ALL OTHERS COURTESY OF THE COMPANIES

FLOAT LAMP BY STUDIO GIANCARLO VALLE AND L&G STUDIO; \$16,700. GIANCARLOVALLE.COM

“We spent so much time looking for the perfect color for the walls. Finally *Suzanne* picked up a handful of sand and said, “That’s the color!””
—Richard Bories



MONTECITO FLORAL FABRIC BY SUZANNE RHEINSTEIN FOR LEE JOFA; TO THE TRADE. LEEJOFA.COM



A GIANCARLO VALLE LIGHT FIXTURE HANGS ABOVE A GERALD BLAND TABLE IN THE LIVING ROOM.



EBONIZED BLACK WALNUT BENCH BY SAWKILL CO.; \$7,200. MARCHSF.COM



DINIAN ZAG FABRIC BY SUZANNE RHEINSTEIN FOR LEE JOFA; TO THE TRADE. LEEJOFA.COM

HARGETT BRIDGE-ARM FLOOR LAMP BY J. RANDALL POWERS FOR VISUAL COMFORT; \$1,089. CIRCA LIGHTING.COM



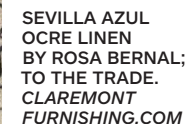
GUSTO PAINTED VILLA KERYLOS CHEST BY CASA GUSTO; PRICE UPON REQUEST. GETTHEGUSTO.COM

“For me, it’s not important that furniture pieces have provenance; they only need presence.”
—Suzanne Rheinstein

TABURETT; \$675. CHELSEA TEXTILES.COM



SEVILLA AZUL OCRE LINEN BY ROSA BERNAL; TO THE TRADE. CLAREMONT FURNISHING.COM



CIRCULAR STEEL CENTER TABLE; PRICE UPON REQUEST. GERALDBLANDINC.COM

WAVERLY MIRROR; TO THE TRADE. MADEGOODS.COM



SUMMER VASE BY FRANCES PALMER; \$1,900. KRBNYC.COM



LANARE PAISLEY FABRIC BY SUZANNE RHEINSTEIN FOR LEE JOFA; TO THE TRADE. LEEJOFA.COM