

"It's not modern, but it has a nice crisp look," says Reginald Adams of his 1930s Colonial-style house nestled in the Hollywood Hills. He designed the marble fireplace surround in the living room as well as the bookcase cabinet and gold-leafed drum table. Before the arched window is a 2nd-century Roman carved marble head from Quatrain.

Hollywood Revisited

Updated Glamour for a Designer's House in the Hills

INTERIOR DESIGN BY REGINALD ADAMS, ISID
TEXT BY HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA
PHOTOGRAPHY BY MARY E. NICHOLS

THERE IS A HOUSE of white wood siding tucked away in the hills of West Hollywood and screened from view by an iron fence laden with bougainvillea. It was once the home of the British character actor Sydney Greenstreet, memorable for his role in the film *Casablanca*. It might have been the home of Orson Welles. It is now the residence of designer Reginald Adams, who has filled the place with crystal chandeliers, nineteenth-century bronze figurines and Asian art to rival the instincts and

certainly the tastes of *Citizen Kane*.

But Adams was not entirely thrilled with the residence of the past celluloid heroes. "This was a 1930s Colonial-style house when I bought it," he says. "I redid the entire house—raised the ceilings, changed the windows and added eight-foot French doors and the white-marble fireplace."

The living room now has high, pitched ceilings following the angles of the roof and exaggerated vaults over elongated windows. Adams retained the glamour of old Hollywood

while adding light and space. He hung a bronze chandelier with a mixture of glittering rock crystals in the living room and let their shimmering presence be echoed by a collection of crystal paperweights, eggs, finials and candlesticks on a glass-topped iron table. "I've been collecting crystal for a long time," he explains. A nearby gold- and silver-leafed oval-back armchair is upholstered in quilted black leather. Small bronze figures from Greece, Rome and Asia are displayed along the fireplace mantel.



"I love beautiful old pieces, and surrounding them with contemporary works contributes to the sense that the space could only exist in this century and not another," he says. Art in the black-granite-paved vestibule includes a 1971 oil by Hans Burkhardt to the left of the doorway. A 3rd-century B.C. Greek figure, from Quatrain, rests on the white crystalline marble table.



On the wall behind the white chenille sofa is a Qing Dynasty silk tapestry, its brilliant embroidered colors faded with the years to soft taupes, browns and grays. Those neutrals are repeated throughout the room, complemented by the ebony floor and accessories such as the baroque carved mirror over the fireplace. "I use textures and rich fabrics but not that much color," he says. "I get tired of strong colors in a room. A room is beautiful because of its scale and the shape of the pieces within it—the textures of

fabrics play against one another." Adams's house is a world where the stereotypically grand is softened and accessible. The designer's own collection of Thai Buddhas lends serenity. "I want the look to be dramatic without being formal," he says. "It's more California that way."

Adams attributes that mix to his East Coast roots. "I had a New York approach, but I adapted to the California way of living," he remarks. "Sophisticated but not overly rigid."

The living room is separated from

the rest of the house by a black-granite-paved entrance hall where niches on either side of the front door hold antique Thai guardian lions. Outside, a pair of stone retrievers do the guarding with the aid of Adams's real-life Doberman, Alex. Adams designed the pedestal table of white crystalline marble in the adjacent vestibule. He prefers the unpolished, honed surface for its matte quality. "I love stone," he says. "Marble, granite—I even use chunks of rock crystal for accessories. Anything that has a



"I've been collecting for years, so I was able to bring in a lot of things I had," Adams says. Antique French overdoor panels add interest in the entrance hall. At left is a Tang-style marble Guanyin head. Beyond, in the dining room, is an early-20th-century Chinese coromandel screen. The dining chairs and the crystal-and-bronze-doré chandelier are Louis XVI style.



"I prefer smaller dinner parties—twelve to fourteen is ideal," he says. OPPOSITE: In the dining room, an 18th-century Chinese jar stands with a Song Dynasty vase and a Han Dynasty horse by a Tokugawa-period Japanese screen. The table holds antique Imari porcelain.

"It has the feeling of a private compound, but there aren't a lot of grounds to worry about, and it's very simple to care for," says Adams. ABOVE: A terrace off the living room features a fireplace and contemporary furnishings for informal alfresco entertaining.

down-to-earth feeling, even though it might be construed as grand." The Hans Burkhardt abstract study and other paintings are reminders of the designer's early training at the New England School of Art.

In the dining room, ceilings were raised and set with deep, square skylights that diffuse the light even at midday. The round marble table, also designed by Adams, is surrounded by Louis XVI-style dining chairs covered in cream leather. An early-twentieth-century black-lacquered coromandel screen offers glistening nocturnal tones. It is accented by a two-panel Japanese screen of two tethered falcons from the Tokugawa period. "I like the scale of Asian art," Adams

says. The Louis XVI-style crystal-and-bronze-doré chandelier is one of the designer's first acquisitions. "I try to buy things that I'll enjoy if the client doesn't," he says.

The vestibule is fitted with French doors that lead to a terrace landscaped with potted ficus, where views of the city stretch south of Sunset Boulevard. A fireplace and contemporary iron furniture make it a favorite room for alfresco dining.

At the back of the vestibule, a sinuous railing accompanies the stairs to the master bedroom. Two bedrooms were combined and the ceilings were raised to twelve feet. The iron bed draped in gray-and-white pinstriped silk is Adams's design, as are the

white crystalline marble pedestals used as night tables. Over the bed hangs a nineteenth-century Neoclassical Italian print. Nine-foot French doors with a bay window present another view of the city, yet the house remains quite private. "I like older buildings," Adams reflects, "because I'm able to create more atmosphere."

Adams, who has designed residences for celebrities such as Marlo Thomas and Chevy Chase, believes ideas about glamour have changed. "Today people want quality—they're not as interested in an overopulent look of conspicuous consumption. People are realizing that that's not the right thing to do. A room can still be elegant but in a simpler way." □





"I raised the ceilings, enlarged the windows and added French doors to let a lot of light in," the designer says. An Italian Neoclassical print hangs over the bed in the master bedroom. On a marble bedside table are an 18th-century Grecian pottery jug and a Neolithic pottery jar from China. Scalamandré striped silk for bed draperies.