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A Well-Traveled HOME



A jet-setting Angeleno injects his house with
ideas from around the globe

Around the world

THE FOUR SEASONS RESORTS

are celebrated for pampering their clientele in luxurious surroundings. Most guests, however, have one problem: They have to pack up and go home.

Joseph Fryzer came up with an ingenious solution to that dilemma. "I like to travel a lot," he says. "So I try to create my own little Four Seasons when I'm home." While building a new

home in Pacific Palisades, Calif., he impressed upon architect Robert Sinclair and designer Mark Cutler that he wanted to import the best aspects of resort living.



The paintings in the game room, above, and the living room, right, are by Eric Zenner. Previous page: A linen tent warms the double-height dining room.



The bed in the master suite, above, is nearly 8 feet wide and more than 7 feet long to accommodate the owner. All of the linens are customized. The master bath, below, provides stellar views of the ocean and mountains, and is cast in white onyx.

"The house had to be built for a guy who wants everything to be accessible," Fryzer says. "Looking straight out to the ocean with my office on the right and the dining room on the left. No rooms I would never go into. Everything has to be close, but I wanted high ceilings because I'm tall. Volume makes me feel comfortable instead of claustrophobic."

The home's exterior is Mediterranean in style but the interior bears Asian influences. "Inside, we steered away from the Mediterranean details and simplified as much as possible," Cutler says. "We were then freer to do a cleaner resort style."

Trained as an architect in Australia, Cutler is familiar with Far Eastern cultures. He made a bold statement of intent in the circular foyer with a large five-petal lotus that is inlaid into the polished concrete floor. The lotus, a symbol of prosperity, is a recurring design motif throughout the house. A 17th-century Thai Buddhist sculpture in the main living space embodies serenity.

With 12-foot-tall coffered ceilings, the living room focuses on the infinity pool that is strategically aligned





The Mediterranean-style exterior, above, was simplified to create more of an Asian look. Much of the wrought iron work was removed and two terra-cotta planters that double as fountains were added.

with the horizon of the sea. The house itself feels as if it is floating. The endless expanse of the Pacific not only dominates the view but also the senses. Large glass pocket doors welcome the balmy sea air indoors. Radiant heating beneath the clay-colored concrete floors warms bare feet. "We call the house Villa Cielo, referring to the big sky up here," says Fryzer, a New York transplant who has lived in Los Angeles for 25 years. "This is a unique microclimate different than anywhere else in L.A. We have ocean breezes, but it is not foggy. There is no marine layer up here, so I keep the doors open a considerable amount of time."

The wedge-shaped living room is furnished with a chenille-covered sofa that curves around a walnut coffee table of Asian sensibility. The carpet is a reproduction of an Agra, woven in shades of tan and orange. Cutler says, "We tried to keep the color palette neutral because the spaces are large and we wanted it to feel loose and easy, like resort-style living." Above the fireplace hangs a flat-screen TV that shows more than the evening news. "Cameras in the pool project images of swimmers onto the screen," Cutler says.

The living room opens onto the vast patio and pool that are outfitted for recreation. "When I travel,

I try to remember things that are unique, and when I built this house, I used ideas that go back 20 years," Fryzer explains. "The swinging couches on the patio came from Jamaica, the infinity pool from Cabo San Lucas, the swim-up bar from the Cayman Islands. If I see something I like, I incorporate it into the house."

The dramatic fire pit—recessed into the pool and surrounded by banquettes—is an idea Fryzer borrowed from Setai in South Beach, the first hotel built in the United States by the Aman resort hotel's sister company, GHM. "It is a great place to hang out and watch the sunset," Cutler says.

An adjacent outdoor dining space covered by a canvas tent includes a circular mosaic-covered table that seats 10, as well as a barbecue and pizza oven. "I have a lot of places where I like to dine," Fryzer says, adding that his private chef often serves them at the bar, in the office and at the pool.

Even in L.A., alfresco dining is not always possible. The dining room, topped with a double-height ceiling, is pure theater. "We came up with the idea that we could turn this into a fabulous indoor tent," Cutler explains. "Tenting the space brought the scale down and made for a fanciful way of eating dinner."

Linen is swagged and suspended from a central soffit to create a tent-like look, while lighting behind drapes of the same linen casts a soft glow at night. Cutler also incorporated elephantine lampshades. "We thought a chandelier was too much of an object," he says. "Joe saw this idea in a restaurant and thought we could play off of it. He plays with it by installing green and red lights at Christmas."

The walnut table seats 12 and is surrounded by leather chairs proportioned for Fryzer's 6-foot-3-inch frame. Cutler added velvet Venetian-print covers and small pillows with Japanese obi-style silk cords for added comfort for smaller guests.

"We played with mixing a contemporary and an old Asian feel, putting in a stainless steel fireplace but adding framed silk screens of old Japanese kimonos,"

he says. A trio of Buddhas blesses the scene while broad-leafed plants in tall pots add a tropical note.

Dinner parties are serviced from the professional-quality kitchen equipped with stainless steel appliances, terra-cotta granite countertops and mahogany cabinetry. Here, Cutler installed a peaked skylight "to get light into every part of the house." Windows off of the breakfast room look onto the patio. A well-stocked wine cellar is announced with oil paintings of fine vintages, such as a portrait of Chateau Lafite-Rothschild 1966.

The resort-style spirit of the home manifests itself in the bar and billiard room, where a wall-sized underwater portrait of Fryzer and his girlfriend, Melynda Pecora, hangs. In the portrait, the two are swimming toward one another. A massive aquarium

The custom sectional simplifies the living room layout, below, and allows the view to be the main attraction. Polished concrete extends seamlessly into the loggia.






built into the wall is viewable from the bar and from the office on the other side. Inside, a spotted moray eel dodges in and out among the rocks.

As the co-chairman of PCS Inc., a telecommunications and real estate development company, Fryzer mainly works from home these days. His office, walled in walnut with silk insets, is comfortably proportioned with chenille-covered sofas and a limestone fireplace. From his custom desk topped with chocolate Imperador marble, Fryzer gazes out at the ocean. "He wanted a warm office," Cutler says. "He likes the room so much that he has breakfast here on most mornings."

A screening room adjacent to the living room is walled in glass with heavy curtains so visitors can keep abreast of the home's activities or view movies in privacy. A pair of chenille swivel chairs turn toward the burgundy velvet seats positioned behind. "The idea was to pop up the color in the smaller rooms like this TV room or the office so that each space had its own separate identity," Cutler says. "Fryzer is a tactile guy—he loves chenille, velvets, comfortable fabrics."

Walnut stairs and a handmade wrought iron railing with etched glass lotus motifs lead to the second floor, where three more Buddhas stand at attention. "The master suite is the only room upstairs and is designed as a retreat so it is entirely self-contained," Cutler explains. The sitting area features sofas, chairs and a fireplace. The custom bed, 8 feet wide and 7 feet long, requires custom linens. Here, the ocean view is unparalleled. The master bath boasts a fireplace and flat-screen TV as well as a Jacuzzi surrounded by amber onyx. A window in the shower peers out to the ocean.

Cutler discusses the difficulty of decorating such a big house: "You are trying to lend intimacy to a large room with 13-foot ceilings." He shares a few tricks of his trade. "The Buddha at the entrance is a museum-quality piece and it carries the design of the house. Fireplaces are also big gestures. We custom-made the big sofa in the living room so the room didn't feel cluttered. You want to create maximum impact without having a huge impact on the budget."

Asian yet modern, open and sybaritic—the house embraces it all. The question is, simply, if you bring the spirit of a resort into your home, do you still need to check into the Four Seasons? Fryzer believes you should. "I love traveling and I love coming home because wherever I've gone, this is still topping it, right here. Every time I escape, it makes me feel like this is better. Ibiza, Thailand, South Beach—none of them combines mountains, ocean and the effect of this weather that makes this very special for me." 

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