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A first look at Riordan's makeover
of Getty House

by Hunter Drohojowska-Philp

Hizzoner's Digs

Two years ago, Mayor Richard Riordan created the charitable Getty House Restoration Foundation and asked his significant other, Nancy Daly, to freshen up the city's mayoral residence in Hancock Park's Windsor Square. Unlike Tom Bradley, Riordan didn't

plan to inhabit the English Tudor-style Getty House, built in 1921. But alert to the city's image problem, Riordan seized the opportunity to transform a stuck-in-the-'70s palace of linoleum and avocado shades into a gracious symbol of the city's post-riot rebirth, suitable for entertaining and hosting visit-

ing dignitaries. Given the city's shabby purse, everything, naturally, had to be done for next to nothing.

Then came the Northridge quake, and what had begun as a modest face-lift turned into a major reconstruction job undertaken by hundreds of civic-minded Angelenos: philanthropists, designers, electricians. Now

The library features an original carved wooden molding that cites a line from Shakespeare's *Henry VIII*. Solid-color fabrics were used to create a soothing environment. The bookshelves are lined with newly printed classics from the Franklin Mint.

photographs by Tim Street-Porter



The entryway is defined by a grand stairway curling to the second floor. A massive Tudor-style desk dominates the mayor's home office, and visiting big shots can luxuriate in the guest suite, with sitting room (painted a new Sinclair shade dubbed Getty Green), bedroom and bath.

the fruits of their labor and generosity are ready for inspection, as a glowing Getty House—our answer to New York's Gracie Mansion—opened to the public on October 26 for four weeks of free tours. It's a friendly, flowery oasis for an O.J.-weary citizenry, symbolizing, says Daly, "a feeling of hopefulness."

Historically, the house is heavy on commerce, with a touch of show-business glamour. Architects Gabriel Meyer and Philip Holler—who also designed the Egyptian and Chinese



Getty House's garden office and adjoining bath feature matching window treatments, with period banded tiles adorning the loo. Currently, the coordinator of activities works out of this suite, but a future mayor who chooses to live here could convert it into another bedroom.

theaters in Hollywood—created the three-story, herringbone-patterned red-brick residence. Perhaps lovelier than the house itself is the one-acre garden laid out by renowned landscape artist A.E. Hanson. In the late 1950s, the Getty Oil Company bought the property, along with a number of others in the vicinity, hoping to create a corporate headquarters. When neighbors protested, Getty rented the house to such tenants as the late Lee Strasberg, founder of the Actors Studio, and his wife, Anna. The couple moved out in 1975, when the house was given to the city.

Twenty years later, the goal for Getty House is to “reflect a style indigenous to Los Angeles within the constraints of an English Tudor manor,” says Adele Yellin, chairperson of the foundation’s Designer Liaison Committee. Although 19 designers lent a hand, the result is a cohesive one of the outdoors brought in, all beige and green with a strong accent on botanical motifs. The gardens will be the site of talks on local history, a reading series and promotions by the Chamber of Commerce. “We’re going to turn this into a celebration of L.A.,” says Polly Williams Kroeger, executive director of the foundation. And not a moment too soon.

Tickets for Getty House tours are available at no cost on a first-come basis through Ticketmaster. Sundays are Family Days, featuring special programs. For information, call 213-243-9453. ■