

## DETAILED LOOK

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PHOTOGRAPHY BY MATTHEW MILLMAN

THE GREATEST CHALLENGE WHEN DESIGNING A LARGE HOUSE IS CREATING INTIMATE SPACES WITHIN ITS EXPANSE. It was a challenge happily met by the design team behind this 20,000-square-foot residence in Beverly Hills. Originally completed eight years ago by Rob Sinclair, AIA, of Sinclair Associates Architects, Inc., in Westwood Village, the owners felt the home was due for a change. On their wish list: the addition of two new wings that would accommodate a theater, wine cellar and tasting room, spa, and morning room for casual dining. The clients also wanted to change the overall aesthetic of the house and its interiors by trading a starchy Spanish formality for a much warmer Tuscan ambience.

Sinclair stripped most of the structure down to the framing and brought in Los Angeles-based interior designer Marla Sher, of Marla Sher Design. They had worked together previously on two other large projects, and Sher's design approach—much like that of a European interior architect who completes a house from the shell inward—had proven itself to be complementary to Sinclair's. "The key to a big house is to make it livable," says the architect. "I like to play things down and keep everything peaceful to create harmony." For this house, he incorporated curved ceilings throughout, often using a groin vault. He explains, "Where walls start to go from straight to curve at about six feet, the room has a more intimate scale, yet you can still go up to about 14 feet high."

Another harmonious component is the quality of light in the house, for which Sinclair gives Sher credit. "To bring in that warm light requires interplay between the architect and designer," he says. "They must

### STYLE SELECTION

This exquisite piece, by Ferdinand Duvinage, circa 1880, features highly decorative marquetry, patented in 1877. *Cloisonné Marquetry Jardinière*, price available upon request; [ablevypb.com](http://ablevypb.com)



**INTERIOR DESIGNER** Marla Sher, Marla Sher Design

**ARCHITECT** Rob Sinclair, Sinclair Associates Architects, Inc.

**HOME BUILDER** Steve Ferqueron, JD Group, Inc.

**BEDROOMS** 5 **BATHROOMS** 12 **SQUARE FEET** 20,000





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develop textures within the rooms—the stone floors and antique finishes and woods—that affect the quality of the atmosphere. It's a skill." To do it, "I broke the project into two parts," explains Sher. "The first was conceptualizing and detailing all the architectural interiors—the custom floors, walls, ceilings, doors, cabinets, iron railings and so forth—while simultaneously developing the material selection and color palette. The interior decorating followed closely behind."

For the latter, Sher traveled with her sophisticated and well-traveled clients to Italy, so the trio could choose the exact materials used throughout the house. "I went with the wife to the stone yards of Pietrasanta, a mountain village in Northern Italy, to hand select slabs of marble; some were carved even before being shipped back," says the designer.

In Venice they stayed at the famed Hotel Danieli, where the husband praised the various wood finishes. Sher later reproduced those gleaming





THE HOUSE IS PROOF POSITIVE THAT  
THE SECRET TO MAKING **LARGE SEEM WARM**  
IS ALL IN THE DETAILS



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**HOME WORK**

The wife's office features a 1650s desk with an Italian gilded wood base and *scagliola* top. The ebonized walnut rococo coffee table is 19th-century Portuguese.

Venetian glass manufacturer yielded one-of-a-kind crystal glasses etched with gold inlay. "They took a year to complete," says Sher, "but it is a beautiful collection for the wine room."

At Antico Setificio Fiorentino in Florence, where the looms are hundreds of years old, "We selected yarns and had samples woven for fabrics taken from old patterns," Sher says. She also worked with stone fabricator Pitti Mosaici to design the stunning heraldic crest that lies in the center of the husband's bathroom floor.

Back in Beverly Hills, Sinclair and Sher connected with Los Angeles builder





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queron. "It was one of the top projects we've ever done," Ferqueron says. The owners have a good eye for color, finishes and fabrics, and when they made a decision, they stuck with it." The project took three long years to complete, but, says Ferqueron, "They stayed the course."

While the clients are family oriented, the decision to expand their large house reflected a desire to entertain regularly and often, and on a very grand scale. To that end, there are now two formal dining rooms, one on the main floor and the other in the wine cellar, as well as an informal dining room, or breakfast room, for daily use. That room features a number of large windows

#### FINE VINTAGE

Oversized chairs upholstered in aged leather surround the table in the wine cellar. The Tabriz carpet is from around 1880; a 17<sup>th</sup>-century French tapestry hangs on the wall.

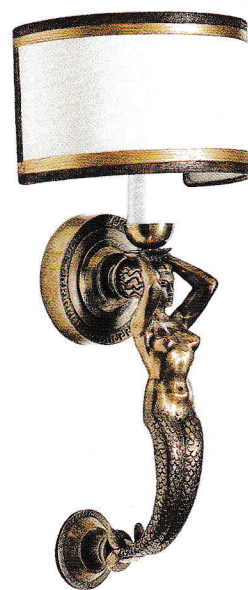




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The Old World feel of the house is dramatically underscored in the theater, with its coffered wood ceilings and curved sofas that were customized to include three individual recliners and concealed amenities. "There was nothing on the market that evoked this high glamour, so Ina Kloss, a designer in my office, created them," Sher says. "Great care was given to both style and comfort."

Indeed, Sher personalized the grandeur of the house at every opportunity. From the brilliant blue sky and trellis painted on the ceiling of the wife's office to the mosaic mural in the steam room "borrowed" from a 15<sup>th</sup>-century villa in Palermo, Sher's work is proof positive that in a home of great scale, the secret to making large seem warm and intimate is all in the details. **L**



**STYLE SELECTION**  
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