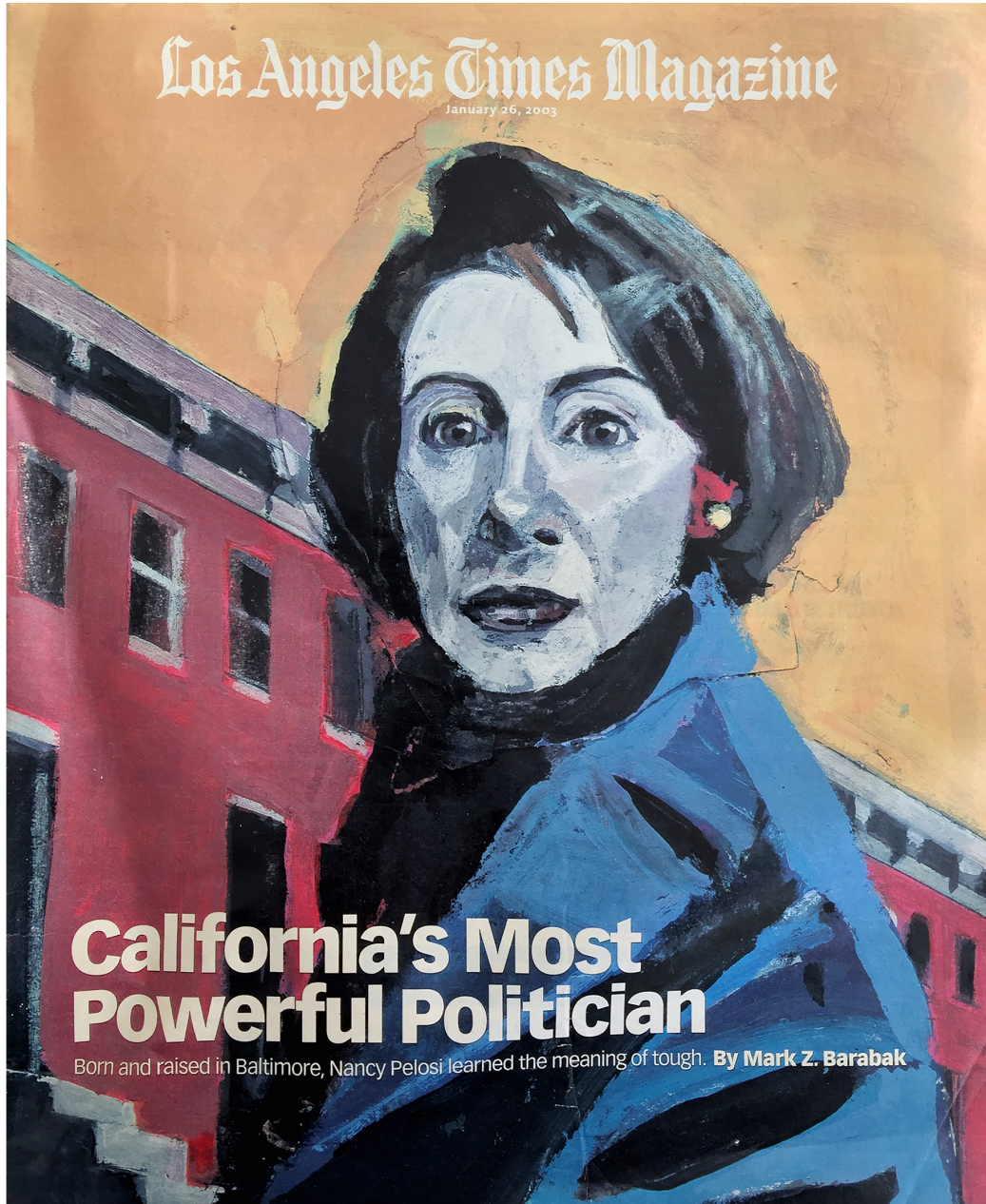


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California's Most Powerful Politician

Born and raised in Baltimore, Nancy Pelosi learned the meaning of tough. **By Mark Z. Barabak**

style
home



natural instincts

A Cool Palette and Sensuous Wooden Accents Set the Scene in an East-Meets-West Hollywood Hills Home

BY EMILY YOUNG / PHOTOGRAPHED BY DOMINIQUE VORILLON

The years hadn't been kind to the Hollywood Hills hideaway Peter Lawrence bought in 1997. Inside and out, a blizzard of white assaulted the eye. From the mirrored walls to the Berber carpet to the glaring stucco, everything about the tri-level house screamed "pass."

"It was an extremely ugly modern box," he says. Fortunately, the '80s time warp didn't prevent the then-Netscape marketing executive from envisioning the place as a stylish sanctuary away from his pressure-packed, frequent-flier job. All it needed was an intelligent update, one that indulged his taste for contemporary Italian

furniture and Asian antiques in an atmosphere of quiet luxury.

From the outset, Lawrence was a fan of his new home's open floor plan. So he decided to remodel only where it would accentuate the 12-foot ceilings, improve flow or harmonize far-flung spaces. "I loved the huge rooms and the different levels," he says. "It was almost like an urban loft set against the hillside."

Architect James Harlan made small but crucial changes that lent the building instant gravitas. He replaced aluminum sliders with floor-to-ceiling French doors. He cut away part of a wall to link the kitchen and dining room, creat-

ing views of a rear terrace and the pool. He also wrapped the living room fireplace in cherry and black granite, sensuous materials repeated elsewhere in the house.

To breathe life into the interiors, designer and former Lotus Antiquities shop owner Bradley Blair first softened them with colors inspired by nature: celadon on walls and sand on ceilings. "The house has a great art gallery feel and, when you get a glimpse outside, it appears to be in a bamboo forest," he says. "I wanted to capitalize on that."

Then it was a matter of establishing the décor's yin and yang by balancing the sleek Euro-

pean-look furnishings Lawrence favored with a few of the ancient artifacts Blair had found in the East. As Lawrence puts it, "I didn't want to live in a brand-new showroom of a house."

For the master bedroom upstairs, Blair combined sculptural chairs by designer Michael Berman with two Japanese dressers arranged side by side to form a bureau.

Each pairing of Occidental and Oriental reinforced the notion that, regardless of period or provenance, good design is timeless. Take the wardrobe with round brass lock plates, for instance. Once part of a 19th century Chinese family compound, it's just as appropriate here

beside a 20th century American spiral staircase. "I used this piece because it's so vertical and expresses a symbolic duality," Blair says. "In Chinese folklore, the squareness represents earth and the circles represent heaven."

Throughout the project, Blair ordered custom upholstery and bedding sewn from rich, earth-toned Gretchen Bellinger fabrics. His choices, all comforting to the touch, include sturdy wool frises and felts as well as plush linen and silk velvets. And, where a little pampering underfoot was desirable, he rolled out wool rugs or wall-to-wall sisal. Finishing touches were left to Lawrence, who incorporated pieces from his art collection (an

For the second-floor living room, a low-slung Minotti sectional sofa and B&B Italia armchair are juxtaposed with an 18th century Chinese scholar's bed used as a coffee table and an early 18th century Chinese screen as *objet d'art*. Opposite: In the dining room, a glass and metal table designed by architect James Harlan and slender Ligne Roset chairs slipcovered in Ultrasuede complement the blond hardwood floor. Designer Bradley Blair framed three large mirrors in cherry to match a sideboard and simulate picture windows.

