



BELIEVER

A YOUNG ENTREPRENEUR HIRES L.A. DESIGN COLLECTIVE COMMUNE
 TO BRING OUT A HOME'S BACHELOR-PAD POTENTIAL

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Entrepreneur Derek Mattison envisioned "a stylish
 village" in the heart of the Hollywood Hills. The
 Angeles home by architects Buff & Hansen, **opposite**,
 Design collective Commune did a
 top-to-bottom renovation; the poolhouse is
 furnished with a vintage Arne Jacobsen Egg chair
 from Galerie Hoff and Piero Lissoni's Softwall sofa
 for Living Divani. For details see Sources.



Many of the best homes
in Los Angeles's Nichols Canyon remain tantalizingly out of sight. The likes of Manna Cass, Steve McQueen, and Ava Gardner have lived in residences cantilevered into the canyon walls, but the properties are hidden behind heavily fortified gates with multiple security cameras or discreet wood arches covered in vines.

A particularly understated metal gate greeted Derek Mattison the day he drove his 1966 Jaguar into Nichols Canyon to see a midcentury Buick & Hensman house that had just hit the market. The Detroit native and founder of ESN Interactive, an online advertising and digital marketing company, was on a yearlong property search, determined to move out of a Laurel Canyon house that "didn't get good light," he says, "and wasn't a great place to entertain." He'd already considered a mansion in Hancock Park and had tried to put in an offer on Silvertop, a 1963 spaceshiplike icon by John Lautner (the owners weren't interested).

Mattison liked what he found behind that metal gate: a two-story, three-bedroom dwelling (formerly producer Jerry Bruckheimer's address) tucked behind pepper trees. "It had a good vibe," he says, "and the potential to become a stylish villain's lair—it seemed inspired by '60s movie characters like Thomas Crown, Diabolik, or James Bond."

The home also needed work. Decades of renovations had resulted in what Mattison describes as "a built-with-duct-tape feel. All the auxiliary structures were a little off, interior columns were in inconvenient places, and the landscaping was a random collection of trees and shrubs. The whole property needed to be retouched in some way."

Mattison hesitated, and two days later the house had sold to someone else. But when that deal fell through, he "boldly approached the owners and offered the original asking price. The home was his—as was a major renovation project.

Enter Commune. Mattison had seen some of the L.A. collective's work and felt its take on modern bohemian design and architecture would be the right fit (the team's projects include creative direction for Silta cosmetics as well as the earth-chic Ace Hotel & Swim Club in Palm Springs). "I had a good feeling when I met them," he says. "They not only presented mocked-up elevations of what the spaces would look like, they also had pictures of all these cool '60s Brazilian furnishings I'd never seen before." →

Reclaimed-oak paneling gives the double-height living room a warm, rustic feel. The floor lamp on the right is from Moe's Home Collections. The floor lamp on the left is from Moe's Home Collections. The floor lamp on the right is from Moe's Home Collections. The floor lamp on the left is from Moe's Home Collections. The floor lamp on the right is from Moe's Home Collections. The floor lamp on the left is from Moe's Home Collections.

"COMMUNE POINTED ME IN THE DIRECTION OF DESIGNERS LIKE VLADIMIR KAGAN AND SERGIO RODRIGUES," SAYS MATTISON. "THE MORE I LEARNED, THE MORE I HAD TO HAVE."



The kitchen is outfitted with a bank of integrated Miele appliances, including a coffeemaker, tiled oven, wall oven, and warming drawer. The tiled oven and warming drawer are by Bertoni, and the wall oven, refrigerator, and built-in espresso machine are by Bessant-Fellows steel sit.



FROM LEFT: The outdoor dining area features a picnic table and benches by Piet Hein Eek from Frozen Fountain and a Franz West chair light from Vinkelrova. The living room sofa is a vintage Piero Lissoni design, with kimono plows by Commune; the vintage bar cart is from J.F. Chen.



Pam Shamshiri, one of Commune's four founding partners, admits to a few doubts about the commission. "I'm a huge fan of Buff & Hensman's work, but I was afraid the building had strayed too far from its roots," she explains. "Then Derek looked me straight in the eye and said, 'I promise you, I will do it right and go the whole nine yards.' So I said okay."

Over the next two years, interior walls were removed, windows and skylights were returned to their original locations, doors were made taller to accommodate Mattison's lanky six-foot-two-inch frame, and the poolhouse, added in the '80s, was taken down to the studs and rebuilt (Mattison now calls it "the fancy cabana").

Shamshiri envisioned true-to-period painted-stucco exteriors. Mattison wanted teak, but when that proved too expensive, he landed on the idea of paneling walls inside and out in planks of reclaimed oak after dining at Gjelina, a restaurant in nearby Venice that makes ample and beautiful use of that material. When it came to furnishings, though, Mattison deferred to Commune. "It was a great education," he says. "They were able to speed up my learning curve by pointing me in the direction of designers like Vladimir Kagan and Sergio Rodrigues. The more I learned, the more I had to have."

"Derek loves researching," Shamshiri says. "Once he decided he liked a particular designer or look, he fully embraced it." California contemporary artists—among them



In the master bedroom, the seat cushions on the walnut daybeds are of Milano wool by Kravet. The vintage cocktail table is from Nicky Kaye, and the walls are covered in grass cloth by Astik; the underfoot are a bold Key Shadow rug by the Portland-based artist. Opposite, a Stan Bitters wall sculpture is from Ton 10. Visible from the master bath, the tub and fittings are by Boffi; the walls and ceiling are sheathed in tile by Heath Ceramics.

sculptor Alvin Allen, ceramist and sculptor Stan Bitters, and lighting designer Robert Lewis—were also included in the mix.

Today the house feels like a stylish modern chalet that could just as easily be found in a Swiss ski town. Light streams through massive windows and sliding doors, playing off the moody, rustic oak. All the rooms offer views of either the pool deck or the canyon below, and the first-floor living spaces open directly to the outdoors.

Mattison has hosted parties for as many as 100 people here, but gatherings of a dozen or so are more the norm. He has a high-tech Boffi kitchen equipped with a 24-foot walnut counter—but he's no master chef. "The kitchen looks cool, but all I use it for is making coffee and cocktails," he admits. "I can count on one hand the number of times I've used the stove."

During the warm months (most of the year, that is) the main pool deck becomes the living room. "I keep all the doors open and the music on and move from lounge chair to pool for hours and hours," Mattison says. "Plus I have a TV out there and a kitchen, so it's like having an outdoor house."

Is this his dream home? "I'll probably have a bunch of them in my life," he says. "But this is my dream home for now." □

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