



Jewel tones and plush fabrics reign in the opulent living room, which features a showstopping wall that was meticulously handpainted by French artisans.





# IN LIVING COLOR

LEGENDARY LOS ANGELES- AND PARIS-BASED INTERIOR DESIGNER  
TIMOTHY CORRIGAN RETOOLED BEVERLY HILLS' SPRAWLING LA COLLINA  
ESTATE INTO A THEATRICAL KALEIDOSCOPE OF COLOR, TEXTURE AND JOY.

BY KATHRYN ROMEYN // PHOTOGRAPHY BY AMY BARNARD





Clockwise from top left: A Lucite chandelier creates a gleaming focal point in the blue lacquered artist's studio; there's no shortage of drama in the dining room thanks to mirrored surfaces, peacock feather-backed chairs and a glamorous gold leaf ceiling; the master bedroom is outfitted almost entirely in pink velvet; in the breakfast room, designer Timothy Corrigan brought the outdoors in by experimenting with a fabric made from glycerin-infused real leaves.





nnovation has never been a byproduct of playing it safe. Just the opposite, in fact. Leaps of faith are where greatness lies. So it's only fitting it took an equally iconic name to reimagine legendary architect Gordon Kauffman's trend-bucking 15,000-square-foot Beverly

Hills estate, La Collina, completed in 1924. Timothy Corrigan, interior designer serving royalty from Hollywood to Europe and the Middle East, was hired by clients with little desire to live in an abode exactly like their neighbors'. "They said that in LA, the creative capital of the world, they were very surprised that most homeowners don't take any creative risks," says Corrigan of the owners, who sought to honor the landmarked house's history by updating it to reflect the Los Angeles of today.

"Rather than filling the house with art, they wanted each room to be a piece of art in and of itself," says Corrigan, who spent four years bringing this concept to life with each saturated space—whether functionally driven or led by fantasy—evoking a sense of wonder and whimsy. "By and large, I find that Americans are somewhat afraid of color," he comments. "They have a fear of 'getting it wrong' in their homes, and thus tend to play it on the safe side."

In a telling fact, the brave and spirited couple wanted turquoise and shocking pink to dominate the palette. The designer, who's well versed in unusual projects, from royal palaces to mega-yachts, admits he'd never before worked on one in which every single room was designed to break design rules and boundaries, thus becoming its own strong visual statement.

It sounds like a tall order, but Corrigan definitely delivered the definition of eye

candy. There's a brilliant blue lacquered dining room with peacock feather-backed chairs and a gold leaf ceiling; a projectile aquarium dedicated to 100 seahorses; an 18th century-style carriage-turned-daybed; and a master bedroom clad entirely in pink velvet. Continuity was of no concern. Instead, Corrigan ensured each room "would be its own series of wows." Some 80% of what's inside was custom made, with pieces sourced from just about every continent (from Africa to Europe, Asia to South America). Corrigan brought a Baroque-art historian who'd designed opera sets to assist on the original concepts, and hired the team of artisans tasked with restoring the Palace of Versailles to meticulously paint the palatial living room.

That room is a special kind of wonderland, with a stage at one end backdropped by a 17th century gilt-wood door surrounded with carved *putti*. Opulent is an understatement. The walls of this jewel-toned spectacle were inspired by Catalan artist Josep Maria Sert, known for Rockefeller Center's murals. On top of white gold leaf, over the course of six weeks, the French artists painted subtle, personalized murals (even the owners' dogs make an appearance in a beach scene), topped with a combination of real silk curtains, fabric soaked in plaster and painted to look like silk curtains, and painted walls with the same look. "The deliberate intention was to create an effect that leaves the viewer not knowing exactly what is real or not," says Corrigan, whose crowning touch was dipping cut-crystal chandeliers in chrome for a contemporary take on a classic fixture.

Throughout the home, liberal use of mirror and glass—in a variety of finishes—keeps that illusion alive. "We used mirrors not as something

to look in, but as a reflective surface and to open up the spaces, because Mediterranean houses of the '20s tended to be fairly dark," says Corrigan. "It was a very heavy house, and we wanted to bring some joy and fun to it." That was accomplished, too, with layering details—and materials. At the center of the plush living room, a statement-making bouquet of rock crystal roses emerges from a pouf bench, wrapped with a ribbon "as if it's a gift being given," Corrigan says. In the artist's lacquered atelier, a Lucite chandelier gleams like a mirage; four walls of chartreuse leather wrap around a hefty brass desk in the office for perhaps the most vivid work setting known to man; and a living space off of the pool is carpeted in luxe artificial turf.

If there's one unifying concept the home embraces, it's a sense of elegant theatricality. Otherwise, references span the globe and centuries of design. Corrigan intentionally maintained the sobriety of the Mediterranean-inflected exterior architecture with the exception of bespoke yellow, pink and orange Perennials fabric draping over the front door and pool pavilions. The entry's marble-inlay floor—which abuts a long barrel-vaulted hallway leading to a pair of dueling taxidermy unicorns—was inspired by the Doge's Palace in Venice, for example, but updated with polka dots, stripes and glass portholes looking into the hammam below for a playful modern-day twist. The master bathroom, a funhouseworthy mosaic of marble and mirrors, with a glass tub, drew from the famed 1916 Vizcaya villa in Miami, while the screening room feels like one of Napoleon's battle tents, with side tables that look like drums.

While composing this fantasia, Corrigan tried many "wonderful new things." One of the most experimental—and experiential—is the lush breakfast room, encased in real leaves infused with glycerin that keeps them fresh, supple and green (for up to 10 years). An artisan in South Africa made the junglelike fabric, which not only tents the octagonal room but was made into curtains, and the tree trunk-base table. The finishing touch? A mistletoelike chandelier custom made in Paris. "It is a totally magical room," says Corrigan.

The designer, whose latest book is *The New Elegance: Stylish, Comfortable Rooms for Today* (\$60, Rizzoli), has an imagination that knows no bounds. His solution for the library—he can't stand a room going unused—was to make it the Library of Liquor, installing refrigerated brass wine coolers into some of the bookcases, sinking a bar into the floor and covering the walls in faux tortoiseshell. The real star of the space, however, is the lit-from-within life-size Superman, made of rock crystal and Swarovski crystal, flying overhead. "He's positioned as if he's just swooped in through the windows overlooking the city, mid-flight," says Corrigan of the commissioned showstopper.

A slightly more subdued, separate master wing does provide a bit of a retreat from the theatrical, but it's anything but mundane. "You cannot have a series of wows without some interludes of calm," says Corrigan of the rooms of respite. Still, inside today's La Collina, exuberance reigns. Says the designer of his most abundant undertaking: "Much of this project was outside of my personal comfort zone, and that is *exactly* what I loved about it." ■

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A life-size crystal Superman commands attention in the faux tortoiseshell-adorned Library of Liquor, the designer's solution for making use of the home's library.