

Pillows crafted from Fortuny fabrics dot the built-in banquette overlooking the Pacific. The tabletop tiles are Spanish antiques.

true romance

When a design-savvy homeowner set eyes on this

perfectly situated Malibu beach house, it was love at first sight





Interior designer Patti Skouras had the 10-foot-long dining table (left) custom made. Pillows crafted from Fortuny's Uccelli line grace the 18th-century Swedish chairs. Below and opposite: In the courtyard and on the back terrace, citrus trees and bright tropical blooms further contribute to the home's exotic island feel.



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love story first began 20 years ago, when interior designer Patti Skouras introduced a long-time client to a certain someone she had been spending a lot of time with. That certain someone wasn't a charming businessman or a charismatic doctor, but rather a stunning beachfront home that she had worked on in Malibu—and, much like the plot of a romantic comedy, it belonged to someone else. "My client had a major emotional response to the house," says Skouras. "She never forgot about it."

So when the designer got word that the owners had plans to sell, she didn't have to think twice about who should get the news next. "It never even got listed," Skouras recalls. "My client and her husband jumped on it immediately." But

unfortunately, they would have to wait a little longer before their fairy-tale got its happy ending; having played host to a number of renters over the years, the residence was showing serious signs of wear. Working with the original architect, Marc Appleton, Skouras spent a year and a half getting the place back to its former glory—and then some.

While the home had first been designed to capture a rustic Greek island aesthetic, the new homeowners wanted a more traditional, sophisticated European country house feel, so Skouras had to switch gears. Out went the distressed and reclaimed pieces, and in came richly finished antiques, as well as some brand new favorites such as the lapis lazuli-topped table in the dining room. "It's sensational," she says.






Inside and out, Santa Barbara sandstone columns and limestone flooring provide texture and warmth. The pool is clad in Bisazza tiles. The reading nook (bottom) boasts pillows made of Fortuny fabrics in Sevres and Fragonard. Opposite: The front door's bold hue is custom. Try Glidden's Regatta Bay for a similar look.



"It's a semiprecious stone, so it's like having a gigantic piece of jewelry in the middle of your home."

Luckily, Skouras was able to restore many of the beautiful, hand-worked built-ins throughout by making some simple adjustments. She traded in the rustic Turkish kilim rugs that were once used to upholster the chestnut seating nook in the library for lavish fabrics in a range of inviting hues. A nice bonus: "They stand up to a large family—everyone plays and eats in that room, and the seats still look great," she says.

Another element that Skouras and Appleton were able to save is the now-you-see-it-now-you-don't punches of color afforded by the quirky exterior paint job: Each window's trim boasts a different hue, from aqua and deep blue to flashy pimienta red. "When you look at the house from a distance, the varied palette makes it seem like it's a series of smaller homes, exactly like a little Greek village," says Skouras. "It was one of the previous owners' most beloved touches."

The home's newest inhabitants have developed their own ways to enjoy the place—the conquest made even sweeter by the years-long chase. They love hosting guests on the upper terrace, where the breathtaking views of the Pacific Ocean are enough to put everyone under the home's spell. "It's really hard to imagine anyone ever giving this up," says Skouras. "It's a dream."  For more information, see Sources, page 121.