

# SETTING THE STAGE

DESIGNERS SHELDON HARTE AND JOHN HENRY KAUFMAN OF HARTE BROWNLEE & ASSOCIATES RETURN A PROVENCAL-STYLE HOME IN CARMEL VALLEY TO ITS FRENCH ROOTS

TEXT BY ABIGAIL STONE | PHOTOGRAPHY BY GREY CRAWFORD

The terrace offers a variety of seating options. Michael Taylor's Bay sofa and Cord Wing chairs from Walter's Wicker create an outdoor living room while Michael Taylor's Bay Lounge chairs cluster around the firepit. The fabric is from Perennials. The landscaping, sculpted from plants indigenous to the area, evokes the French countryside.



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“We’re creating backdrops for people to live their lives,” says interior designer Sheldon Harte of Harte Brownlee & Associates who worked with his colleague John Henry Kaufman to redesign this French Colonial-style home in Quail Meadows in the Carmel Valley. The previous owner had ignored the home’s architectural cues in favor of something “prim and proper,” remembers Harte. The clients, a retired couple who love to play golf and entertain, wanted a comfortable “easy to live with” retreat more in keeping with the home’s Provençal vibe.

When Harte first saw the house “the walls were covered in a paint that had a gold metallic tint”. So he and Kaufman started by stripping down the interiors. After treating the walls to look like raw plaster, they brought in artist Maria Trimbell to paint delicate frescos. Flimsy fixtures were replaced with new lighting, much of it custom-made by Paul Ferrante. Furniture, some of it designed by Harte Brownlee, including the headboards in the bedrooms and the bookcases in the library, takes the house “back to its roots.” Natural fabrics layer the rooms with texture, underlining the home’s rustic, approachable aesthetic.

**ABOVE** In the entry hall, a trio of jade disc sculptures from Formations frames the landscape. “They layer the view and almost feel like binoculars,” says Harte.



**ABOVE** In the dining room, a table that came with the house is surrounded by Dessin Fournir's Lena side chairs. Slipcovers, made from Travers Tazza embroidered linen, cover the host chairs. A custom chandelier by Paul Ferrante hangs from a ceiling embellished by artist Maria Trimbell. Although the door surround that connects the dining room with the living room seems original to the house, it's a custom design by Harte Brownlee. The paintings are by Kathy Jones, a Laguna Beach artist.

**LEFT** A sofa by Jasper, a daybed from Formations and two Dessin Fournir club chairs with star ottomans from Gibson via Paul Ferrante lead the group of seating around the majestic stone fireplace in the living room. Antique wine screw floor lamp from Lee Stanton. Clarence House embroidered linen draperies and Conrad Shades.



**ABOVE** Custom-made linens created from Jim Thompson fabric top a limed oak custom designed headboard by Harte Brownlee. The matching nightstands are from Harte Brownlee. The bedside lamps are by Paul Ferrante.

**RIGHT** Taking color cues from an adjoining guest bathroom, a custom headboard, upholstered in Rogers and Goffigon fabric, graces a bed draped in custom linens. The bedside lamps are by Gregorius Pineo, the night tables are by Harte Brownlee. The carpet is by Hart's Rug & Carpet in Costa Mesa.



**BELOW** The sofa is upholstered in lambswool plaid from Pollack and Associates. The walls are covered in Middleton Mocha tweed from Philip Jeffrey's. The draperies were custom made of Byron embroidered wool from Schumacher. The deep modern Moroccan rug is from Harts Rug and Carpet. The custom bookcases are from Harte Brownlee.



Because the clients' time at the house extends through fall, they wanted one room that was "a nesting place to watch TV," says Harte. Harte's response was the library. With its sofa clad in lambswool plaid by Pollack and Associates, its walls sheathed in Philip Jeffrey's Middleton Mocha wool tweed, Schumacher's Byron embroidered wool draping the windows and a "thick Moroccan rug you can sink your toes into," the room exudes cozy. In warmer weather, the focus

is on the patio, which mixes chairs from Walter's Wicker with pieces from Michael Taylor's Bay collection and offers up the opportunity to enjoy the "sensational view."

For Harte, who is now working on the couple's Newport Beach home, it's all about giving clients wonderful spaces in which to enjoy themselves. The stage is set. Let the beautiful life begin. **CH**