

PHOTOGRAPHY Tom Bassett
WORDS Keith Flanagan

DRINKS ON THE house

This mid-century modern Beverly Hills home was built for hosting, with a glam bar room worthy of a Hollywood movie at its heart

DINING AREA

All four walls feature wallpaper that the home's designer, Nina Takesh, designed, inspired by her Mediterranean travels and favourite tree. 'I see that tree every summer and all I can think about are the chirping crickets and it just takes me back,' she says.

Wallpaper, Nina Takesh for belarteSTUDIO. **Table** by Nina Takesh. **Chairs**, Enrico Girotti. **Dishes, glassware and candelabras**, all West Elm

BAR

Nina moved the walnut bar from the corner to the centre of the room. 'People can come behind the bar, make a drink, talk with a bartender and move around,' she says of the social layout. 'There should be circulation in a room.'

Stools by Nina Takesh. **Table lanterns** and **wall sconce**, Visual Comfort & Co. **Antolini Viola Calacatta countertops**, Royal Stone and Tile. **Tiles**, Marokk. **Wallpaper**, Nina Takesh for belarteSTUDIO. **Walls in** Jade Romanesque, Benjamin Moore. **Herringbone wood floors**, Bel Air Flooring



Nina Takesh made a cash offer. That's how confident the designer was in a Beverly Hills home yet to hit the market, built in the 1950s for Leslie H. Martinson, the film director behind the original *Batman*.

'The energy is what drives me to these homes,' says Nina, a self-described serial house flipper. 'And the energy was there.'

Although time-worn, the home had maintained its mid-century layout (it never left the Martinson family's hands) with memories of vintage Hollywood soirees still hanging in the air. Nina could just picture the types of stylish gatherings: screenings in the projector room, cocktails in the walnut-panelled bar, maybe a late-night dip in the pool. It was, and remains, a home built to entertain.

Leaning into its cinematic past, Nina embraced the social layout – the bar room, larger than even the primary bedroom or the kitchen, was quintessential to its character – while upgrading every inch with fine materials and flourishes.

Nina started by creating a foyer (it originally opened abruptly onto living space) and thus a new first impression. With marble chequerboard tiles and arched doorways that peek into rooms, it gives guests a taster of what's to come in a home that relishes rich materials. 'We wanted a little cashmere. We wanted mohair. We wanted a lot of marble. We wanted brass. We wanted living finishes,' says Nina. 'We wanted things that really elevate a space.'

The true crowd-pleaser is the refashioned bar room, where a central marble island steals the spotlight. Closer inspection reveals a hand-hammered nickel sink in the counter – a £4,000 splurge – while Nina enhanced the whole experience with what she calls 'the world's smallest powder room' (surprisingly, the original home only had en suites), concealed behind wainscoting and Mediterranean-inspired wallpaper. 'It's dying for a cocktail party,' she jokes.

Throughout the home, Nina refined how each space feels, offering glamorous twists along the way. The tranquil main bedroom feels like a cabin on a boat, thanks to a glass door along the pool's edge; the expanded kitchen hardly feels like a kitchen at all, thanks to elegantly discreet features. Lighting, meanwhile, is an unsung hero. 'If you want to look beautiful, if you want to entertain, if you want to have the mood lighting that you require, then lighting has to be considered,' she says. Working with Visual Comfort & Co's in-house team, Nina created a lighting plan that avoids harsh shadows and casts each room in a Hollywood-worthy glow.

There are designers who gut with abandon, with mass appeal in mind, but Nina wasn't designing this house for just anyone. 'I know it is going to be owned by somebody who will love and appreciate the details,' she says of the design-driven buyer she has in mind. 'It really is all about those details and the love and effort that is put into this home.' Certainly, this is now a house ready for its close-up.

ninatakesh.com

LIVING ROOM

'We purposely made the fireplace very linear,' says Nina, noting that an ornate fireplace might have overwhelmed a space already full of strong furnishings. 'Simplicity sometimes is overlooked.'

Photograph of Françoise Hardy, Getty Images. **Wall sconce**, Visual Comfort & Co. **Floor lamp**, West Elm. Custom **fireplace**, **sofa**, **ottoman**, **rug**, **coffee table**, **side table** and **chairs**, all by Nina Takesh



KITCHEN

Similar to the bar, the cooking space was moved from one side of the room to the middle, framed by an arched doorway. 'You have to not only consider architecture, but also the placement of all the elements within it and how that's going to look from different perspectives,' says Nina.

Stools by Nina Takesh. **Calacatta Oro countertops** and **splashback**, Royal Stone and Tile. **Vase**, Olive Ateliers. **Walls in** La Catedral, Portola Paints. **Wall sconces**, Visual Comfort & Co



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THE DESIGNER

Known for blending timeless elegance with bold sculptural moments, LA-based designer Nina Takesh – who has a YouTube channel and her own furniture line – has a knack for renovating homes. This project was close to home as she once lived on the same street.

THE PROPERTY

Near Rodeo Drive, this one-storey home has a foyer with two doorways on either side that connect a living room and a bar with a cloakroom. Following the entry, an open-plan family room – which looks out onto the garden and pool – connects two sides of the home: the first has a kitchen, office and bathroom, while the other leads to the main bedroom and two guest rooms, all en suite.

CLOAKROOM

This moody space has a glamorous effect from the hanging pendant. 'You look fabulous here no matter what because of the way the light reflects into the space,' says Nina. 'Every time I'm in there, I'm like, "oh wow, I didn't know I look so young!"'

Custom stone **vanity**, Royal Stone and Tile. **Mirror**, Wayfair. **Walls** in Nostalgia, Portola Paints. **Pendant**, Visual Comfort & Co. **Vase**, DOIY



ENTRANCE

Noting that even a small piece of furniture can 'ground' an entry, Nina placed a small table in the newly built foyer, positioning a light fixture above it for an added dose of symmetry.

Ceiling light, Visual Comfort & Co. **Vase**, CB2. **Walls** in Seapearl, Benjamin Moore. **Marble floor tiles**, Royal Stone and Tile. Similar vintage **table**, Vinterior



MAIN BEDROOM

A perk from more lenient 1950s building regs, the pool is only a couple of feet from the house and Nina leaned into that by replacing a window with double doors along the pool's edge. 'It feels like you're in a boat,' she says. 'That's one of the greatest moments in the house.'

Bed and **cushion** by Nina Takesh. **Sheets**, Parachute. **Bedside table**, CB2. **Sconce**, Visual Comfort & Co. **Walls in** Seapearl, Benjamin Moore

MAIN BATHROOM

'When you're in this room, all you want to do is touch the walls,' says Nina, who drenched the space in Calacatta Viola Rosso marble and dusty rose Roman clay walls.

Marble surfaces, Royal Stone and Tile. **Mirrors**, Perigold. **Wall sconces**, Visual Comfort & Co. **Walls in Prayer**, Portola Paints. Similar **bath**, BC Designs

