



Welcome home.
Nancy Marks in the
entry hall of her
Southern California
house. Sies Marjan
shirt, \$695. shop
BAZAAR.com. Sies
Marjan pants, \$895,
and shoes, \$695.
siesmarjan.com.



A FASHIONABLE LIFE

*Top interior designer Michael S. Smith uses
eclectic decor as a canvas for quiet family
life at the Beverly Hills home of
Sies Marjan chairman Nancy Marks.
By Alison S. Cohn*

Photographs by Dominique Vorillon

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The sunroom offers clear views of the garden. Opposite page: Marks on the patio.



“The back staircase is filled with family photos, and somehow it feels like we’ve lived here forever.”

WHEN NEW-ESTABLISHMENT American luxury label Sies Marjan appeared two years ago, seemingly out of thin air, it simultaneously offered the shock of the new through its bright palettes and artful draping and something distinctly Old World in its traditional Italian silk jacquard and crepe de chine fabrics. Financial backer Nancy Marks, 69, put her full trust in creative director Sander Lak, a young Dutchman who previously served on Dries Van Noten’s design team, and he encouraged her to reconsider her own approach to dressing. “I was always a monochrome navy and gray person,” says Marks. “Sander helps me be bolder and unafraid of color: His strong yellows and pinks and greens put a lilt in my step, and, I have to say, people notice!”

For Marks, who is married to the investor Howard Marks, the leap of faith has paid dividends professionally as well as personally:

Sies Marjan now sits beside top European brands like Balenciaga and Prada at 75 stores around the world.

This latest chapter in Marks’s career has brought the longtime Angeleno to Manhattan—although there were also personal motivators at play. “My kids went to college here,” Marks explains. “When they said they were never going back to L.A., I said, ‘Okay, I’m coming wherever you go.’” As chairman of Sies Marjan, Marks works out of the company’s garment district atelier, and she and her husband now count a Park Avenue aerie as their primary residence. For the Markses, though, the thought of staying away from L.A. was unthinkable. They commissioned their go-to interior designer and close friend, Michael S. Smith—the star decorator known for bringing grand English country house style to the Obamas and Hollywood moguls alike—to renovate a 1930s Mediterranean-style ➤



Blue chip. Sies Marjan dress, and shoes, \$695. Similar styles available at siesmarjan.com. Jewelry (worn throughout), Marks’s own.

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Clockwise from left: Marks in her “tree house.” Sofas upholstered with Robert Kime fabric. A guest bedroom.

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From left: The entry hall’s repurposed marble floor. Marks relaxes in the sunroom.



five-bedroom house in Beverly Hills for when they need a break from the New York hustle. More romantic and intimate in scale than the Brentwood manse where they raised two children, the two-story home has smallish, beautifully proportioned rooms that Marks describes as “very Ozzie and Harriet.” “The back staircase leading from the upstairs bedrooms to the kitchen is filled with family photos,” she says, “and somehow it feels like we’ve lived here forever.”

As befits the Southern California weather, the house was built for an indoor-outdoor lifestyle, with most rooms having a terrace and French doors. The dining room, with its Pierre Frey slipcovered chairs and ornate 18th-century Italian glass chandelier, leads out to a patio that surrounds the pool and eucalyptus-

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and gardenia-filled gardens. Marks loves to sit outside and have her coffee under the bougainvillea-draped wraparound pergola. For Smith, the pièce de résistance is the sunroom: “It’s this beautiful pavilion that opens out on three sides to the garden in three different directions. It’s a room that you could only do in a climate where you can leave all the doors open.” The bright, cozy space, which is fitted with rustic wicker chairs from Baldacchino and reproduction 18th-century Portuguese tile, is the center of family life when the couple’s children and grandchildren are in town.

“When I come here, I find a great deal of peace,” Marks says. “It’s like going back in time to a moment when life was much simpler and easier, with no cell phones or computers, just an old wooden swing hung from a giant oak tree for my grand-

daughter, Rosie.” When Marks requires isolation, she retreats to her “tree house,” an upstairs study complete with a working fireplace. The final touch: the room’s ceiling, which is painted to match the floral Zuber wallpaper.

Much like the Sies Marjan label, Marks’s home bridges past and future. In addition to the antique chandeliers, the house features custom light fixtures designed by the sculptor Philippe Anthonioz, who studied under Diego Giacometti. (“He’s done a lot of work for us,” says Marks.) The floor in the entry hall also has a unique pedigree: “We put in this reclaimed black-and-white marble floor from a convent in the south of Spain,” says Smith. Sofas from the family’s former residence in Brentwood share space with knickknacks from Paris flea markets. The result is an

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eclectic, livable aesthetic that feels authentic to the house’s architecture. “This house hadn’t been touched since it was built,” Marks explains. Even the vegetation has largely been preserved as it was, give or take a few embellishments. “A neighbor called and thanked us for not tearing down the original house and building a monstrosity,” she says. “It wasn’t a massive renovation that was needed but more a restoration of its original beauty.”

Still, for their next home base, the couple may veer away from the comfortable, lived-in feel of their Beverly Hills house to borrow some avant-garde design cues from the Sies Marjan label. “I’ll tell Howard for the next house that he has to consult Sander on the palette,” says Marks. “So we’re going to have highlighter-yellow couches.” ■

Color theory: Sies Marjan shirt, \$695, skirt, \$1,495, and shoes, \$695. siesmarjan.com.

Design within reach. Sies Marjan sweater, \$995, and skirt, \$495. siesmarjan.com.

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