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LIVING



HOME + GARDEN

Good Vibrations

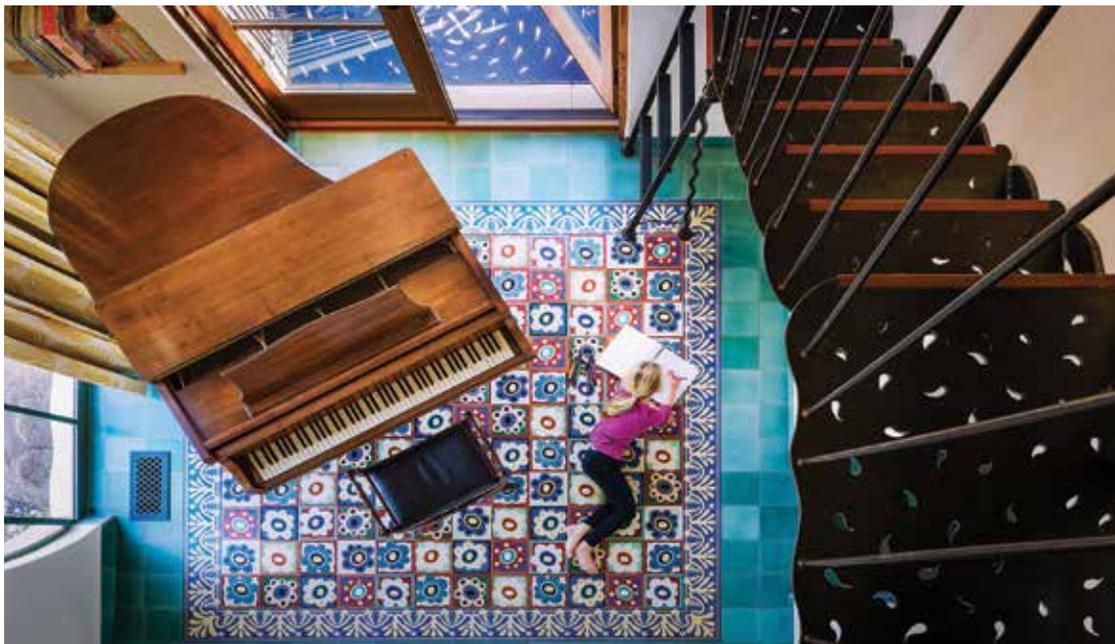
A match of design, setting, imagination, and artanship infuses a hillside house with energy.



BY JOAN TAPPER PHOTOGRAPHS BY JASON RICK



Interior living spaces flow easily into one another in a Santa Barbara hillside home, while oversized doorways and expansive windows underscore the family's wish to be able to watch animals and birds that might wander through the yard. Kid-friendly details abound, like the chalkboard door panel on the refrigerator.



Architect Jeff Shelton added his signature tile and wrought iron fabricated by his brother, Dave, throughout the home. In the daughter's room (above) he punched out a favorite teardrop design in the metal staircase and on the Juliet balcony, so sunlight would make interesting shadows below. In the kitchen (top), Shelton says, "The wood island is like something you can rub against."

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JASON RICK and his wife, Meggen Maloney, knew what they were looking for when they decided to build a house in the hills above Santa Barbara. “We felt a pull to live somewhere that still felt a bit wild,” Rick says. “Once we found an untamed lot with a little elbow room, we approached [local architect] Jeff Shelton to build a magical place for our kids to grow up in. As you can see by his designs, Jeff has seemingly never lost his childhood imagination.”

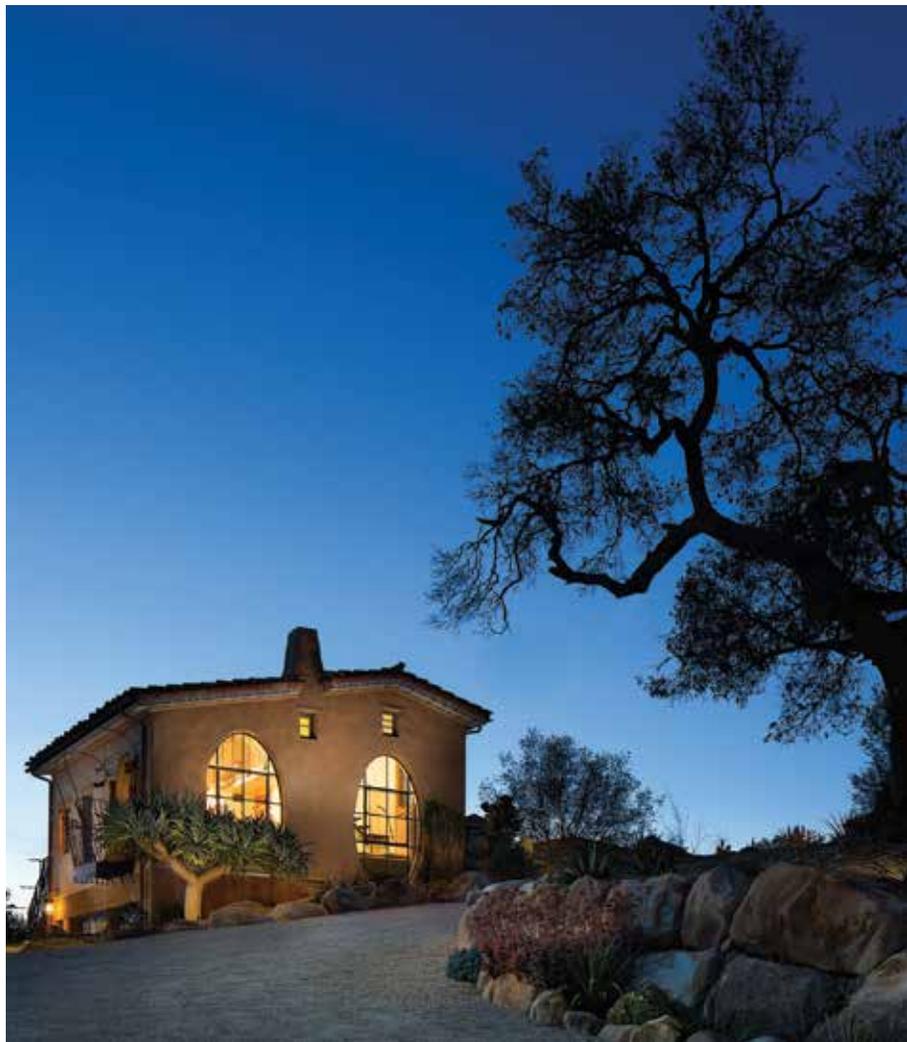
The resulting home—with a kids’ wing at one end, a great room and kitchen in the center, and master bedroom and offices on the other end—is lighthearted and whimsical, full of the colorful tile and wrought iron emblematic of Jeff Shelton’s work (jeffsheltonarchitect.com). There’s also a pool and a separate cabana-guesthouse. And it all nestles easily into a beautifully landscaped setting of boulders and greenery.

Moving big rocks to prepare the site was the accomplishment of stoneworker and sculptor Anders Johnson. “Once we solved that,” Shelton says, “you have fun with the spaces and views and fun tiles and metal shapes. The kitchen and living room open to the yard, which is what the family wanted. They look out to the ocean.” The sight lines of the rooms allow Maloney to keep an eye on the kids from the kitchen and her office.

Shelton designed a collection of tile patterns for the floors, fireplaces, kitchen walls, and pool sides. In their daughter’s room the tile has a flowery motif; her brother’s floor showcases griffins and dragons. The architect collaborated with his brother, Dave, on iron light fixtures, staircases, fireplace surrounds, and balconies, incorporating >



Dragons and griffins set the theme for the tile in the son’s room (top), one of two bedrooms in the children’s wing, along with an art space and a loft. The giant oval windows appear like eyes peering into the night (below). Grading and preparing the sloped, boulder-filled site called for careful planning to keep a low silhouette for the neighbors and provide needed access for vehicles.



A backdrop of boulders interspersed with greenery surrounds the pool, with its contrasting blue-and-white patterns and stripes. All the hardscape and stone was culled from the site and carefully placed to create a natural look.



A striped awning on a Dave Shelton metal pergola provides shade for the two-room cabana-guesthouse, where swivel chairs invite guests to linger by the fire after a swim.





a teardrop pattern into many of the details, including pendant glass bulbs they commissioned from Saul Alcaraz at Santa Barbara Art Glass.

Rick has great admiration for what he calls the “merry band of artisans” that Shelton amassed to bring his drawings to life. In addition to Johnson, Dave Shelton, and Alcaraz, the team included contractor Dan Upton and landscape designer Margie Grace, who matched “the whimsy of the building design with plants that also didn’t take themselves too seriously,” Rick says.

When it came to interior design, the family turned to Elizabeth Vallino (elizabethvallinointeriors.com). “I had to respond to the architecture 100 percent,” says Vallino. “How do you design around a house with such personality without being bland? You need a high tolerance for pattern. It’s not for the faint of heart.”

To mesh with the many irregular shapes of the house, Vallino avoided rectilinear furnishings and floor coverings. In the living room she used B&B Italia’s Bend couch, which has an asymmetrical footprint, and set it on a freeform pony rug with an interesting texture. “Everything is pretty much natural materials,” she says.

For the kitchen, with its striking blue tile and Murano-inspired lights, Vallino went to Raoul Textiles and had the company’s Ocean Flowers pattern printed in a perfectly matching hue on a silk fabric to coordinate the window treatments. The centerpiece is a stunning walnut island set on purple cabinets and flanked by Norman Cherner vintage-style bar stools.

In the master bedroom, which has a bold espresso-and-white fireplace, Vallino used another sympathetic Raoul textile with an expansive but subtle leafy design.

Shelton incorporated kid-friendly accents throughout the house, like a crawl space above the living room where children can lie down and watch the adults below. He also put sleeping lofts in the kids’ rooms. Vallino furnished them with stacks of thin mattresses inspired by the French firm Caravane. The mattresses can be taken apart for play and restacked at night.

“It’s a really successful house,” says Vallino, “such a good energy house.”

Rick adds: “We love it!” ♦



Tiny wrought-iron avian sculptures provide an artful nod to the birdlife just outside the master bath (above), where the sleek tub holds pride of place. A loggia (top) with its own fireplace offers another spot to sit and dine with a view. Opposite: The master bedroom comes to life with bright and subtle patterns and an array of textures—from the stone hearth to the thick rug and the silk gauze drapery.

