

A DESIGNER'S DREAM

Josette Murphy transforms a historic Palos Verdes home into a light-filled family haven.

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After raising their family on the Peninsula for more than two decades, a Palos Verdes Estates couple decided to spend most of the year outside the South Bay. Once their primary home became a second home, they set in motion plans for a renovation. By giving the property a much-needed upgrade, they knew their family could continue to enjoy quality time together and entertain guests in the special place they called home for so many years.

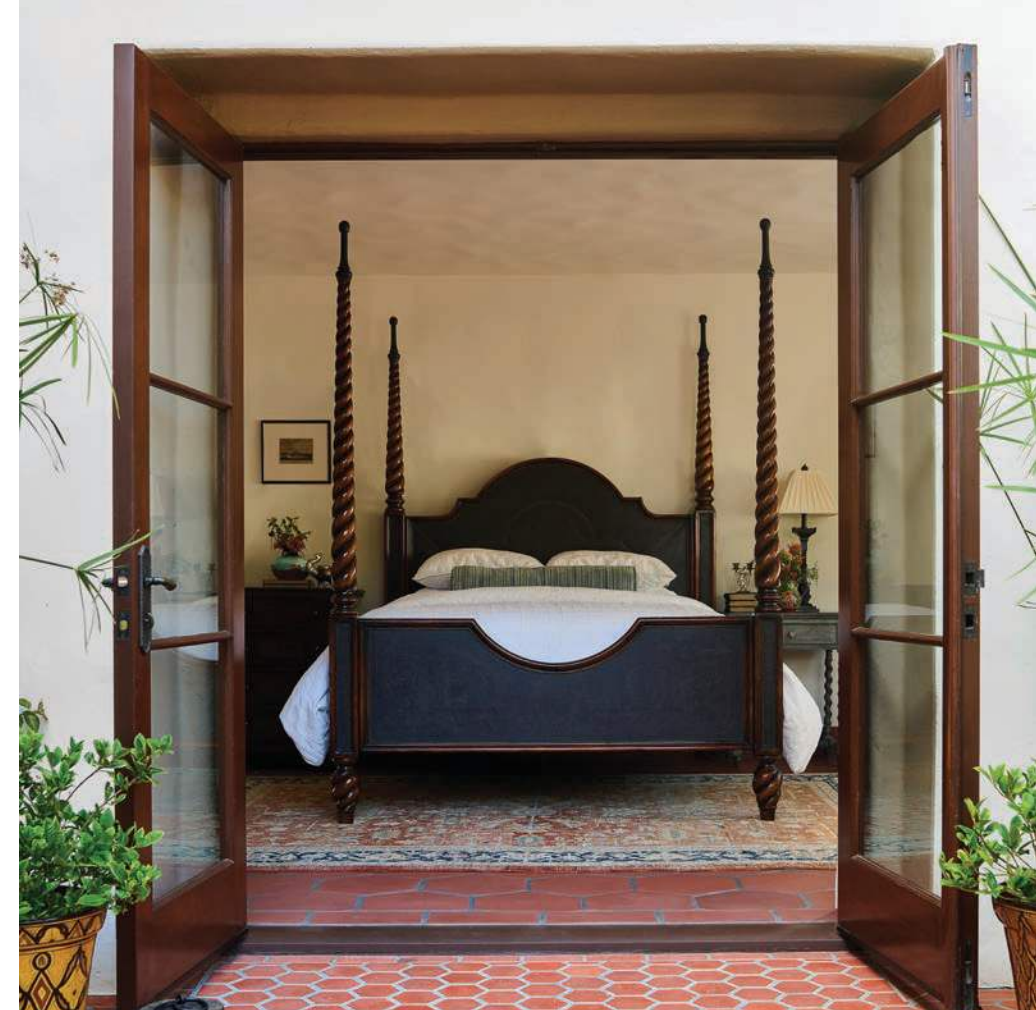
Enter Josette Murphy, founder and principal of About:Space in El Segundo. A professional interior designer for nearly 30 years, Josette was immediately enamored with the project—an opportunity to turn a charming 1940s California Spanish home filled with unique features into a beautifully curated retreat.

“We grew to appreciate Spanish Revival architecture and Moorish design elements. It was as if we were standing on the shoulders of the giants that came before us,” say the owners.

With little to do structurally, Josette and her team could focus on refreshing and updating the interior environment, furnishings and accoutrements. “This project was a labor of love and all about the decorating!” says Josette.

She started with updating surface finishes, lightening the textured plaster





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walls, refinishing the oak wood floors and reviving the terra-cotta tiles. Then they turned their attention to the furnishings and decor.

Fortunately, the well-traveled clients had an extensive collection of antiques, art and unique accessories to work with. “When a client has amassed a good collection, it’s a pleasure to begin with that foundation so that the result, thank goodness, will never look like everything came from one showroom,” says Josette. “This family travels the globe, and they love to collect. We gave the best items new life by moving them to a new setting or giving them an upgrade.”

Those improvements included reupholstering wood-framed seating, repairing and refinishing well-worn antiques, restoring several heirloom-quality area rugs and reframing treasured artwork.

Josette also sourced new area rugs and designed upholstered bed frames for the bedroom suites. She commissioned new custom upholstered seating and new window coverings with unique accent details, all blended with care to achieve a completely fresh look.

“We added a whole new layer to bring this house from dark and heavy to light and bright with a cream-and-blue palette of ‘today,’” she shares.

The integrity of the home remained intact, including uniquely shaped doorways and arches, colorfully painted decorative motifs and sculptural fireplaces. To balance some of these dramatic moments, Josette chose a muted color scheme and embraced natural light for a softer touch. The home suggests an international flavor, layered with artifacts, antiques, tiles and textiles from around the

world while paying homage to its coastal roots with comfort, openness and ease.

Family treasures, lovingly displayed, add visual interest without overwhelming the space. Notable touches include light bed linens with colorful custom accent pillows and elegant new window treatments in every room that frame but do not obscure the breathtaking ocean views.

Josette recognizes that many homeowners fear that a modern design approach might take away the historic character that makes this area and its homes so special. But as she proved with this successful project, Josette sees a path forward—marrying the past with the present.

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