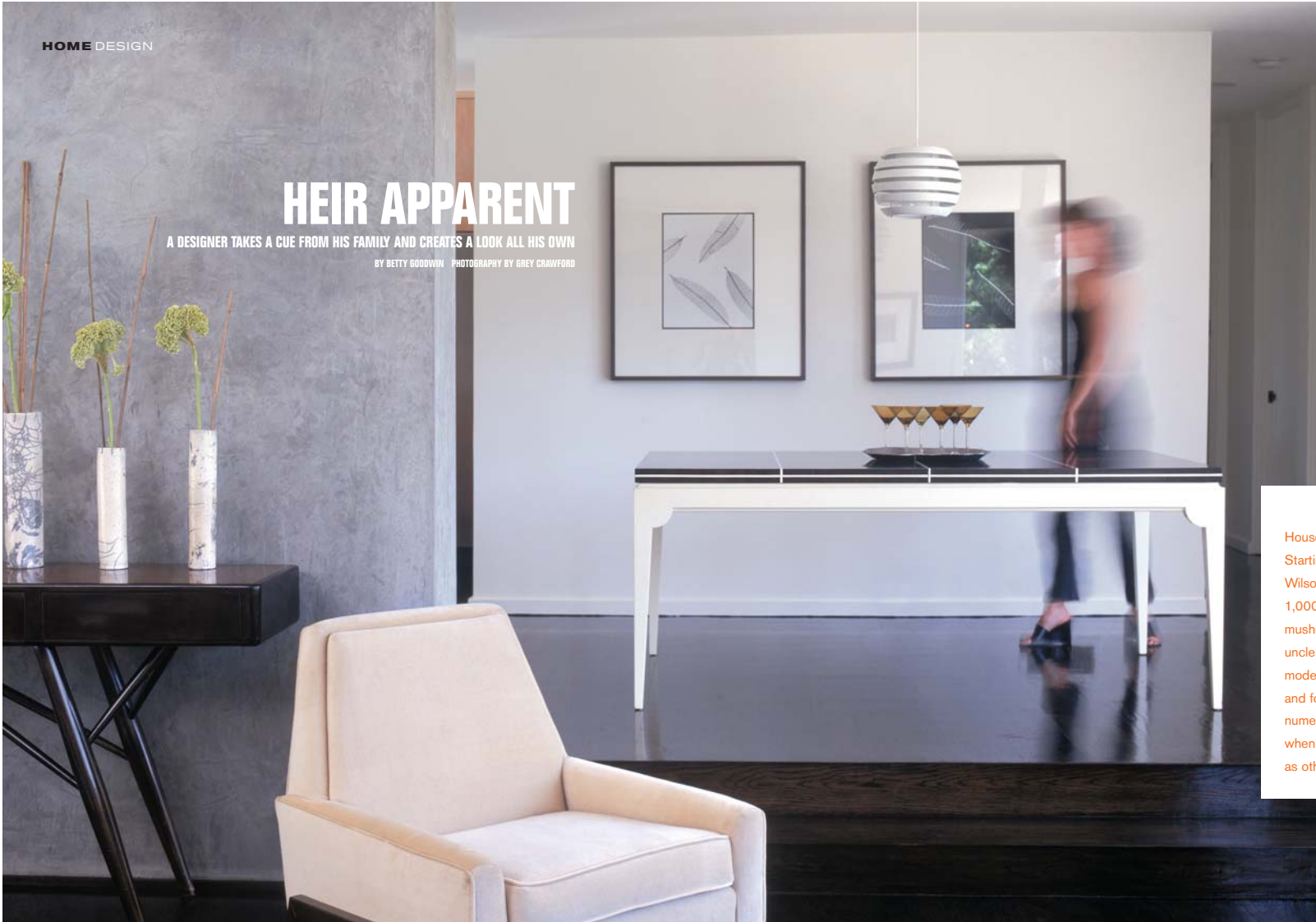


HOME DESIGN

HEIR APPARENT

A DESIGNER TAKES A CUE FROM HIS FAMILY AND CREATES A LOOK ALL HIS OWN

BY BETTY GOODWIN PHOTOGRAPHY BY GREY CRAWFORD



Houses are in Darryl Wilson's blood. Starting in the '50s, his father, Marvin Wilson, developed high rises and about 1,000 tract and custom homes in L.A.'s mushrooming San Fernando Valley. His uncle, Ron, did the interiors of Marvin's model houses and went on to gain fame and fortune as the designer of Cher's numerous homes ("She was my babysitter when I was an infant," says Darryl), as well as other movie star mansions. >>



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The younger Wilson tried law, personal management of rock 'n' roll musicians as well as buying, renovating and selling houses for himself until he finally heeded the advice of a mentor in the music business to "follow the flesh."

Although he never formally studied design, the 44-year-old designer, who wears dark denim jeans, slim-fit T-shirts and Gucci and Prada footwear, initially became a general contractor. Wilson found construction gave him a grasp of how space is created. "Understanding how houses are built gave me a greater imagination," he says.

Of course, uncle Ron's flair for the dramatic was a school unto itself. His classic '50s shag-nug-and-terrazzo design for Darryl's family's house landed on the cover of *Interior Design*. "Then he was into traditional, and I watched him transform this Hawaiian modern house into a French country home. That was really inspiring. Every day I'd come home and see the floor or the tile laid. He'd tape three pieces of wallpaper on my bedroom wall and make me choose one. I learned early on about quality and style."

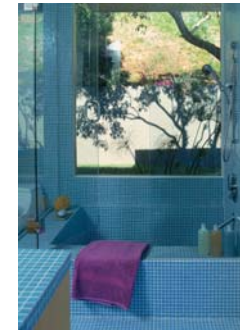
But Wilson says his own approach didn't emerge until he left California. "My first trips to Western Europe opened my eyes," he says. "What really resonated with him was staying at Tawarayama Ryokan, Kyoto's oldest traditional inn. "The simplicity and use of natural materials and bringing the outside in really blew me away," he recalls.

Opportunity to put that inspiration to work came a few years ago when Wilson found a '60s post and beam in the canyons of Beverly Hills, one of about 20 houses he has transformed for himself. While respecting its "great bones," which attracted him in the first place, he set about giving it a contemporary spin. Although there is a sense of Japanese purity inside, Wilson makes it clear that it's only because he sees a connection between Eastern sensibility and the profession of glass (he added even more, including an entire wall of glass along the front of the house), light and wood ceilings.

Wilson left the background neutral—cement walls, ebony floors—to allow the greenery outdoors to become an important feature, even using the garden as a complement to the fabrics he chose. "As a kid, I always hated the closed-in space of our low-caved, Hawaiian modern home. I always wanted lots of light and space and simplicity."

The overall look is clean, simple, even contemplative yet ultimately highly livable. Bursts of color, like the blue bathroom, come in controlled amounts, adding to yet not overwhelming the home's ultimate serenity.

Wilson reports that his father is pleased with his son's career choice, even though "to him a beautiful building is one that is leaved and a beautiful house is one that sells. I approach houses from an aesthetic point of view." ■



Previous page: In the dining room, the house's original painted metal chandelier hangs above a '40s Tommi Parzinger table. Beige chair is by Paul Lazlow. This page: Wilson resurfaced the pool deck, re-tiled the pool and changed its color from white to pale gray to make the water a deeper blue. Above: Aqua blue glass tile covers the tub, shower, floor and countertops in the bathroom. Wilson used a similar glass tile in the pool for indoor-outdoor continuity.



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Opposite page: The newly installed ebony floors and white walls create a neutral backdrop for the vibrantly colored crushed velvet sofa, chairs and silk ottoman. Above: Wilson stripped away black paint above the fireplace and discovered the bronze-glazed ceramic tile. He added gray natural concrete that now borders the tile, as well as the limestone-encrusted hearth. The foot-and-sandal sculpture is from Desi Derata.

