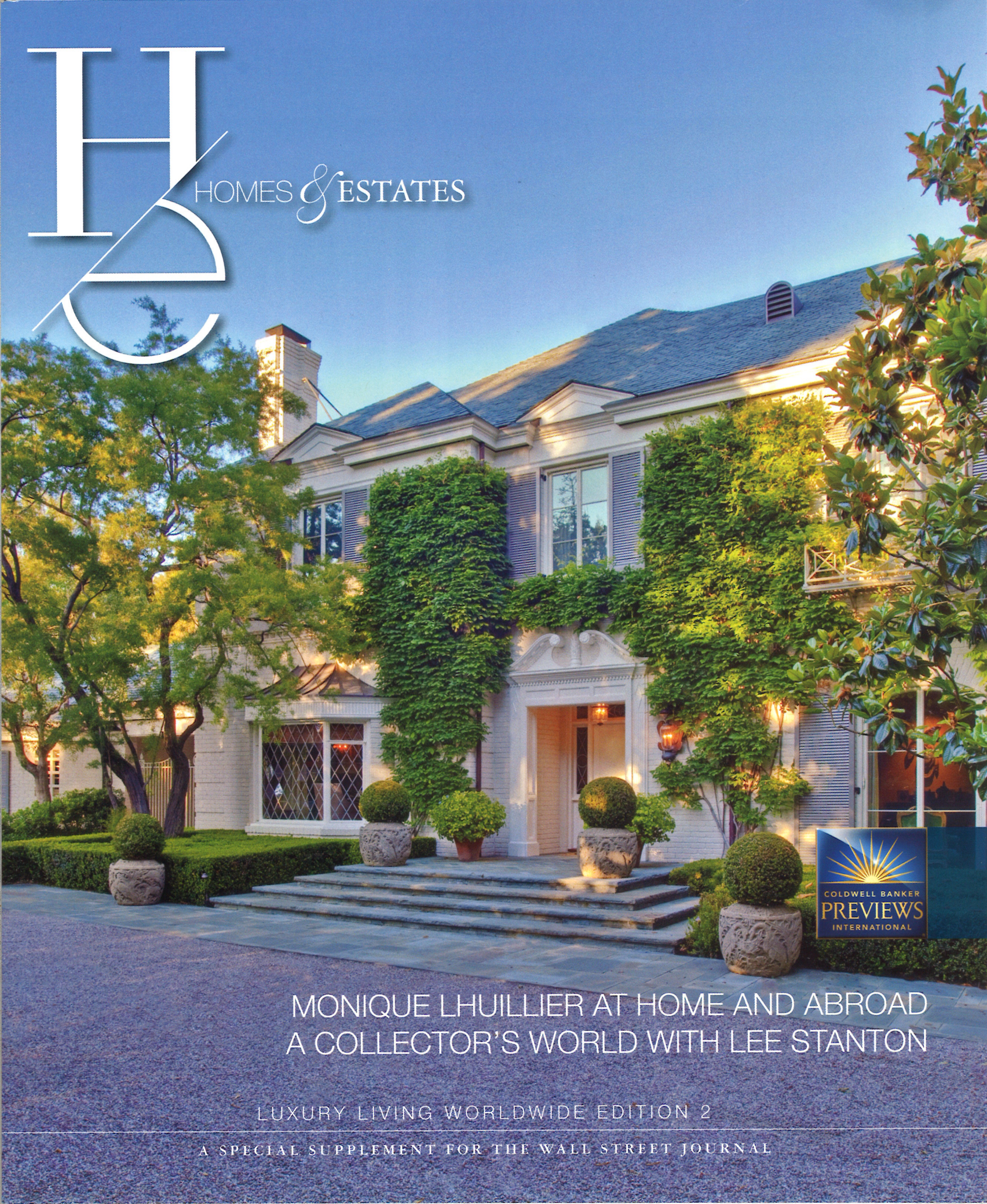


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HOMES & ESTATES



MONIQUE LHUILLIER AT HOME AND ABROAD
A COLLECTOR'S WORLD WITH LEE STANTON

LUXURY LIVING WORLDWIDE EDITION 2

A SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT FOR THE WALL STREET JOURNAL



PRIVATE PLACES
Enchantment on Faring Road

BY MICHAEL BRUNO

"THE HOME'S
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When interior designer Lauren King first saw the stately Georgian-style manse in Holmby Hills perched above Sunset Boulevard, she immediately had a vision for what it could be. The 1938-built residence possessed an enchanting celebrity pedigree to start—the original “Funny Girl,” Fanny Brice, had once lived there, as did music mogul Jerry Moss and Oscar-winning producer Alan Ladd Jr. in later years. King also fell in love with the estate’s rhythmic cadence of classicism, which she saw as a promise of “casual formality.” In an emotional moment, her husband, Richard, a respected television syndicator, purchased the nearly two-acre estate on his birthday.

“The property was remarkable,” she reveals to me during one of my recent visits to Los Angeles. “The other lovely thing about it was that it had few prior owners. It seemed that a lot of happy families lived here.”

Like any historic property, however, it required both labor and love. In 2001, the Kings commissioned Manhattan-based AD100 firm Ferguson & Shamamian Architects to refashion the home with contemporary enhancements. What they thought was going to be a straightforward renovation turned into a landmark rebuild spanning five years. Among the classically minded architects, mechanical engineers, contractor Peter McCoy, landscape architect Nancy Goslee Power and King’s restrained approach to interior design, they managed to thoughtfully transform the residence into an example of “the new traditional.” The home’s eclectic yet harmonious blend of furnishings, fabrics and rich architectural detail reveals an enormous sense of depth, from rooms touched with contemporary art and 18th-century English furniture to masterful spaces flowing out to rolling lawns, gardens, a guest house and pool house. I asked King to share the secrets behind her home’s timeless elegance, as well as her experiences restoring and living in a residence with such a star-studded past.

continued



Michael Bruno: What moved you to purchase this estate?

Lauren King: I wanted a home that had two acres in Holmby Hills above Sunset. So, when this home came on the market, my realtor Loren Judd called me immediately. It was the former home of Fanny Brice. It just so happened that it was on the cover of Dream Homes magazine.

MB: What pulled you to this versus a newer home, which is all the rage in Los Angeles right now?

LK: It's funny that you would ask that question. I hired Oscar Shamamian from Ferguson & Shamamian Architects and McCoy Construction. I thought I was doing a renovation. My contractor was supposed to carefully remove plaster when I was away. When I returned, I found a brick wall, some wood studs, and foundation...my house was gone. I was told at that time that the house was not structurally sound, that it needed to be reframed and that it would be \$50,000 to hold up the front wall. I was on the board of the Los Angeles Conservancy and couldn't imagine knocking down such a famous and iconic California home, so we decided to rebuild. In essence, we have a new home, but it retains all of the charm of something built in the 1920s and 1930s, yet with all the modern conveniences of a smart house that's new.

MB: What was it like working with Ferguson & Shamamian Architects?

LK: It was my landscape architect Nancy Goslee Power who recommended them. We went to see one of their homes and started researching their work. We found Oscar Shamamian and Andrew Oyen, who designed our project, to be a perfect match for us. They were doing several homes in California, so they were coming out to California one week per month. I have to say, every meeting with them was, "This is so fabulous. I love it, I love it, I love it." They designed what I consider to be the new modern: a transitional instead of traditional home. On top of having a very skilled group of draftsmen and architects, they have exquisite taste and great imagination. It became our magnificent obsession. We spared no expense and used the best of everything, as we were planning to live here forever.

MB: You said that you wanted to maintain the classicism of the home by preserving its casual formality. How did you manage that balancing act?

LK: My husband and I really thought about the way we live. My husband was in the television business, so he likes to have TVs in all the rooms. We have a chef, so a kitchen open to a family room would not have worked for us. I have a secretary, so we needed a home office as well as a formal office. We like to spend time in the sitting room outside of our bedroom. My husband had three boys before we married, so we needed to have bedrooms and guesthouses to accommodate a large and growing family. My son played football, so we wanted a large, flat backyard and one that would be safe for our three dogs to be able to play outside unsupervised. It's a rare thing to have a yard in California that's safe for dogs. I love gardening and wanted a substantially sized vegetable garden. We like watching events and movies and host a lot of fundraisers, so we needed a room that could double as a screening room and room to hold charity events. We wanted a playroom for our son. My husband and I both work out several days a week, and it was important for us to have a pool house with a large gym separate from the main house where we could have pool parties, BBQs and pizzas from our pizza oven. We designed this house so it would function perfectly, look great, and fulfill all of our needs. This house has been loved!



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MB: Can you tell us a little more about who previously lived here or who visited here?

LK: It is the former home of Fanny Brice. It was used on her Baby Snooks postcard. I'm not sure who visited this home before, but I'm sure if the walls could talk, they would have a lot to say. Since I've lived here, we've had everyone from Dominic Dunn to senators, ambassadors, athletes, movie stars and producers. It entertains well. We like to have large parties in the backyard in the summertime. I did hear a cute story from a neighbor of ours. When she first moved to the neighborhood from New York three decades ago, she was invited to a children's birthday party at this house. She was surprised to get to the backyard and find a circus with an elephant!

MB: Arguably, the home's greatest showpiece is the great room with its walnut paneling, columns and cove ceiling concealing a 21st-century screening room behind a 17th-century Flemish tapestry. Where did you find the inspiration for such an invention?

LK: This house had a great room that had been added by the Mosses to replace a smaller library. It was used as a combination great room, bar and screening room. We redesigned it to have a larger area for the screening room and to suit our personal taste.

MB: What kind of buyer do you see purchasing this estate?

LK: I would say that the buyer for this home would probably be elegant, successful and interested in a large home for his or her family that lived like a smaller home. Even though our home is grand, it still has a cozy family feeling.

Michael Bruno is the creator and founder of 1stdibs, the online luxury marketplace for antique and vintage design, and the creator of the Housepad app, a tool that makes managing life at home easy and fun for the entire household. Become one of Housepad's very first users by joining the beta test. Housepad app is available on all devices and can currently be downloaded for free by going to the iTunes or Google Play stores or visit housepadapp.com.