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Let There Be Light!

Looking to the future with cherished treasures and pops of modernity.

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PHOTOGRAPHS BY MEGHAN BEIERLE-O'BRIEN

Crisp, white walls provide a unifying backdrop for the traditional layout of a Thousand Oaks-area home and allow the mix of high and low furnishings and accessories to stand out dramatically.



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WHEN MONDANA AND ARMAN ARAMI FIRST CONNECTED with interior designer Breeze Giannasio, they had modest goals in mind. They had been living in their 5,000-square-foot home in the Thousand Oaks area for a few years, and the kitchen layout no longer was conducive to the family's needs. There were other concerns, too.

"The house was outdated," says Mondana. "It had an '80s look." And since it was surrounded by oak and redwood trees, the interior was dark. "We were looking for someone with a sense of what was up and coming, someone who could work with the traditional layout but make it lighter and more modern," Mondana explains.

To start, Giannasio suggested a modest kitchen renovation, taking down a wall that separated it from a dining nook, changing a dated desk area, extending the kitchen island, and working on circulation, sight lines, and light. As she added suggestions for giving the house an overall update, those were welcomed, too.

"Her vision was fresh to us," says Arman, "and it appealed."

It meant getting rid of lots of wallpaper and ornamentation but keeping lovely woodwork and millwork. Painting the rooms a crisp white "infused a touch of modernity," notes Giannasio, though they retained the brick fireplaces in the living and family rooms and "strategically left mirrored panels in the dining room.

"Where we could start fresh with a modern sensibility, we did," says Giannasio. "The [Aramis] had an appreciation for a contemporary aesthetic with a penchant for antiques from the Paris flea market and other well-curated treasures." That made for a mix of heirloom pieces complemented by newly sourced custom furnishings. For example, the entry showcases an 18th-century antique bench that Mondana had collected years ago, and in the living room Giannasio refinished and reupholstered a pair of beautiful bergère chairs with F. Schumacher & Co. fabric. "I loved having things with history and soul to add to the space," she says.

The substantial dining room table was a custom piece. It was an important area, a place for breaking bread with friends, and in fact, it turned out to be a favorite spot for Arman, who relishes the heaviness of the table and the contrast with the modern gold chandelier.

Throughout the house the light fixtures are like the "jewelry of the spaces," says Giannasio. "They add a

sculptural presence. Everything else is quiet and clean; it's a nice pop to have something modern." Similarly, the rugs add variety to the rooms. "Some are earthy, some are tribal, some are backdrops," says the designer.

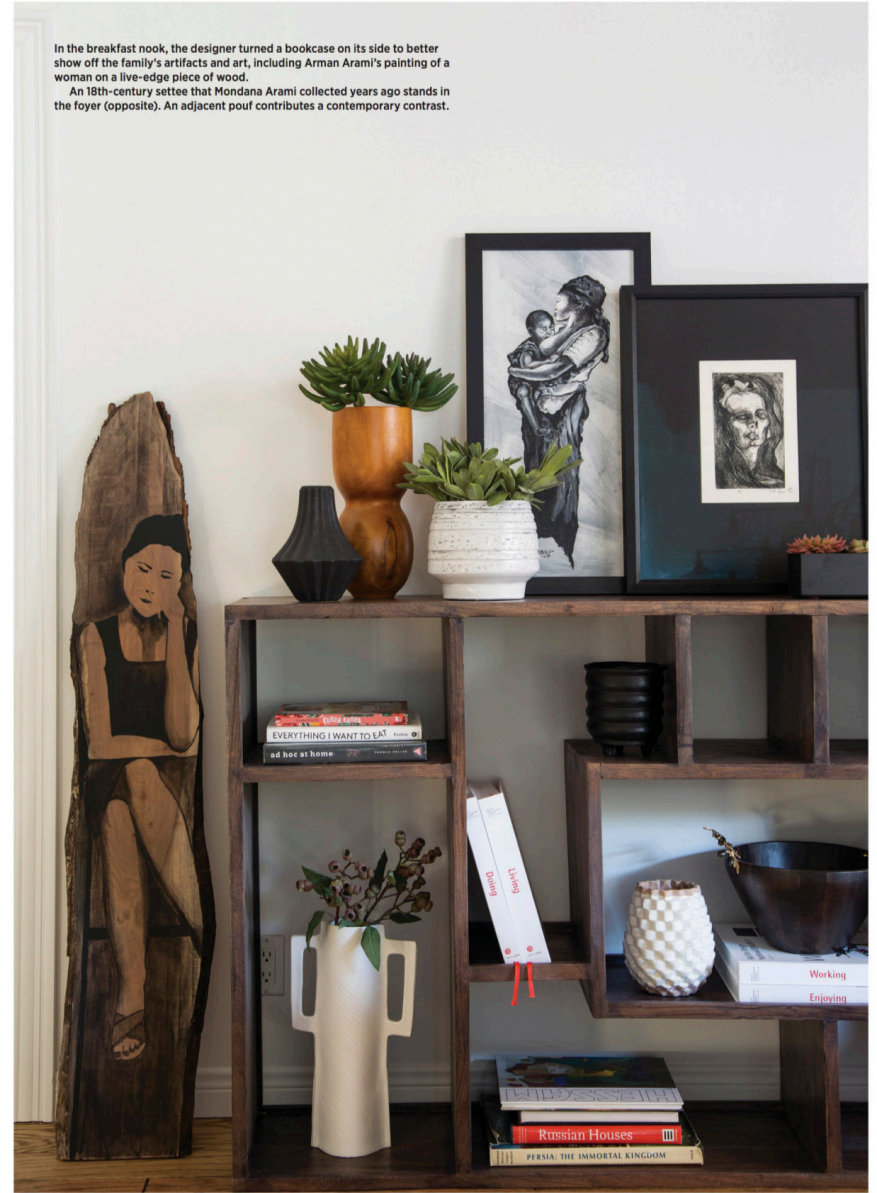
For Mondana, the zebra rug in the living room has helped to make it her go-to space, a place that's comforting. "Overall, the house feels like a refuge," says Giannasio, "with interest and texture, art and nature. The renovation was an important transition in their lives. Their daughter was going to college, and they were looking to the future.

"At the end of the process I was surprised to find out that Arman is an artist," Giannasio adds. "We were so focused on the furniture and the renovation. He painted the dancing Sufis for the living room.

"The renovation was an organic process," she says. "The owners felt celebrated and listened to. And there's nothing more gratifying than giving a couple the home they dream of." ♦



Mirrored panels and a modern metallic chandelier amplify the light in the dining room, where the custom table is a monumental centerpiece.





The renovation started with updating the kitchen (below), where the island was extended and painted a subtle gray with blue undertones. Open shelves (right) highlight wood and white wares as well as architectural prints acquired at a Paris flea market.



The brick fireplace in the living room was left unpainted, but the owners' bergère chairs were reupholstered and recovered in a brown F. Schumacher & Co. fabric that enhances the wow factor of the zebra rug.