

Designer Cliff Fong's Great Dane, Maggie, naps on a vintage Charlotte Perriand bench in the dining room of his restored 1953 ranch-style house in Los Angeles.

OPPOSITE: In the living room, the vintage chair and bench are by Jean Royère, and the dog is Fong's rescue pet, Monkey. For details, see Resources.

Cliff's



From vintage furniture to a koi pond and orchid garden, designer Cliff Fong's Los Angeles home checks all the boxes.

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Notes



ABOVE: A room divider by Jean Prouvé separates the living and dining areas. Sofa by Børge Mogensen; pendant by Serge Mouille; console by Charlotte Perriand; rug, Woven; artwork over console by Darren Bader.

RIGHT: Vintage pieces by Jean Royère, George Nakashima, and Isamu Noguchi mix in the living room. Artwork (right) by Vern Blosum.

OPPOSITE: In Fong's son's room, the 19th-century secretary is a family heirloom. Chair, Babacar Niang; leather bag, Hermès; artworks by Mark Roeder (left) and Gina Beavers (over door).



For designer Cliff Fong, serenity is found in a simple, sustainable lifestyle. Nowhere is this more evident than in the 1953 ranch-style house he moved into four years ago in a quiet neighborhood in Central Los Angeles.

Here, Fong, the principal behind the Los Angeles design firm Matt Blacke, followed the visual vocabulary he often employs in his projects, mixing vintage Scandinavian and French masterworks with understated yet luscious floor coverings, contemporary art, and family heirlooms that tell a story.

Fong had been searching for a new home for about nine months when he found this one, a midcentury house that had undergone an extensive renovation in the 1990s and retained such postmodern vestiges as quirky cutouts and finishes. Some of these details worked with his vision, while others—like the original mismatched mahogany flooring—had to go. “It was a pretty unremarkable structure,” says Fong. “But the good thing about it being basic was that it was easy for me to see where changes could be made.”

Fong made numerous interior alterations: He replaced the floors with poured concrete, expanded the home's entry, and created an extension to accommodate a new bedroom suite. Outside the house, he cleared a dense thicket of bamboo, making way for a garden filled with tropical plants and palms. To set the scene for the dinner parties he loves to host, Fong dreamed up an entertaining oasis on the patio, where a table is under an iron canopy hung with a Poul Henningsen artichoke light—the type of find you could easily imagine among the inventory at Galerie Half, the influential Los Angeles design shop of which Fong is a co-owner.

The real star of the garden is a wall displaying Fong's collection of more than 400 species of orchids. These, along with the garden's many other plants, are

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Artworks by Gonzalo Lebrija (left) and Lita Albuquerque flank the door to the primary suite's walk-in closet. Bedding, Matteo; chair by Mats Theselius; table by Chuck Moffit; walls painted in Smoke Embers by Benjamin Moore; rug by Woven; sculpture by Michael Wilson.

OPPOSITE, BOTTOM: Fong designed his walk-in closet around a vintage shelf by Le Corbusier. Cabinetry, custom; vintage Dutch pendant; artwork by Dan Finsel.



Cliff Fong in his garden.



irrigated with wastewater from the concrete koi pond that Fong created. “A lot of my inspiration comes from nature,” says Fong, who calls himself an “armchair botanist.” He likes to recall the time when, as a 10-year-old, his mother let him take over the family’s basement. “I had 10 fish tanks down there with all sorts of reptiles and amphibians,” he recalls. “When I got this house, I wanted to revisit the things I loved so much as a kid and experience them again as an adult.”

Full-circle moments like this recur throughout the house. In a particularly meaningful gesture, Fong placed a family heirloom from his parents—a 19th-century black lacquered secretary—in his son’s bedroom. Adding levity to the youngster’s space is a Japanese paper blowfish suspended from the ceiling, which picks up the primary blues and yellows that appear in a Gina Beavers painting hung above the bedroom door.

Fong’s primary suite is an altogether more modernist affair. In the closet, a Le Corbusier shelving unit acts as an island, influencing the custom cabinetry and millwork in the rest of the space. Another icon, Jean Prouvé, designed the desk in his bedroom. The chair, also by Prouvé, was one of the first investment pieces Fong purchased when he made the shift from fashion to the interior design world some two decades ago.

Today, the house reflects both Fong’s pared-down sensibility and his active imagination. Natural light and strategically placed windows create a bridge between the designer’s layered interiors and the generative presence of nature. An angled window above the bookcase in the living room abstractly frames Los Angeles’s vibrant skies. Across from the Børge Mogensen leather sofa that dominates the room, a Jean Prouvé wall divider separates this space from the dining area, centered on a Charlotte Perriand table and stools. A skylight sliced into the space above a back door lets in pure, unobstructed light, some of which is absorbed by a dark circular painting by Michelle Grabner. A circular window in the foyer completes this light-filled narrative, assuring that at every step, the home’s lush exterior isn’t forgotten.

The green that creeps its way into the home complements Fong’s go-to palette of grays, browns, blacks, and blues. Everything in this 2,400-square-foot house is perfectly in balance. It’s a lifestyle shift for this former jet-setter who now enjoys nothing more than a quiet evening at home with family and friends. “This house gave me the freedom to revisit things I loved that weren’t about traveling the world or being in fancy hotels,” Fong says. “The benefit of getting older is that we know our limits and our strengths. I think a home should be an extension of that.” ■