

# Artful Living

A HEDGE OF CUBAN LAUREL ENCLOSES THE BACKYARD OF SARAH AND AUSTIN HARRELSON'S MIAMI BEACH HOME, WHERE A FLOCK OF INFLATABLE FLAMINGOS OFTEN FILLS THE POOL. LANDSCAPE DESIGN BY FERNANDO WONG.

Work and play blend seamlessly in *Sarah and Austin Harrelson's* art-filled, high-style, family-friendly Miami Beach home





IN THE LIVING ROOM, THE FAMILY'S CAVALIER KING CHARLES SPANIEL, SLIM, SITS SURROUNDED BY ARTWORK, INCLUDING BRASS HAAS BROTHERS STOOLS, A PLASTER-AND-BRONZE OWL ON BRANCH BY DAVID WISEMAN, AND A 2014 WORK BY QUINN HARRELSON. JANSEN BERGÈRES IN A ROGERS & GOFFIGON FABRIC SIT ON AN IKAT RUG BY THE RUG COMPANY. FAR LEFT INDIA, QUINN, AND AUDREY BUILD CARD HOUSES ON A VINTAGE TABLE IN THE FAMILY ROOM.

finding a respite amid the chaotic commercialism of Art Basel Miami Beach is a tall order these days, but one reliable source of nurturing and energizing hospitality is the annual pig roast hosted by *Cultured Magazine* and New York's R & Co. gallery at the home of Sarah Harrelson, the publication's jet-setting founder and editor in chief, and her interior-designer husband, Austin.

"I've been in love with this house since we moved in sixteen years ago," says Sarah of their 5,000-square-foot 1936 British Colonial-style home. The residence sits on a nearly half-acre lot with a sparkling pool (often filled with inflatable flamingos) that overlooks an *ipe*-wood dock extending into Miami Beach's Surprise Lake, the tropical canal connecting Biscayne Bay to the Intracoastal Waterway. But the sleeper hit of the exterior is an extensive hedge of Cuban-Laurel added by landscape designer Fernando Wong.

"Fernando is a friend and we work together a lot, so when I told him I wanted a walled courtyard, he suggested a tree hedge with a view to the water," says Austin. "It creates a peekaboo effect with this illusion of privacy, so you can still see and understand the action of the water."

The hedge is just one of many clever twists on traditional tropes that punctuate the property. "A lot of people here won't restore an old home like this; they just knock it down and throw up a big modernist box," says Austin. Instead, the couple opted for a gut-renovation: raising ceilings and reworking the flow downstairs; adding a fourth bedroom; plastering the walls and installing un-lacquered brass fittings throughout; and painting the exterior shutters black and the concrete roof tiles white. The goal was to open up and modernize the space, all while retaining the classical bones that Sarah originally fell in love with.

"My theory of design is very subtle," Austin says, literally pointing out several low-key embellishments lest they go unnoticed—outdoor hardscaping hewn from Florida coral stone; quarter-sawn oak floors; Chinese sea-grass rugs painted to look like driftwood; a bronze stair rail cast from bamboo stalks that references a Caribbean estate designed by Oliver Messel. "The backgrounds here are so simple, so clean, that even though it's a traditional house there's a modernity to it, and we can mix historic design and contemporary art and it all works together."

That mix includes Jansen and Karl Springer gems the designer has collected over the past three decades, amplified by flashes of contemporary art and design such as a Brutalist glass pendant light by Thaddeus Wolfe and brass hex-tile Haas Brothers stools that Sarah gave Austin for his birthday a few years ago. ("I bought one, but when it got here I thought the legs

were not thin enough, so I ordered another to replace it," she recalls. "But when it arrived we decided to keep both.")

The editor—who also helms the Miami-based *Bal Harbour Magazine* and just launched *LALA*, which covers the Los Angeles art-and-culture scene—began collecting after acquiring a Spencer Sweeney painting at Art Basel in Switzerland a decade ago. "The collection is mainly composed of works by mid-career and emerging artists, with a female focus," she says, calling attention to a large abstract painting by Lucy Dodd hanging over a brown velvet sofa in the family room, a silicone-and-floral work by Anicka Yi presiding in the downstairs office, and several of Ella Kruglyanskaya's figurative drawings hanging throughout the house.

Austin calls the method behind the collection "very personal," explaining how a monochrome artwork by their 16-year-old son, Quinn, hangs alongside a plaster-and-cast bronze owl sculpture by David Wiseman, and an Analia Saban diptych over the living-room sofa. "We wanted to create a family house, something that was sort of bulletproof, and it is," says Austin, noting he allowed the kids—Quinn and daughters Audrey, 13, and India, 12—to ride bikes and skateboards over the cerused herringbone-patterned floors after installation because they felt too perfect.

"I like houses that evolve and organically age," Austin explains. "And that's what I was trying to create here. I deal

with clients who treat everything like a museum—'Don't touch this; don't go into that room.' Our house is the complete opposite of that."

The house isn't the only kid-friendly design in the Harrelsons' life. "It was important for me to fold my kids into my career," says Sarah, who brought Quinn with her to the Frieze art fair in New York last spring and has been taking the entire family to Basel fairs in Switzerland for the past five years. "I travel a lot and I don't want to be without my kids, so I do whatever I can to bring them into the world. Obviously that made a huge impression on Quinn at an early age."

To wit: The teenager has been trading drawings with the Haas Brothers since he was 13, just got a film that his parents didn't know he'd made into Miami's Borscht Film Festival, and is curating a show at Los Angeles's buzzy BBQLA gallery this summer.

A lot of this artistic output leads back to the pig roast. "Being around creative types with such frequency since they were little has played a significant role in who the kids are becoming as they grow up, and not just Quinn," says Sarah. "The girls are feeling more comfortable and confident thinking out of the box in their own pursuits—Audrey went through a phase where she only wore clothes she made herself. I think seeing so many artists who live in their studios has had a real impact on them; they see how much work it really takes." ▀





ABOVE A THADDEUS WOLFE GLASS PENDANT HANGS FROM AUDREY'S BEDROOM CEILING. AUSTIN HARRELSON-DESIGNED NIGHTSTAND AND BED; MATCHSTICK SHADES BY SMITH & NOBLE. RIGHT THE DINING-ROOM WALLS ARE PAINTED IN BENJAMIN MOORE'S HERB GARDEN. VINTAGE ANGELO LELLI LIGHT FIXTURE, GUILLERME ET CHAMBRON TABLE, AND JANSEN STOOLS. BELOW QUINN'S DRAWINGS PEPPER HIS BEDROOM WALLS. ROMAN SHADE OF A CALVIN FABRICS LINEN.



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ABOVE THE FAMILY GATHERS ON A TERRACE PAVED WITH FLORIDA KEYSTONE. LEFT IN THE SITTING ROOM, AN AFRICAN STOOL STANDS IN FRONT OF A VINTAGE BIELECKY BROTHERS RATTAN SOFA.





A SUNBRELLA-STRIPE FABRIC AWNING SHADES  
A TERRACE. CUSTOM PADDLEBOARD BY INDIGO SUP.