

# WESTERN Interiors

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OCTOBER/NOVEMBER 2008



*Small-scale GLAMOUR*







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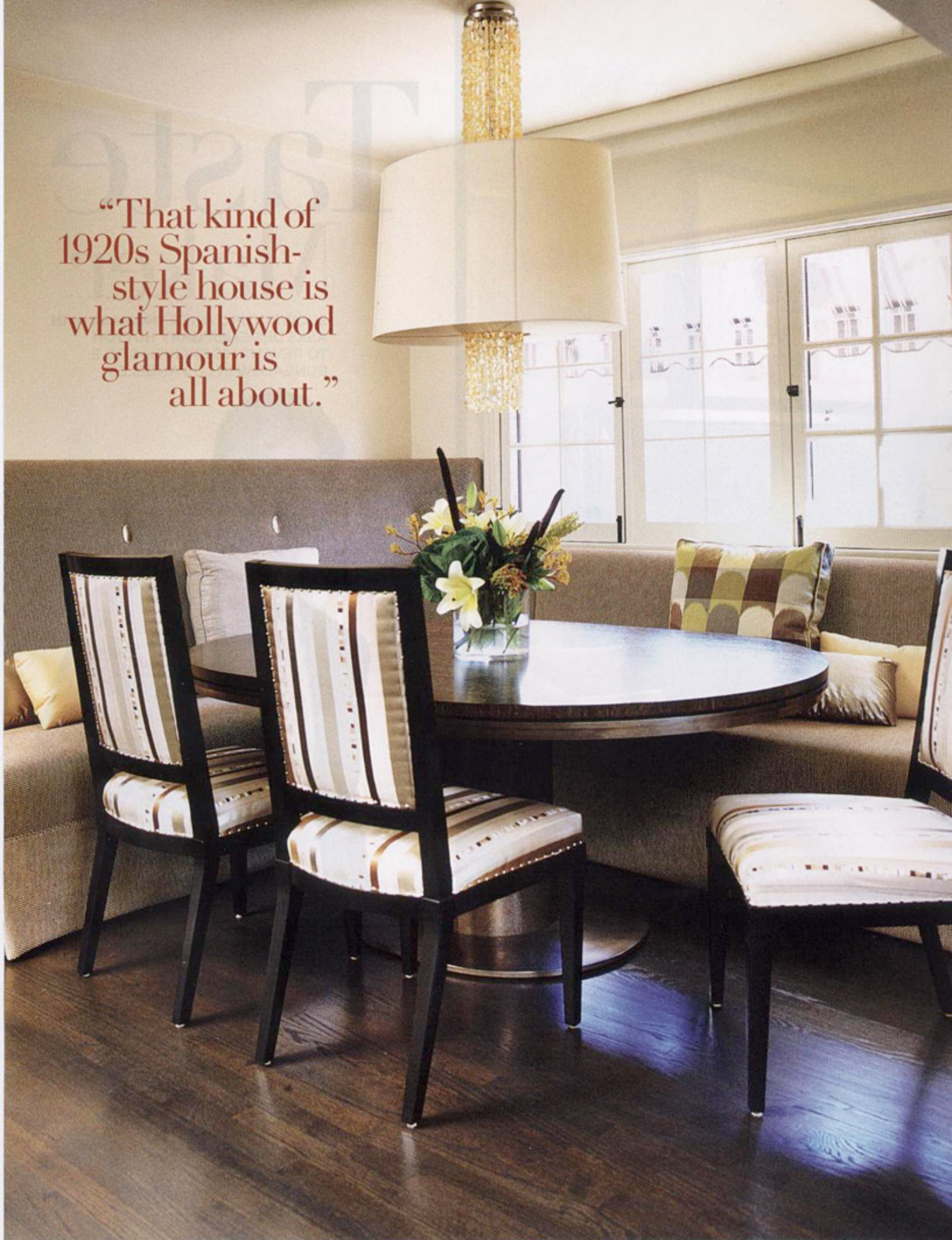
# Taste Maker

SHOWROOM OWNER **THOMAS LAVIN**  
ASKS DESIGNER **GARY HUTTON**  
TO REVAMP HIS SPANISH-STYLE  
BUNGALOW IN LOS ANGELES





“That kind of  
1920s Spanish-  
style house is  
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all about.”







**I**'VE ALWAYS WANTED TO HAVE A REALLY GLAMOROUS EXISTENCE," says Thomas Lavin. "But I didn't think my house could be glamorous because it's a small Spanish bungalow." And Lavin, whose eponymous showroom has become a breakout star of Los Angeles's design scene for its fresh point of view and wide stylistic range, knows something about glamour. Nevertheless, after living in the 1,100-square-foot house for three years, he was ready for an update. "I wanted it to be really useful for entertaining, and I also wanted to try to bring the outside in," he explains. "But the biggest thing was that I'm a clotheshorse, and I had no more closet space. I had shoes on the floor and jackets hanging on doorknobs."

Lavin recruited Scrafano Architects for the project, which was managed by Noel Williams, and then called San Francisco designer and good friend Gary Hutton to stop by for an hour and help him get the interiors pointed in the right direction. "He agreed on a Friday," says Lavin, "and then called me back on Monday and offered to do the whole thing." Eager to translate his friend's larger-than-life personality into an equally engaging interior, Hutton saw the possibilities. "That kind of 1920s Spanish-style house is what Hollywood glamour is all about," he says. "People don't necessarily put glamour and small spaces in the same category, but I don't think that they're mutually exclusive."

The modest two-bedroom structure opens to the living area, which is separated from the dining area by a wide archway and looks into the kitchen beyond. Subtle

**opening pages** Showroom owner Thomas Lavin (right) and San Francisco designer Gary Hutton transformed Lavin's small Spanish-style bungalow in Los Angeles. Four Hutton-designed chairs and two vintage Guglielmo Ulrich chairs face a custom low table in the living area. Glittering Swarovski crystals line a sleek bronze fireplace surround.

**opposite** A corner banquette covered with Zimmer + Rohde fabric opens up the dining area and is paired with silk-covered Madeline Stuart chairs. The table is by Gulassa, and the fixture is by Kevin Kolanowski for Fuse Lighting. **above** A smooth stucco finish, striped awnings and landscaping by Naomi Sanders were added to enliven the exterior.



Complementary arches distinguish the kitchen's breakfast nook and adjacent storage area, which is outfitted with an espresso machine and a Sub-Zero wine chiller. Phoenix Day's Shell fixture hangs above a table designed by Christian Schnyder. The bench fabric is from Great Plains by Holly Hunt.





but important architectural changes—including tightening the archway about a foot and closing a door from the dining area to the hallway—helped reorganize the space, as did rethinking the interior design. “Part of the strategy of making the space feel open and more expansive was keeping the colors and finishes to a minimum,” explains Hutton, who chose Benjamin Moore’s Estate Greige for the interior walls and trim. Hardwood floors were extended from the living and dining areas all the way through to the kitchen and “tortured” to match a matte metallic tile chosen for the front porch. To make the living area lighter and brighter, Hutton had the windows elongated and replaced taffeta draperies with simple roller shades.

With entertaining in mind, Hutton suggested exchanging the typical living room arrangement of a sofa and two chairs for a more functional setup of six chairs around a low table. “That was a turning point in the



Before and After transformation

## DESIGN DETAILS

**“I THOUGHT THE HOUSE COULD BE A JEWEL BOX WITH THE RIGHT ATTENTION,” SAYS THOMAS LAVIN, WHO WORKED WITH DESIGNER GARY HUTTON TO LEND HIS SMALL SPACE A GLAMOROUS NEW LOOK.**

[BEFORE]



### FRONT FACADE

Hutton gave the exterior of the Spanish-style bungalow a sleek makeover with a smooth stucco finish and new Sunbrella awning fabric. Landscape designer Naomi Sanders removed the grass in favor of drought-tolerant gravel and succulents.



### REAR FACADE

Although Lavin had a large back yard, the shadeless expanse didn’t promote outdoor living. To fix that, he added an inviting deck that stretches across the house, and Hutton furnished it with sitting and dining spaces. Sanders put in mature trees and tropical plantings.



### LIVING AREA

The living area’s previous arrangement lacked seating options, and while the fireplace’s Batchelder tiles “were lovely,” says Hutton, “they weren’t glamorous.” The tiles were removed and replaced with a sleek Swarovski-crystal-trimmed bronze surround.



### DINING AREA

“With the dining table in the middle of the room and the pendant in the center,” explains Hutton, “you were stopped dead visually from getting to the other side.” By shifting the table to face a new corner banquette, the designer created more free space.





To set off the master bedroom's grass-cloth wall covering by Windochine, Hutton chose black paint to trim the window and French doors. Lavin's Koch-Smith bed was reupholstered with a crocodile-embossed leather from Cortina Leathers and dressed with a faux-fur throw from Bergamo. **opposite** A rear porch running the width of the house creates an inviting outdoor space. Two chairs by Terry Hunziker for Sutherland offer seating, and an alfresco dining area is furnished with Kartell chairs and a Michael Taylor table. The pendants are by Gulassa.





project," says Lavin, who wasn't sure how the space would work without a sofa. Hutton reasoned that the conventional grouping could comfortably seat four guests, but Lavin usually had dinner parties for six. "There was nowhere for his guests to sit," says Hutton. Lavin adds, "After that, I just said yes to everything." Hutton designed a sleek upholstered chair with a contoured back for the space and placed a pair on either side of a marble-topped low table. Two vintage Italian chairs round out the composition. Hutton enlivened the rich but muted palette of grey, taupe and wheat with eye-catching sparkle. Swarovski crystals top his Facet side tables and form a single row around the new custom bronze fireplace surround.

In the connecting dining area, Hutton designed an upholstered banquette that wraps around a corner to form an intimate pocket within the room. "It creates the feeling that there's more open space than there really is," he says. The comfortable seat is tailor-made for leisurely dinner parties. "People feel like they're in a fancy restaurant," says Lavin. Madeline Stuart chairs, covered with a shimmery silk from Rubelli, pull up to a Gulassa table, and above it a chandelier by Kevin Kolanowski for Fuse Lighting drips with citrine stones.

For the critical storage situation, Hutton almost tripled the closet space for the master bedroom with wall-size built-in cabinetry. "There's actually room in the closet now," says Hutton, "although I don't anticipate that lasting for long." To make way for the built-in, the bed was switched to the opposite wall, where a wide window was put in above the headboard. A grass-cloth wall covering lends texture, and new French doors open onto a deck. Another built-in, with room for a television and desk, was added to the second bedroom along with a sofa bed from Design Within Reach. The small, nondescript bath was dramatically made over with a skylight, a new elongated window and a soothing mix of tiles.

"Los Angeles is a very fancy city, and everybody's always striving to be bigger and better than the rest," says Lavin, "so I grappled with the idea of moving to a bigger house. But I think there's something to be said for a single man living in a house that's an appropriate size." Thanks to Hutton's tailored and sophisticated vision, Lavin is able to maximize the space he has. "Now this house does everything I want it to. It's luxurious, it's spare; it's like a beautiful couture suit. There's nothing extra, but it's all there." +