



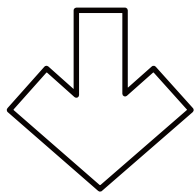
AN INHERITED
1940 HOME IS
THE STARTING POINT
FOR INTERIORS
THAT HONOR
THE PAST AND
REFLECT THE PRESENT.

A HOUSE *with a* PAST

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Home is where the heart is. Sure, it's a tattered old cliché—but the phrase fits so well in this case it almost demands to be stated. Because here's where the story starts: When homeowner Michele Barton's father passed away, he left his daughter a treasure—his home. This 1940 home in Inglewood, California to be exact, which then became her first home.

Michele, who works in the health-care industry, decided to call in a design pro to help her pull off a balancing act: Retain the character and personal history of the 1,500-square-foot house while making it a better reflection of her. Los Angeles interior designer Linda Hayslett of LH.Designs answered that call. "The home had great bones," Linda says. "I didn't want to erase the character of the home because it had such meaning for my client. She just wanted it to be updated and fresh."

Michele found Linda through the Black Interior Designers Inc. (BID Inc.), an organization committed to recognizing and celebrating Black designers, architects, and artisans. And she was well up to the task at hand. Formerly in the fashion business, Linda had worked at well-known brands such as *W* and *Allure* to help style well-known people like Hilary Swank and Sandra Oh. Linda was practiced at making people look (and feel) their personal best. As a result, she brings a warm, personal touch that now shines through her interior design work.

For this project, Linda's design process started as it always does—by getting on the same page with her client. "I do a Pinterest board with my cli-



Though Michele likes color, she shied away from it. "I never realized that I was afraid of using it," she says, until Linda began to show her the possibilities—such as this jewel tone sectional from Article. Metal accents on the CB2 coffee table and Michele's own stools add their own sparkle. The original fireplace was painted a charcoal gray and topped with an LG television. The carved chair is part of Michele's art collection, so it gets a throne-worthy spot in one corner of the living room. "I knew it needed to be displayed prominently," Linda says, "which makes it more modern so it speaks to the other modern elements in the room."

ents," Linda says. "And so, we pin. I pin and she pins. Then, I start looking at some of the things that she's pinning and pull from there. I believe she hired me because she knew I was going to give her something that she loved. And she truly does love her home."

In this case, Michele offered another lovely starting point: a collection of African art. "When we first met, she told me that she had an extensive art collection that she had hoped to one day have displayed in her home," Linda says. "When she showed me her artwork, I was just amazed. Most people don't think of artwork at the beginning, or even in

general, until maybe at the end of the process. So, I made sure to place and highlight every single piece."

To make the art pop, Linda painted most of the walls gallery white (Benjamin Moore White Opulence), even as she retained moldings, a fireplace, and other architectural features to preserve the home's character. "My intent was to make a comfortable gallery," Linda says. "I thought the pieces should be a real focal point when she came into the home so she could truly enjoy her collection."

Michele inherited her father's dining set too, which also got special treatment. "We just needed to give them a little love," Linda says. "They made sense in the space, so we just modernized them by refinishing them with black paint."

In fact, Linda pulls black accents through the home—on everything from frames to light fixtures. "I like using black," she says, "because it can really ground the space

The primary bedroom is at once serene and colorful, in large part thanks to a feature wall covered in a mottled Rebecca Atwood wallpaper. The wall is punctuated with sconces from Arteriors.



and make it modern. It adds contrast and, in that way, it keeps it all level and pulls your focus where you'd like it to be."

Other areas in the home needed a lot of love—namely the kitchen and bathrooms. The kitchen was transformed from a study in beige (from cabinets to floor tiles to counters) with an awkward layout, to a bright spot in the home's design. It's now Michele's favorite place to hang out. "It was just not a happy place, and it wasn't even easy to cook in there," Linda says. "You basically went in there to cook and get your stuff out. I wanted to give her a proper kitchen. We didn't change the footprint, but everyone thought it got bigger—even my client."

The bathrooms also were gutted and, though they too stayed the same size, they were each given a spa treatment with artful Zellige tile, sparkling glass shower surrounds, and sculptural fixtures, including a soaking tub. "I feel like sometimes people think they can only do basic, typical things in small bathrooms," Linda says. "But I think you can make any size bathroom look stunning with the right elements."

The primary bedroom required a soft touch. "This was once her dad's bedroom, so I really wanted it to be a place not of sadness but of warmth and happiness," Linda says. "So, we picked a fun wallpaper from Rebecca Atwood. And then I actually changed the direction of the layout—there used to be a door where the head of her bed is—to really make it her own."

Now Michele's home is where her heart is, where her art is, and where she sees herself and her father reflected. Michele couldn't be happier. "This experience was extraordinary and challenging," Michele says. "My house is beautiful and having a professional set of eyes left no stone unturned. I can pick pieces; however, Linda was great at putting my ideas together. I learned a lot about myself as I was pushed to my limits."



Once a kitchen/laundry room with an awkward layout and a whole lot of dark brown, now Michele's eat-in space is where she spends much of her time. To finish off one end of the room with style and service, built-in banquette seating hugs a Lulu and Georgia table that's illuminated by Visual Comfort pendants. "My kitchen is where I hang out the most often," says Michele. Black and white is used throughout the kitchen to help it snap to attention, and a quartz countertop wears a similar shade as the open wood shelving to warm the space. New Bosch appliances offer high-functioning luxury.



To make a standard-size bathroom live more luxuriously, Linda designed a walk-in shower that includes a soaking tub. She also pulled out some visual tricks. "Using the glass from floor to ceiling," she says, "makes the space feel bigger and taller, even though it has 8-foot ceilings." Handmade Zellige tile contrasts the smooth glass and adds a dose of rich color.



Handed down from her father, Michele's dining room pieces were given a refresh with black paint and Kravet seat covers. A Regina Andrew chandelier speaks to the home's contemporary side, but Linda joined it with a ceiling medallion to emphasize the modern-meets-traditional vibe of the home (see page 116).