

home



A stuccoed support column and cantilevered oak staircase join the Denenbergs' upstairs living quarters with their fine arts gallery, which features Biedermeier antiques, an 18th century bronze temple brazier and an early 20th century charcoal drawing by Giulio Bargellini. Opposite, from top left: A detail of a Biedermeier fruitwood side chair with a mirror-polish finish. The couple updated the façade, restoring the combed stucco and painting panels in charcoal brown. An eight-armed lindenwood chandelier hangs above a Clorindo Testa oil painting and a grand director's desk, armchair and mantel clock—all Biedermeier.

## curated quarters

Take a 1960s Home, Add Biedermeier Furniture and Old Masters Drawings, and Living Becomes an

Artful Experience



BY BARBARA THORNBURG + PHOTOGRAPHED BY FERNANDO BENGOCHEA

Living in a gallery can't be easy—all those 16th century Procaccini and Bedoli drawings on the walls and mirror-finish Biedermeier chairs for lounging. But for art dealers Stuart and Beverly Denerberg, blurring the lines between home and work comes naturally in their minimalist Los Angeles house because it doubles as their gallery space. "There is no separation between who we are and what we do," says Stuart, who has been dealing in Old Master prints and drawings for nearly 40 years. "Art is our whole life."

The couple found the house two years ago after seeing a listing advertising an "architectural landmark for sale." "Our vision was to have a private gallery with exhibition space and a residence all in one," Stuart says. For Beverly, a third-generation Southern Californian and a founding director of the Los Angeles Conservancy, living in a landmark building struck an instant chord. The couple visited the property the next morning, and two days later they handed the real estate agent a check. "It was instant building karma," Stuart says.

Formerly owned by architect Michael Morrison, the two-story structure, begun in the late 1960s and completed in 1979, is on the site of a former colonial-style house at Ashcroft and San Vicente Boulevard. The building served as an antiques emporium and design studio for the mid-century architect, who began his career working for designer William "Billie" Haines after World War II.

The building's location seemed ideal, and it had "great bones," Beverly says, but she admits they were somewhat blinded to its physical condition. "The first time we saw it, the main floor was floor to ceiling with antiques, everything from a Roman cistern to circus animals, and there was a wrought-iron staircase leading to nowhere," Beverly says. "Who could see with all those antiques everywhere?"

The couple began renovations by reallocating space to accommodate a private residence and exhibition space. An enclosed atrium was joined to the







Clockwise from left: Upstairs in the couple's living quarters, a pair of 19th century Japanese bronze vases with twin-dragon handles flank Sydney Kumalo's bronze female nude sculpture. Austrian armchairs and a lyre table stand in front of new built-in bookshelves, which house the Denenbergs' collection of art books and antique Japanese and Chinese bronzes. In the dining and living room area, parquet floors from the 1970s, an Italian modern table and contemporary chaises are juxtaposed with antique bronzes and Old Master drawings. The couple's personal art collection, which ranges from Old Masters to early 20th century sculptures, fills the master bedroom, where a Wilton carpet adds warmth.





first-floor gallery to enlarge that space. Next they added new plumbing and electrical wiring, air conditioning and alarm systems, high-end Internet cabling and UV-protected windows. Outside, the couple updated the burnt orange façade with a subdued charcoal brown-and-taupe palette. When dry rot forced replacement of the combed stucco of the exterior walls, they replicated the pattern of the original striations.

Although they kept the original '70s parquet floors in the living area, they added a more subdued Turkish limestone floor throughout the rest of the house and a wall-to-wall Wilton carpet in the bedroom for warmth. Faded, cracked and peeling wall coverings of green burlap, cork and vermiculite were removed, and walls were painted bone-white, providing a neutral backdrop for their collections. Many of the cantilevered decks remain, as do Morrison's clerestory windows, which run the length of the modern kitchen and along the back of the house. "It was a more extensive renovation than we anticipated, but then renovations usually are," Beverly says. "We tried to keep everything reflective of Beverly's original vision," Stuart adds. "We just updated it a little."

Iliad Antik and Denenberg Fine Arts gallery, which opened last November, showcases an art collection ranging from early 16th century master drawings to Impressionist and 20th century Modernist paintings. In addition, the gallery is filled with museum-quality Austro-Hungarian Viennese Biedermeier furnishings of the early 1800s from Iliad Antik in New York City. The Denenbergs represent the antiques firm on the West Coast and will be showcasing at the Los Angeles Antiques Show, a benefit for the Women's Guild of Cedars-Sinai Medical Center, held this weekend at the Santa Monica Air Center's Barker Hangar. The renovated modernist building acts as a perfect foil for these 19th century Biedermeier furnishings, which are characterized by elegant forms, beautiful veneers and mirror-like finishes. "Clients get a chance to see the antique furnishings and Old Masters in a modern contemporary setting," Denenberg says. Although Beverly loves living with all the beautiful pieces, she says "you do have to be pretty neat most of the time—in case someone calls and wants to drop by in five minutes." <