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EMILIA CLARKE *IGNITES* GAME OF THRONES
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HOUSE PROUD

The home of late Hollywood exec Laura Ziskin is, like her movies, an object lesson in creative brio *by* MAYER RUS / *photographs by* TIM STREET-PORTER

In the memorial segment of the 2012 Academy Awards production, Laura Ziskin's image appeared between those of Cliff Robertson and Sidney Lumet. She was identified as Producer/Humanitarian. The appended recognition of her charitable work was a singular honor—one not accorded even to Elizabeth Taylor, herself a legendary figure in philanthropic circles. It was a telling sign of the enormous respect the trailblazing executive commanded in Hollywood. Ziskin died last June at the age of 61, after a seven-year battle with breast cancer. Her three-decade career was marked by box-office triumphs and breakthroughs for women in Hollywood. She is perhaps best known for producing the three installments in the *Spider-Man* franchise, as well as the highly anticipated one due this summer, an all-too-rare case of a woman striking it big in the arena of high-octane, special-effects movies. But she also produced the 1997 hit *As Good as It Gets* (which vied for Best Picture and nabbed both Best Acting Oscars), Gus Van Sant's brilliantly satirical 1995 romp *To Die For* and the quintessential romcom, 1990's *Pretty Woman*. In 2002, Ziskin became the first solo female producer of the Academy Awards telecast, a role she reprised in 2007. »—→

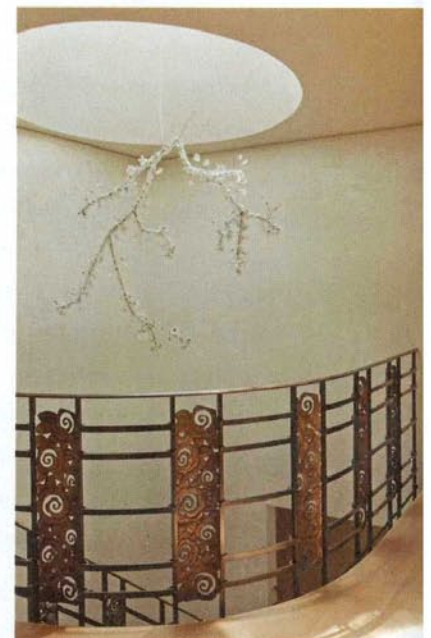


After her breast-cancer diagnosis in 2004, Ziskin applied her considerable influence and passion toward fighting the disease through research, education and experimental therapies. She was a cofounder of the entertainment-industry group Stand Up to Cancer and served as executive producer for groundbreaking telethons in 2008 and 2010 that raised nearly \$200 million. “My mother was an incredible woman,” says Julia Barry, Ziskin’s daughter. “She approached the design of her home the way she did everything. She balanced her natural inclination to be a control freak—as a producer has to be—by trusting her collaborators. She had a vision of what she wanted, and she pulled in talented people like Jane Hallworth to realize it.”

Hallworth was introduced to Ziskin in 2005 by her stylist sisters, Nina and Clare

Hallworth, who designed costumes for two of the *Spider-Man* movies. They met a year after Ziskin’s initial diagnosis to discuss a renovation of the master suite of the 1940s Santa Monica house the producer shared with her husband, screenwriter Alvin Sargent. Hallworth had prepared preliminary drawings for the work when the news came that her own father had been afflicted with cancer, prompting the designer to take a six-month leave from her practice. “I was blown away when Laura said she’d wait for me,” Hallworth recalls. “It was a huge honor to have someone of her stature postpone work because I was having a personal issue. Her sense of compassion was unbelievable.”

Once Hallworth returned, the scope of the bed and bath redo expanded to the entry hall and eventually the whole house—short



The stairwell of the updated Monterey Colonial house is crowned by a Tord Boontje crystal chandelier hanging from a skylight.



Erich Dieckmann and Luis Barragán living-room chairs flank an Arturo Pani table. The dining table is by Jerome Abel Seguin, cabinets by Michael Wilson.

film to feature, if you will. The project's narrative, as Hallworth describes it, was based on the idea of rebirth following Ziskin's first round of chemotherapy: "She was interested in all things organic, substantive, life-affirming, elegant and special. Laura wanted the house to tell a story, and she wanted every part of that story to be meaningful."

In practical terms, that played out in the assemblage of a decorative-arts collection of extraordinary quality and idiosyncrasy. The story begins in the entry hall, where Hallworth designed a stair railing to incorporate a series of bronze floral panels designed by Émile-Jacques Ruhlmann and fabricated by Edgar Brandt in 1925 for Paris' Au Bon Marche department store. The staircase is crowned by a newly added oculus that bathes the entry in natural light. Hanging from the

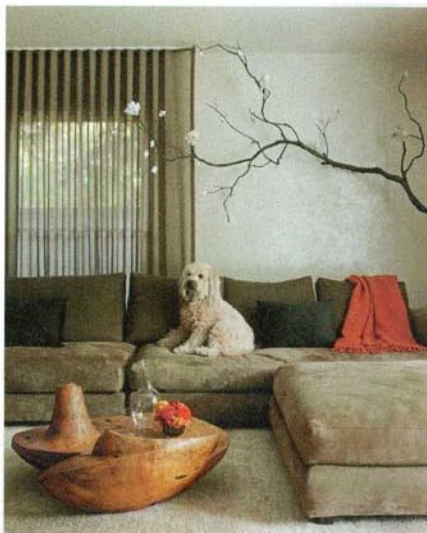




aperture is a Tord Boontje crystal blossom chandelier that exemplifies Ziskin's seemingly contradictory desire for things both organic and glamorous.

Hallworth's living-room composition similarly gathers objets de vertu of widely varying provenance into a holistic statement that reflects the vivid spirit of her client. Beneath a rare Poul Henningsen ceiling fixture obtained from a Danish collector, two sets of lounge chairs—one by the German Bauhaus designer Erich Dieckmann, the other by the Mexican master Luis Barragán—surround a coffee table by the late Arturo Pani, a Mexican designer whose reputation has ascended in recent years, as his work has gained exposure in the design demimonde. "Laura was an incredibly savvy collector," she says. "We'd acquire work by certain designers

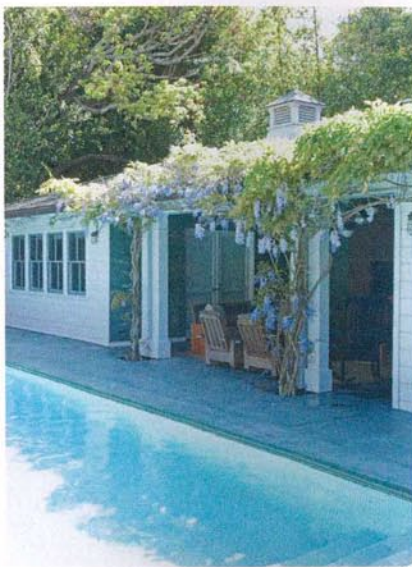
Two Guillermo Ulrich lounge chairs, Jacques Adnet fire tools and a Le Corbusier sconce grace the lacquered library. Another Corbu sconce, below, illuminates the hammered-bronze fireplace surround and parchment-covered wall in the bedroom. Stanley the Wheaten terrier hangs out between David Wiseman's bronze branch installation and a sculpture by J.B. Blunk. Opposite: Josef Frank's Flora cabinet epitomizes Hallworth's focus on organic forms and motifs. Candlesticks are by Ted Muehling.





A teak and hammered-bronze tub from India is joined by teak-framed de Gournay silk panels, a rug by C.F.A. Voysey and a "silent valet" by Michael Wilson.





Handpainted de Gournay wallpaper extends the aquatic theme to the richly appointed, wisteria-covered pool pavilion adjacent to the home gymnasium. Vintage 1960s Stilnovo pendant lights hang from the ceiling.

before they really caught on in the marketplace, like the J.B. Blunk sculpture she used as a coffee table in the den. I don't think we could touch that today."

Ziskin's prescience extended to bespoke work by a slate of contemporary designers. Among the pieces she commissioned are a chandelier by glass artist Alison Berger, a bronze and porcelain fireplace screen and wall sculpture by David Wiseman, china cabinets and a tree-form breakfast table by Michael Wilson and a dining table by Jerome Abel Seguin made from a massive log of Balinese blond ebony. "A lot of the custom work was not easy to fabricate. We had to persevere on every aspect of this project, and the results are a testament to Laura's patience and dedication to making things that are truly special," notes Hallworth.

The genius of Ziskin's home, however, is not merely a function of collecting and commissioning; it relies on Hallworth's finesse in conjuring an environment sympathetic to the furnishings in scale, proportion, craftsmanship and quality. Consider the hand-troweled iridescent plaster walls, which required months of painstaking application, waxing and finishing by a single artisan. Few clients would have the equanimity for such an undertaking, but the results are startlingly beautiful. Even without the Le Corbusier sconces, these walls sing.

One hopes whoever buys the home will appreciate the care that went into every inch of it. "This house gave my mother a lot of joy," says Barry. "She worked hard for a long time and fought for the things she believed in. She deserved a little luxury." ♦