



The living room of the Bel Air residence with Ocean Memories marble bench, designed by French designer Mathieu Lehanneur; L.N.A Coffee Table; Aspre Lounge Chairs; Autan Chaise and Nagato Side Table by Liaigre

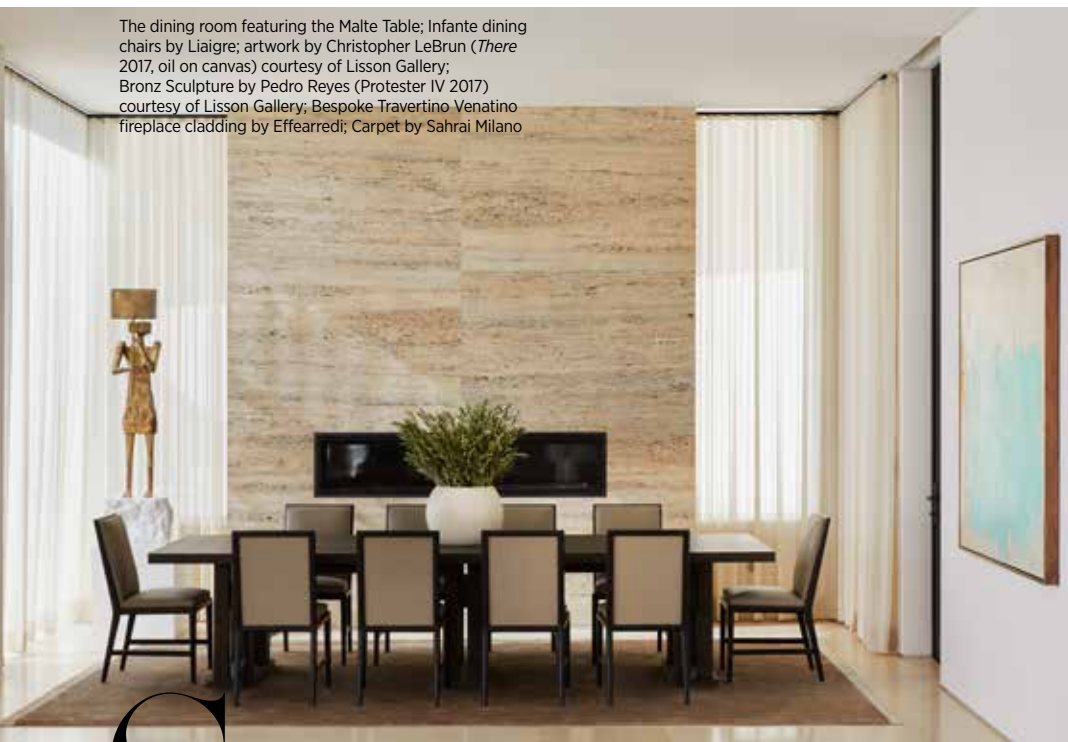
MEDITERRANEAN *dreams*

Turkey-born founder of the eponymous Nebihe Cihan Studio walks us through the private treasure trove of design and art housed inside a lavish Bel Air abode in Los Angeles

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The dining room featuring the Malte Table; Infante dining chairs by Liaigre; artwork by Christopher LeBrun (*There* 2017, oil on canvas) courtesy of Lisson Gallery; Bronz Sculpture by Pedro Reyes (*Protester IV* 2017) courtesy of Lisson Gallery; Bespoke Travertino Venatino fireplace cladding by Effearedi; Carpet by Sahrai Milano



Situated on the foothills of the Santa Monica Mountains in California's exclusive residential enclave of Bel Air, Los Angeles, is a 12,600 square foot property made to be a destination home for the modern art collector. Boasting a main house and a guest house, the space has been designed by the illustrious London-based Nebihe Cihan Studio over a period of one year, reflecting the surrounding nature and the client's love for art. "My goal was to create the ultimate California destination home imbued with a Mediterranean feel," says Nebihe Cihan, founder of Nebihe Cihan Studio. The private residence marks the first project the studio has worked on in California.

Before the establishment of the interior design firm in 2016, Cihan lived in the United States for several years, graduating with a degree in interior design from the renowned Parsons School of Design in New York City. Having worked for Michael Kors and French fashion house Catherine Malandrino as the senior designer for store design and development globally, she grasped the power of design early on. "What really inspired me was seeing how the environment around us changes the way we think and behave," she says. "When I was at Michael Kors, certain store layouts and designs changed the shopping habits and preferences of our customers which showed me how important architecture and design was." Throughout her notable career, Cihan has worked on retail and high-end residential projects across Paris, London and the Upper East Side in New York.

The Bel Air residence is dotted with art works and design objects throughout, a testament to the owner's extensive travels and longstanding affiliation with the global art scene. "My objective for this project was to seamlessly marry the Californian heritage with the Italian and French influence in a way that was inextricably intertwined," says Cihan.

Cihan joined hands with Italian craftsmen to create custom cladding throughout the opulent home, sourcing organic materials from stone yards in Italy which have been used to design buildings in Milan for decades, such as travertino venatino and ceppo lombardo. "I chose modern Italian fittings to mirror the modern exterior of the house," she says. "I prefer to use classic materials that will never go out of fashion and are timeless." He customised the home's wood cladding using a wire brushing technique that is prevalent in Italy. "The pores of the travertine are filled with black stucco and left dry in the stone yard in Italy," she shares. "This rare backdrop works in unison with the clean lines of the French furnishings from Liaigre, whose furniture dominates the interiors of the house creating a look that is 'style without being stylish'."

When the designer first encountered the property, "I was completely mesmerised by the panoramic views," she expresses. "However, I felt that the interiors were disconnected from the architecture and as a result, it just felt chaotic." And so Cihan ventured on the project with the vision to create

unity between the outside and inside. "I wanted to find a harmony between the internal and external juxtaposition and I used the palette to enhance this."

Boasting a sophisticated indoor-outdoor aesthetic, a rarity in California, the main house of the property comprises seven bedrooms, two open kitchens and one main kitchen. The lower ground is devoted to a lounge, bar, spa and gym area. "I would say I designed it to be a comfortable hotel," she smiles.

The entrance, which resembles a hotel lobby, features *8 stack*, a sculpture by British artist Annie Morris, a stunning silver plated brass neon light by Milan-based architect Vincenzo De Cotiis, which was sourced from New York-based Carpenters Workshop Gallery and a Phocce Table by Liaigre. *Ocean Memories*, a marble bench designed by French designer Mathieu Lehanneur graces the intersection between the outside and inside of the living room, manifesting a seamless fusion of the exterior and the interior.

The dining area is adorned with a beautiful bronze sculpture by Mexican artist

Pedro Reyes, sourced from Lisson Gallery and an oil on canvas painting entitled *There* by British artist Christopher LeBrun made in 2017.

Complementing the décor of the dining room, the white, semi-open kitchen by Bulthaup houses two large paintings by Swiss artist Ugo Randinone. The walls of the foyer are adorned with bespoke wood cladding by Effearedi and at the periphery, visitors will find *Eclipse*, a neon artwork by French artist Laurent Grasso from New York-based Sean Kelly Gallery.

"I cannot think of a California venture without a piece of neon artwork, it was needed," exclaims Cihan. "There is a careful juxtaposition between the upstairs and downstairs, which enables the client to seek refuge and entertain in the evening in the lounge."

Downstairs by the opening of the media room hangs *What's Up Mickey*, a work by the late American painter Joyce Pensato while over at the lounge, suspended from the wall unit amidst bespoke wall panelling, is the *Aquamarine Murano Glass Necklace* sculpture by Paris-based artist Jean Michele Othoniel.

In collaboration with the client, Cihan sourced the works from galleries around the world including Kukje Gallery in Seoul and Lisson Gallery in London - a testament to the owner's love of collecting art since a young age. "He is always cognisant of upcoming successful artists and the trends," says Cihan, of the owner. "Interestingly, his taste in interiors are minimal and reserved, compared to his taste in art. His artwork collection varies and he is open to slightly more daring pieces, whereas his choice in interiors is more conservative."

The minimalist designs of the bedrooms, which resemble hotel suites, are inspired by the client's love for travel while the neutral colour palette echoes the surrounding views and natural light. "I kept the palette very light and airy on the ground floor which is saturated with sunlight, selecting light European oak finishing in all of the bedrooms while the bedrooms on the lower ground floor have darker wood as they're not exposed to direct sunlight," says Cihan. "Each bedroom is custom designed by Nebihe Cihan Studio, crafted in Italy by fine Italian millwork and features bespoke rugs made in Nepal with different materials incorporated throughout, exploring texture and tone."

The simplistic lamps, side tables and dining chairs seen throughout the space are by French brand Liaigre. "I was drawn to the understated and minimalistic style of their designs, which is exactly what I envisioned for this project," she says. "This created a sophisticated and chic setting throughout the house, whilst not detracting from the artwork. To preserve the Californian influence, I chose a lighter palette and used lots of linen fabric throughout."

Cihan adds, "whether it is a retail or a residential project, I strive to make my designs both functional and timeless - good design should age well and not feel outdated." nebihecihan.com ■



8 Stack Sculpture by Annie Morris,
Alex Eagle Studio; two artworks by
Ugo Rondinone courtesy of Lisson
Gallery; an artwork (right) entitled
Wind with in one by Waqas Khan
courtesy of Galerie Krinzinger