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September 2012

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**Southern
Charm**

3 HOMES THAT
SAY WELCOME
(FIND OUT HOW)

**Tasteful &
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UNFORGETTABLE LOOKS
UNIQUELY YOURS

plus,

ACTRESS SELA WARD BRINGS HER MISSISSIPPI
HERITAGE TO SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA, **pl06**



Southern Belle

ACTRESS AND ARTIST SELA WARD'S BEL AIR HOME SHINES THE SPOTLIGHT ON HER SOUTHERN SIDE

Sela Ward's home may be nestled into a hillside in the heart of Bel Air, but its posh Southern California address is tempered by a wholeheartedly Southern soul. A concoction of Southern California—verdant gardens filled with jasmine, bougainvillea, succulents, and redwoods; contemporary art; and an Emmy or two—is mixed with Southern charm and influences. With its reclaimed wood beams from Louisiana and Mississippi, McCarty pottery, and heart-pine floors, the family home readily reflects the actress's Mississippi upbringing.

"The South is such a part of my soul," says Sela. "Architecturally, that flavor is part of me. When I found out this house was redone in

1954 by Samuel Marx [an architect from Natchez, Mississippi], I knew it was serendipitous."

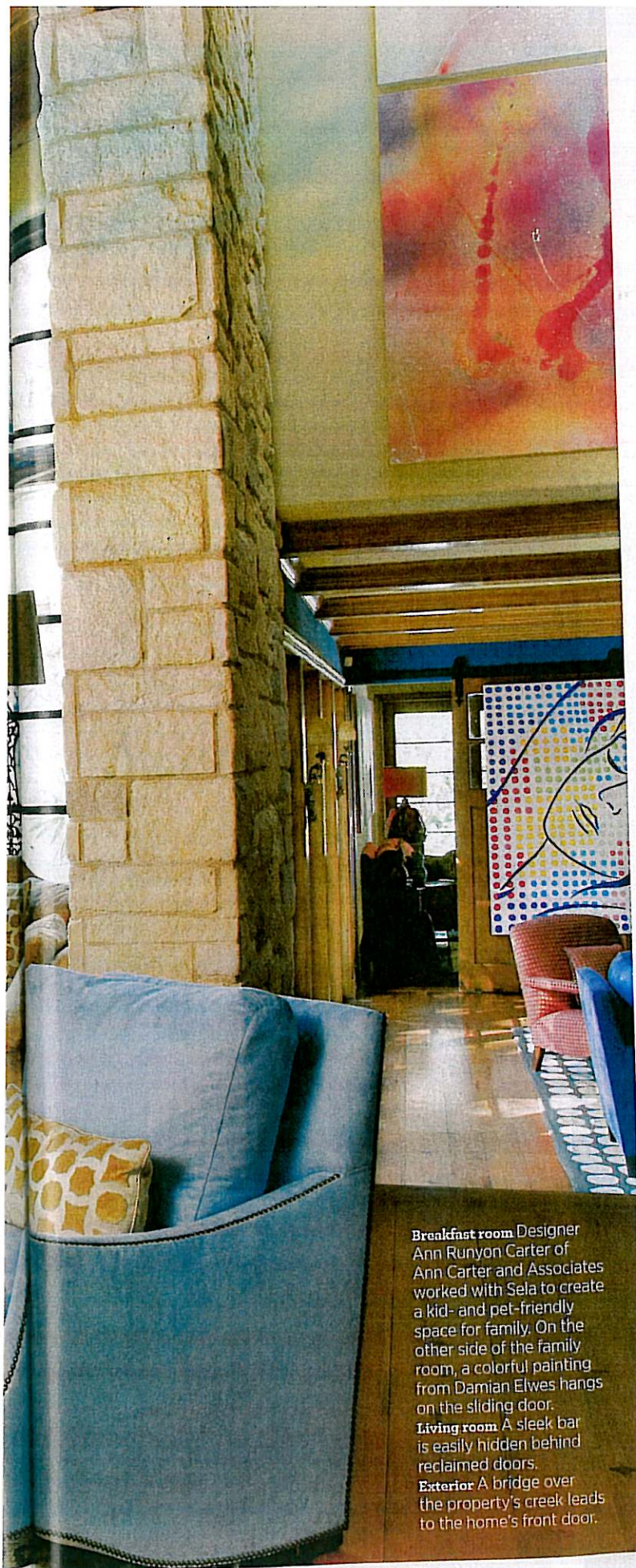
In desperate need of a little TLC (there were ducks living in the house when Sela and her husband, Howard Sherman, bought it), the home was initially intended to be fixed up and quickly sold. The problem? The pair fell in love with the place. "Sela greeted me at the door one day and said, 'Let's live here!'" says Howard, a venture capitalist. "I could tell she'd fallen head over heels in love with it."

The couple called in architect Robbin Hayne to repair the home's structural problems and add onto the original footprint. Sela's friend of 15 years, designer and fellow Mississippian Ann Runyon

Living room With its quiet palette, the living room is the ideal place to showcase the family's collection of art. The large-scale piece above the fireplace was painted by Sela. Below Sela Ward puts her feet up in the living room.



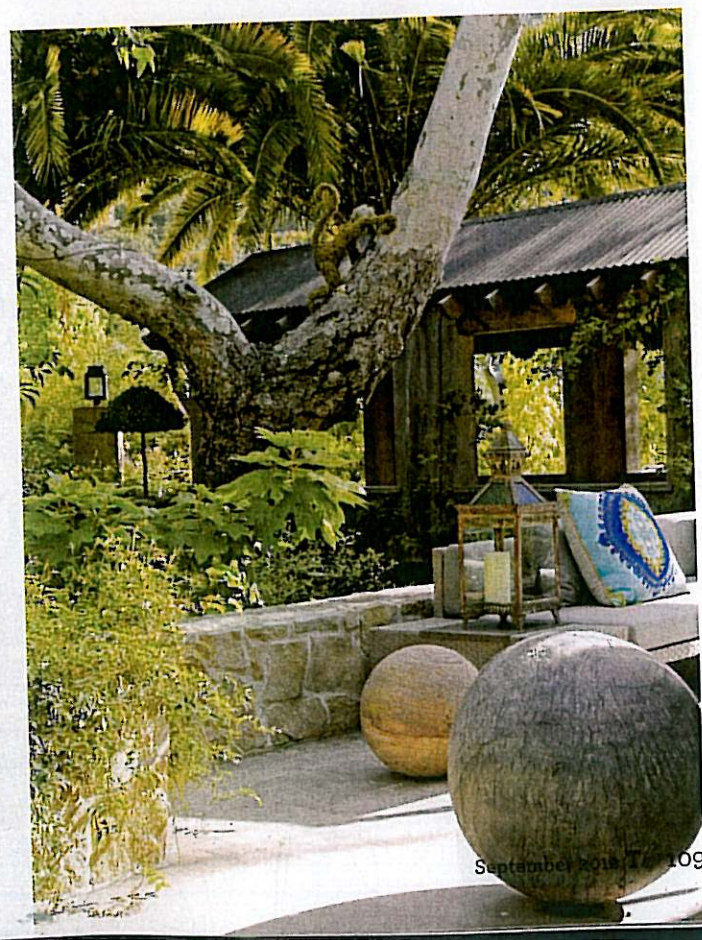




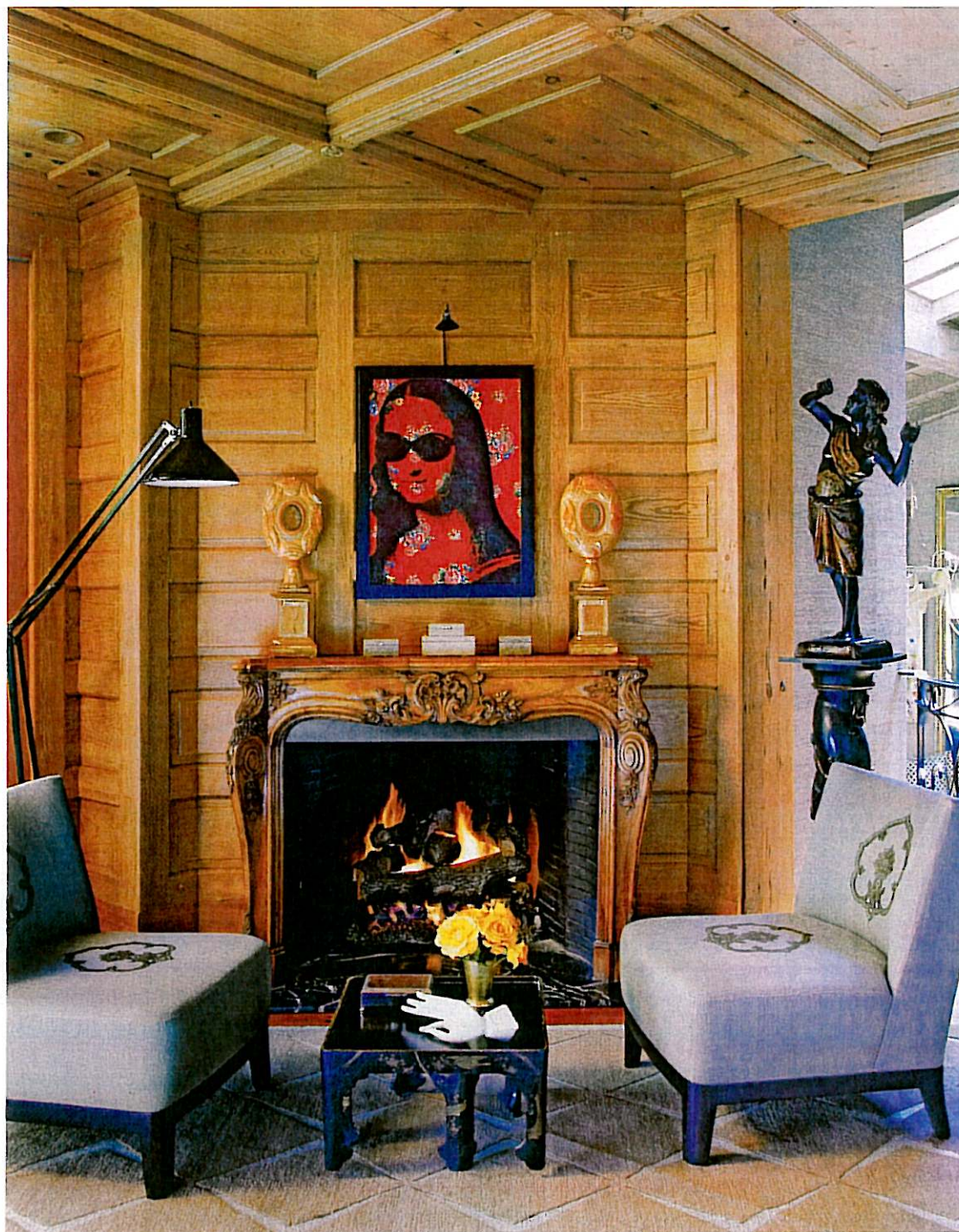
Breakfast room Designer Ann Runyon Carter of Ann Carter and Associates worked with Sela to create a kid- and pet-friendly space for family. On the other side of the family room, a colorful painting from Damian Elwes hangs on the sliding door.

Living room A sleek bar is easily hidden behind reclaimed doors.

Exterior A bridge over the property's creek leads to the home's front door.







Library The antique cypress used on the library's walls and coffered ceiling is from Louisiana—a nod to Sela's Southern roots. The painting above the fireplace is by Thierry Guetta.

Exterior The house staircases down a lush hillside in Bel Air.

Office Sela's light-filled work space opens to a terrace that overlooks the pool. The faux Warhol down the hall from her office is from the film "54," in which Sela co-starred.

Carter was enlisted to help with the interiors. "Ann helped us create a sense of place for our family [son Austin is 18 and daughter Anabella is 14] in a city that can sometimes feel very ungrounded," says Sela. "And she gets the Southern thing!" In fact, the friends often complete each other's sentences.

Designed to flow effortlessly from room to room, each streamlined space opens onto the next, delicately stair-stepping down the hill—an elegant ordonnance of rooms.

"Architecturally, you can walk out of the master bedroom at the top of the house, step into the library, and see all the way through to the other end," says Carter. "The house sits organically in the canyon and tiers down. I take my hat off to Robbin Hayne. He created a home you can truly appreciate from room to room to room."

At the center of the house, the large, inviting kitchen welcomes the Southern California sunlight through an expanse of steel-framed windows. Antique oak beams, French limestone counters, and painted cabinets add a warm, traditional appeal. Viking appliances were chosen for their Southern connection—the company is based in Greenwood, Mississippi.

"I love that this space is more traditional than contemporary," notes Sela. "It has this great stone wall and 100-year-old heart pine floors. We tried to use reclaimed materials but handle them in a very transitional way."

"The entire house is really all about these textures," agrees Carter. "Reclaimed beams, stone, heart pine, textural wall coverings—it's the texture that gives it heart."

Kitchen Antique oak beams and a vintage counter from France add patina to the sunny kitchen.

Dining room Gold accents infuse the dining room with elegance while whitewashed doors add a bit of rustic charm. Serendipitously, the reclaimed doors fit the space perfectly—no need to trim! A sleek dining table and chairs add a more contemporary edge to the traditional elements in the space.



The art's not half bad, either. An artist herself, Sela has filled their home with a collection that's as varied as it is carefully curated. Contemporary pieces by Damian Elwes inject color into the family room. Sketches from an art school peer line a living room wall. Sela's own creations, bold and lively, are scattered throughout the house.

And it's a family affair. A chalkboard with artistic flair hangs above the fireplace in the keeping room (dubbed "The Circle of Contemplation") and is updated by Sela or the children with inspirational quotes by everyone from Thoreau to Jimi Hendrix. "This is one of my favorite spaces," says Sela. "We sit here with the kids and talk." Everyone has his or her own space to spread out but still be together."

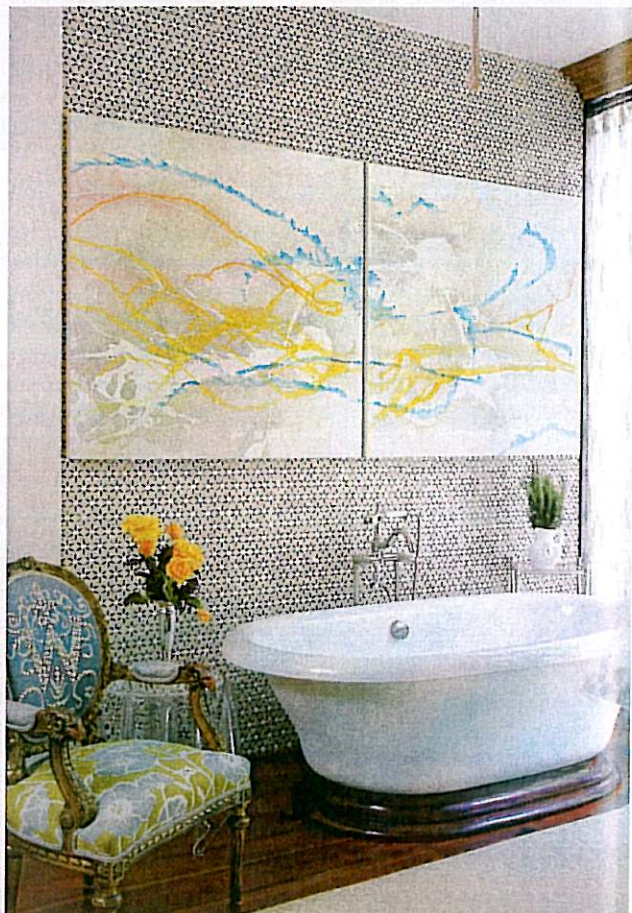
The adjoining breakfast room with its ample banquette and spill-proof fabric is perfectly kid- and pet-friendly. "Sela and I

brought fabric samples back and tested them out thoroughly," laughs Carter. "They're impenetrable!"

At the other end of the house, near the master bedroom, are arguably the home's most formal spaces. The living room and library, with their diverse collections of art, luxuriously clad furnishings, and fluid arrangements have that Southern *thang*. Tailored yet comfortable. Refined yet inviting. Polished yet carefree.

In the library, a work by filmmaker and artist Thierry Guetta (*aka* Mr. Brainwash) adds a hint of irreverence to the otherwise formal space. Richly hued wood-paneled walls are constructed from antique cypress doors from a company out of New Orleans. "I handpicked every door," notes Carter. "The room is completely enveloped in cypress, even the coffered ceiling. And it's all from Louisiana!"







Guest cottage A carved headboard and colorfully patterned textiles add an exotic element to the guest cottage.

Master bedroom A four poster with bed curtains, white upholstery, and French doors with a view to the garden add serenity to the master bedroom.

Art studio Sela paints in her studio. A lofted bedroom and a bathroom enclosed behind sliding louvered doors allow the space to be used as a guest room as well.

Master bath A dramatic wall of small-scale patterned tiles becomes a work of art all its own.

Just steps below, in the living room, reclaimed doors from France enclose a stainless steel bar—a handsome combination of vintage and modern. A painting by Sela crowns the carved fireplace mantel. A wall of steel-framed doors opens onto a terrace overlooking a stream lined with rosebushes, Mexican lime trees, and parrot's beak (lotus vine).

And while the indoor spaces flow effortlessly, one into the next, the melding of indoors and out is just as fluid. With doors thrown open wide, it's sometimes difficult to tell where the house ends and the manicured grounds begin. "We're nestled into this canyon," says Sela, "enveloped by it. The house becomes one with the exterior in a Frank Lloyd Wright kind of way."

And like the house, every square inch of this 8-acre property has a purpose. An organic vegetable garden filled with red chard, arti-

chokes, and myriad other vegetables is harvested for family dinners. Sela's art studio—perched below a koi pond that feeds the property's stream—offers creative respite. An amphitheater is host to summer concerts and gatherings of friends and family. At the top, a lake—complete with beach, hammock, tiki torches, and putting greens—is a recent and favorite addition. "You feel like you could be anywhere in the world when you're up there," says Sela. "I often feel like I'm in St. Barts!"

St. Barts or Southern California—this little slice of Bel Air will always have Southern soul. ■

Architect: Robbin Hayne

Interior designer: Ann Runyon Carter

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