

# Photo Finish

IT'S A PERPETUAL VACATION IN PHOTOGRAPHER **GRAY MALIN'S** CALIFORNIA HOME, WHERE HIS DREAMY IMAGERY SETS A CLASSIC COASTAL TONE.

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A breaking-wave photo (far right) that Gray Malin shot from a helicopter inspired the design of his family's living room. "We really wanted to lean into the coastal environment," he says. Sofas are placed for calming symmetry. New built-ins offer tuck-in spots for the family's travel finds.



Gray Malin (on the right) with his husband, Jeff Richardson, and their 5-year-olds, Max and Dove. The grayish-blue accents hint at the interior's coastal style.

When Gray and his husband, Jeff Richardson, first got the keys, the house was a bit sterile for their tastes: Rooms had generous 11-foot ceilings but fell short of the warm, welcoming feel Gray envisioned. "I knew after walking through that I could transform it from a modern farmhouse interior to a traditional coastal aesthetic, and I accepted the challenge in my heart," says Gray, who was raised in Dallas in a decor-loving household (his mother was an interior design editor for *Glamour* magazine) and who leans toward classic in his interior choices.

Gray and Jeff freshened the kitchen with a calming blue paint color on the cabinets. They painted inky ceiling beams white for a sense of lightness. And they enlisted L.A. designer Leslie L. Hunt to help select patterns for things such as window treatments and headboards (including the primary bedroom's 9-foot-tall beauty inspired by beds in a favorite London hotel) that would bring in instant coziness.

Given Gray's job as a photographer, it's perhaps no surprise that his imagery is the focal point for several of the rooms. In the dining room, a large photo taken off the Italian island of Capri provides a de facto picture window on one wall. In the study, a flurry of dalmatians Gray photographed at Paris' circa-1639 Palais-Royal becomes a cinematic backdrop.

"My photography is meant to transport you to a place of relaxation and happiness, and carrying this philosophy over to my

**F**ine art photographer Gray Malin has become famous for capturing a color-saturated and enviable version of the world—like aerials of beaches that make you wish you were there and playful renditions of pampered pups in ritzy locations. He is arguably his generation's Slim Aarons (the celebrity photographer whose iconic images captured the midcentury jet set at play). Gray recently trained his eye for beauty and love of vacation destinations on his family's new home near the beaches of Pacific Palisades, CA. "If you look at all my work, you'll see there is a lot of symmetry," he says. "I love composing my interiors in the same style, with symmetric lines and strong composition."



"This is the first time that we have a true formal dining room," Gray says. "In our previous home, our dining room became our playroom." A balance between formal and casual is struck by pairing classic furniture and a vine-motif wallpaper with a seagrass rug and Gray's image of the Faraglioni rocks off Capri, Italy.

The study is Gray and Jeff's escape hatch. Built-ins display books and collected objects that are off-limits to the kids. An Eames chair and ottoman veer the traditional space to modern. Layered rugs include a washable one from Gray's Ruggable collection. "Layering rugs is fun, and if someone spills on it, you always have the rug just below," he says.



Sea blue barn doors help launch the surf scene in the mudroom, where the closet, above, is a focal point. "That little vignette sparks the appetite for what's to come in the home," Gray says. The surfboard's Saint-Tropez image is one of Gray's past product collaborations.

Painting cabinets and installing 2-inch-thick quartzite countertops spin the kitchen, above right, in a lighter mood. One of Gray's photographs hangs with hook-and-loop tape, which allows for easy removal when cooking spatter-risky foods. The breakfast area, right, gains beachy texture from woven chairs.



house has been easy," Gray says. "We chose paint colors that make spaces feel coastal and sunny, grass cloth to warm up and invite you in, wallpaper that reminds us of destinations we have traveled to, and, of course, lots of books and decorative objects we've collected over the years that help bring us back to happy moments as a family." Because the couple knew that life with two young kids can be a bit chaotic and uncontrolled—and it doesn't always mesh with the more perfect world of interior design—accommodations were made. They chose hard-wearing quartzite kitchen countertops over marble and, when feasible, opted for indoor-outdoor fabrics or ones that could be tossed in the washing machine. "We wanted to create a space people felt comfortable in, so if someone spilled or the kids accidentally took a crayon to the sofa, it wasn't a big deal," Gray says. Even as Gray's work continues to take him to destinations all over the world, none of those places rival the feeling of contentment he has right at home. "Our house is our ultimate vacation," he says.

"I TRY TO CREATE SPACES THAT FEEL LIKE YOU'RE ON A VACATION. EACH ROOM INVITES YOU TO ESCAPE TO A NEW DESTINATION."

—GRAY MALIN



The primary bedroom, *opposite*, has a showstopping canyon view over redwoods and a huge oak tree that sets the room's palette. Dallas-based ceramicist Paul Schneider painted lamps to match the colors of the soaring headboard, inspired by the couple's love of Kit Kemp's designs for Firmdale Hotels. "Because the room is peaked, it has a very tall ceiling, and we wanted to play that up," Gray says. In the primary bath, *above*, matching the Roman shade fabric to the wallpaper creates a continuous flow that emphasizes the voluminous feeling; the octagonal side table provides shapely interest. "The room is harmonious and bright—a balanced space to start and end the day," Gray says.



● Max's bedroom, *opposite*, goes nautical with an antique mirror that reflects the ceiling's starry-sky wallpaper. Gray's photograph of dogs picnicking brings in playfulness. "This room is quintessentially Max," Gray says. "It's young and boyish but also has a bit of a sophisticated feel."

● All-over stripes make Dove's bedroom, *left*, seem like "a magical tent," Gray says. A blue strip cut from the wallpaper and applied as trim provides a visual break between the walls and ceiling.

● Palm Beach chic meets island whimsy in the guest bedroom, *below*. Gray's travels inspired using a fun fabric on the upholstered headboard and a chinoiserie-style mirror.



● Iconic China Seas Lyford Trellis wallpaper from Quadrille pairs with a gilt bamboo mirror and woven shades on sconces to put the bathroom, *above*, on island time.



The backyard firepit gets heavy use to keep everyone warm on chilly evenings. Also warming things up are the woven rattan chairs and sofa with plush cushions and chinoiserie garden stools. "You could be in the Hamptons or you could be on Nantucket, but you're actually in a canyon by a beach in L.A.," Gray says. □

"WE USE OUR BACKYARD A LOT. IT MAKES SENSE FOR US WHERE WE ARE AT THIS LIFE STAGE AS A FAMILY." —GRAY MALIN