

A photograph of a swimming pool in a lush garden. The pool is in the foreground, reflecting the sky and the surrounding greenery. The garden is filled with various trees and plants, including large potted trees on either side of the pool. In the background, a hill rises under a clear blue sky. The overall scene is bright and sunny, with a warm, golden light.

OUT OF AFRICA

Inspired by the spirit of Karen Blixen's Kenyan aesthetic, a Malibu ranch beats to its own drum

BY DAWN MOORE PHOTOGRAPHED BY TIM STREET-PORTER

Antique African currency mounted as sculpture from Primary Source joins Richard Gere's *Tibetan Boy on a Horse* and Herb Ritts' *Enveloped Girls* on the stone mantel. OPPOSITE The pool is lined with greenery and terra-cotta pots from Inner Gardens.



T

he 'Bu coastline is rife with power brokers, movie stars and surf fanatics averaging maybe seven feet between neighbors. But above them, there is space. Glorious space. Just ask Chris Cortazzo, who owns a slice of enchanted forest like no other. "I am sure elves and fairies live on this magical property; the spirit of the land is so powerful and positive." And so is the house itself, boasting an intense tribal vibe throughout. Therein lies Cortazzo's charm. Coldwell Banker's top producing realtor in the U.S. hails from Malibu and appreciates the value of this land. A 30-year-long vegetarian, he has an elaborate (unused) outdoor grill and a menagerie of rescued feathered friends that include turkeys, chickens and peacocks. "They don't have names, but I know all their personalities." No doubt his two German shepherds, Lola and Tazzo, do, too.

The 28-acre property loops up and down soft knolls and winds around the original 1940s California ranch structure. "It's the most amazing place to entertain [whether for a friend's wedding or an intimate gathering for allies from one of the 40-plus organizations Cortazzo supports, including PETA, Elton John AIDS Foundation, Boys & Girls Club and Farm Sanctuary]. Whenever I say there's a party at the ranch, everyone scrambles!"

While in escrow on the property in 2006, a New Year's sojourn to South Africa's Royal Malewane lodge (with close friend and interior decorator Martyn Lawrence Bullard) ignited the interior's inspiration. Cortazzo was first introduced to the continent by lensman Herb Ritts while assisting on a shoot in 1993. Ritts encouraged Cortazzo's love for both photography and African culture. Since then, Cortazzo has added images from Peter Beard, Nick Brandt, Richard Gere and, of course, Ritts himself. Prominent as they are, the emotive works offer a backdrop to the treasures collected over 20 years: beads from Tibet, artifacts from Peru, candlesticks from London, ceremonial jewelry from South Africa. And Bullard's aesthetic was a perfect match. Cortazzo's directive to the designer? To be able to curl up in any corner, barefoot. "The central hub is a cocoon for Chris," says Bullard. "Luxurious, ethnic fabrics yet comfortable and laid back."

Perfect for those cool evenings tucked in with a little carbon-neutral vodka. •



"The house has a traveled eye. Great moments of photography, interesting bowls of beads, feathers in vases, collector's items dropped on stacks of books," notes designer Martyn Lawrence Bullard. Three powerful photographs by Leni Riefenstahl hang above a ladder-back chair and coffee table by Axel Vervoordt.





CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT In the garden, teak plantation chairs from British Khaki. In the dining room, a captain's table from Dos Gallos and works by Peter Beard and Herb Ritts. On the master bedroom's side table, a gift of Galle glass from Ritts sits beside the custom four-poster bed from MLB Home Collection. The pool cabana's entrance drips with wisteria. Chris Cortazzo. Steel and brass custom log holders flank the sunroom's stone fireplace. A Restoration Hardware lamp on an antique table in the guesthouse.



An African indigo cloth at the foot of the custom bed. The tactile vibe continues with Sultan Garden fabric-covered walls and red Bobbin table from MLB Home Collection.





Floating above the overscale tub from Waterworks in the master bath is a vintage Hundi lantern from JF Chen. Raw Belgium linen drapes puddle on an Afghan tribal rug. OPPOSITE "We found really fabulous textiles in London; a vintage Turkish horse blanket for the bedcovering," Bullard notes. Chair and bed pillows covered in Senja linen from MLB Fabric. Giraffe prints by Nick Brandt.

