

# RIVIERA Interiors

5TH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE!

**FRESH  
FALL  
STYLE**

**INDOOR-OUTDOOR LIVING**

THE INTERVIEW  
KELLY WEARSTLER

O.C.'S BREAKOUT TALENTS

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**PLUS**  
NEW ON THE GREEN SCENE  
FROM BEACH TO CHIC IN LA JOLLA

## Glam Lab

Designer Lori Gentile transforms a plain-box La Jolla house into a head-turning retreat for glamorous beach-chic.

By AnnaMaria Stephens  
Photography by Ed Gohlich

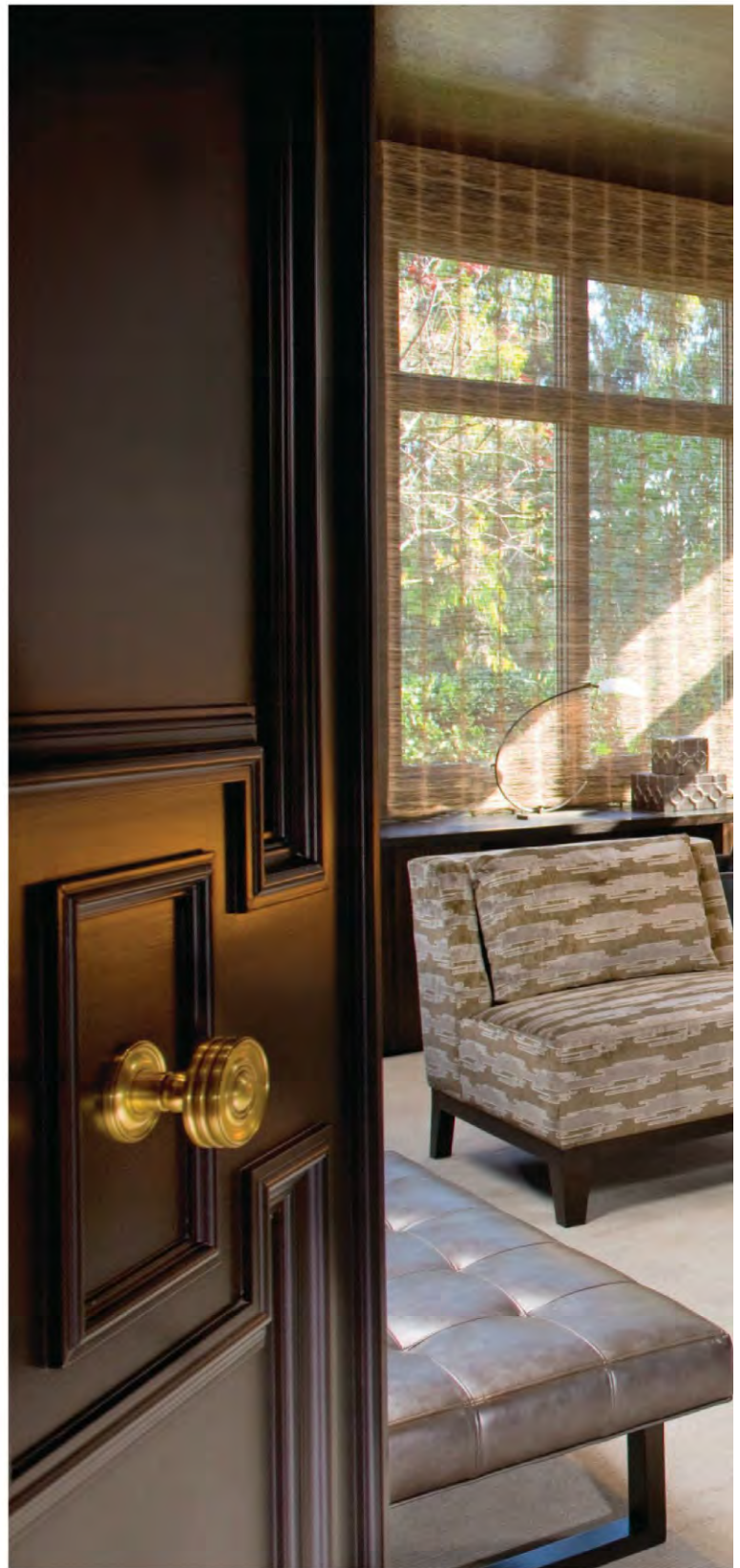
“Carte blanche” may be the two words every interior designer most longs to hear. The first time Lori Gentile showed her La Jolla clients a sheaf of CAD drawings, they gave her the no-questions-asked go-ahead to transform their home from top to bottom—and the budget to bankroll her vision. The couple was so thrilled with the results, they tapped her again to design their backyard. After all, perfection is priceless.

“It’s so fulfilling working with people who have complete trust and faith in you and your team,” says Gentile, whose firm is based in Solana Beach.

The outdoor area, though expansive, had a cookie-cutter feel, with boxy chaise lounges in solid fabric lining the pool area and a series of banal white lattice pergolas providing shaded spots along the side of the house.

### OFFICE ACE

For the client’s home office, designer Lori Gentile covered a pair of custom-designed chairs with fabric designed by Kelly Wearstler for Kravet. The coffee table is from Designers Gallery in San Diego and the pendant light is from Ironware International, purchased at Blake House.









"We simplified the exterior and went for a modern, sophisticated look by combining textures and using strong architectural elements," says Gentile.

Her starting point? A striking metal artwork already owned by her clients. "I wanted to incorporate the drama of the sculpture," she explains.

Just beyond the pool, which was gorgeously redone in glittering mosaic tiles from Oceanside Glass, the sculpture serves as a focal point, viewable from the entrance of the house and perfectly framed by a new pergola, which architect Craig Frieauf designed based on Gentile's specifications.

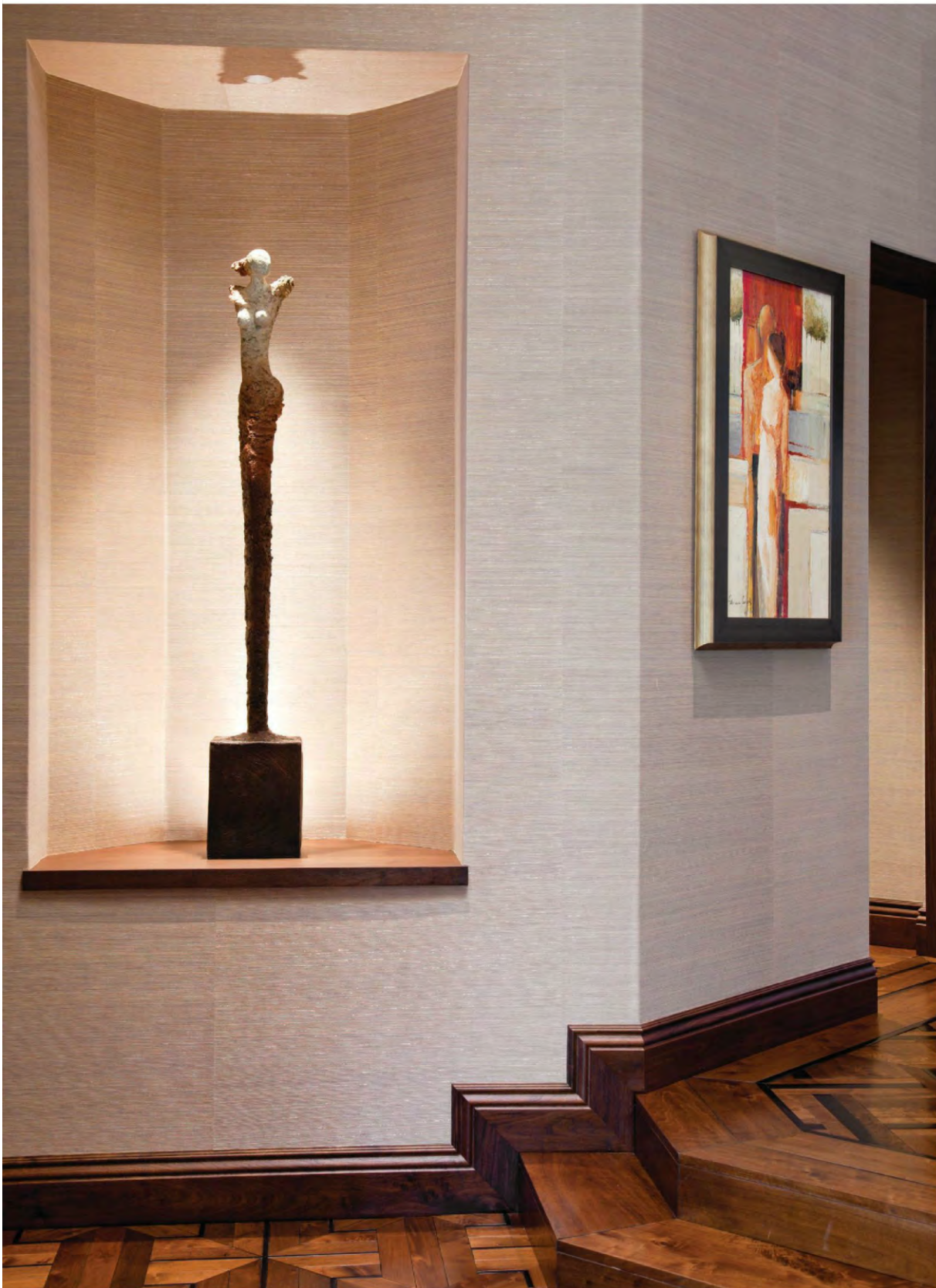
The pergola's unique roof, made of zinc, reclaimed wood and stained-black beams, does not have any horizontal supports, a structural sleight of hand on Frieauf's part. "He really rose to the challenge," says Gentile. At night, two rows of hanging lights from Hammerton Fixtures cast a soft glow over the seating areas below.

Throughout the yard, Gentile created a series of lounging areas for her clients, empty-nesters who love to entertain. A cushy sectional topped with pillows and a pair of chaises form an outdoor living room where lawn used to dominate. By the pool, guests can sink into beanbag chairs that surround a trio of fire bowls.

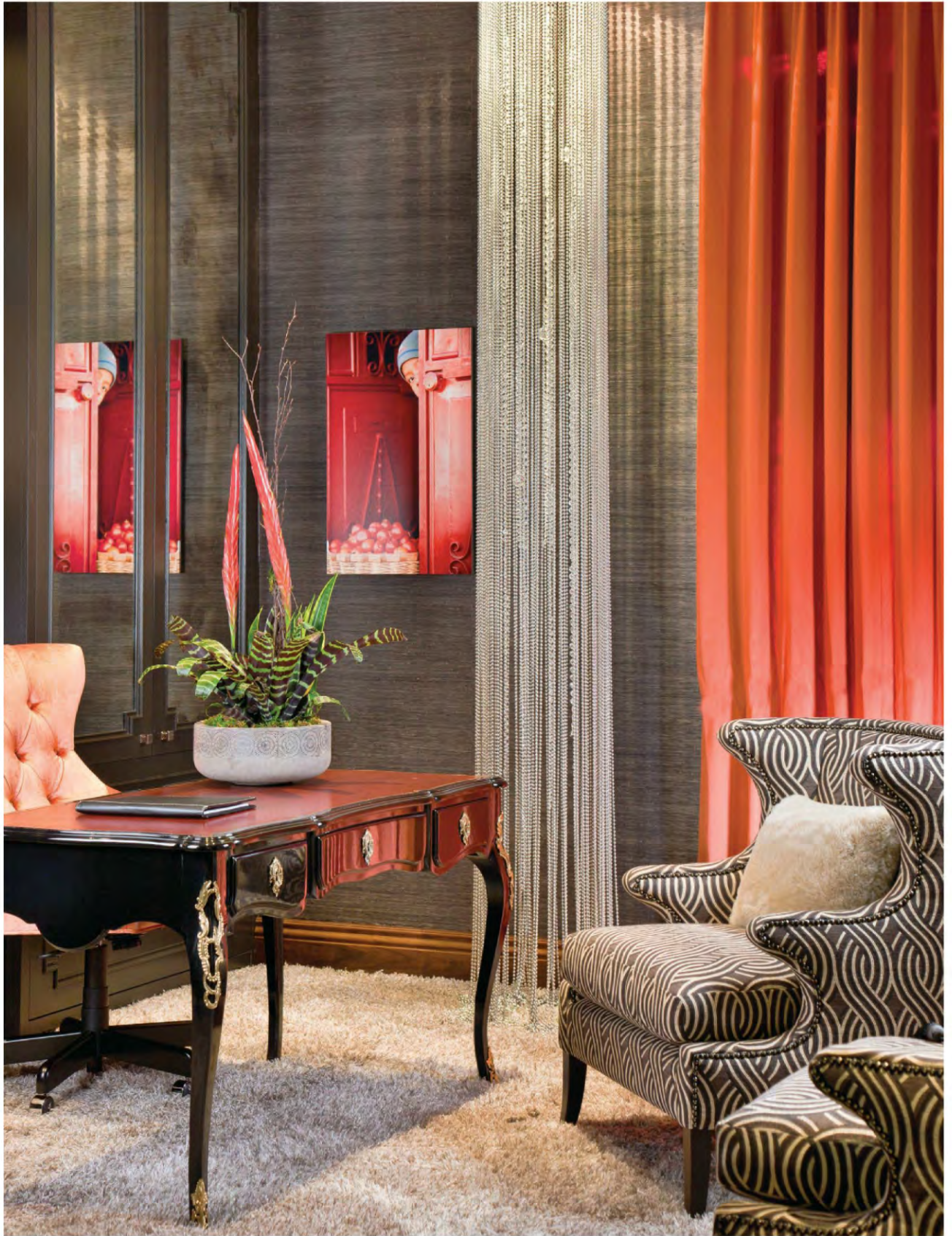
A bar area, which also serves as barbecue central, is set against the backdrop of a teak TV wall, designed by Gentile's go-to cabinetmaker, Jeff

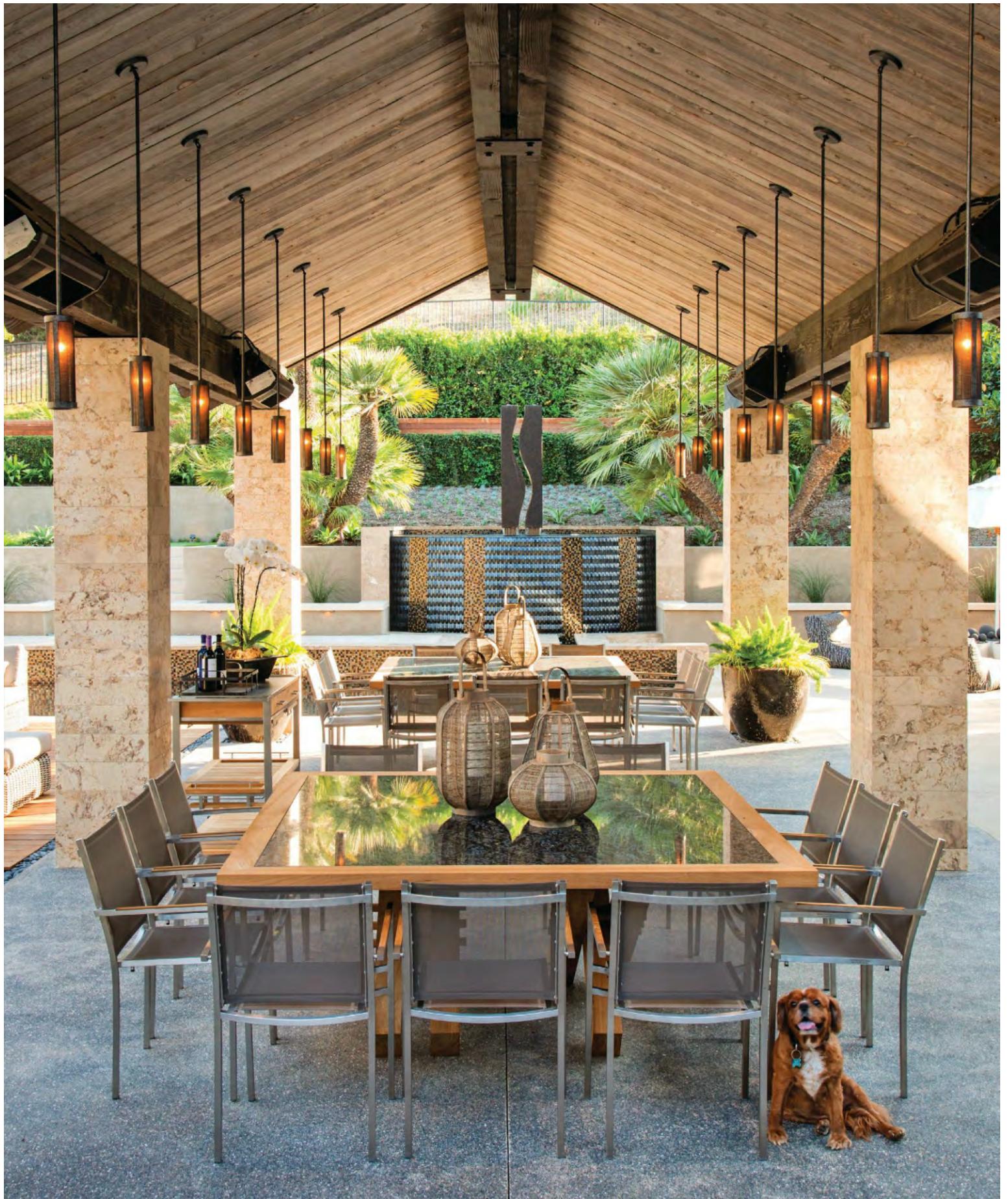
**MATERIALS WORLD**  
Clockwise, from top left: Designer Lori Gentile; one of the outdoor patio's many seating areas, designed around a fireplace; Gentile used granite counters for the kitchen and porcelain tile for the backsplash in the kitchen/breakfast areas. Opposite page: The media room features a large-scale photograph by Robert Dutesco. Gentile custom-designed the sectional sofa.





**FINISH LESSONS** Left: A bronze statue by Gustavo Torres from Madison Gallery in La Jolla lives in an entry niche. Opposite page: Black grass cloth and a desk by Ralph Lauren in the wife's home office make for a glamorous refuge.









...CONTINUED Nilson, who also crafted several outdoor tables, and one of the yard's most noteworthy features, a hanging bed with custom-made chains that's tucked into a second, smaller pergola.

"The hanging bed is something I experienced in Cambodia and just loved," says Gentile, who finds much of her design inspiration while traveling. "I love the dreamy feeling of swaying back and forth ever so slowly, inhaling the flowers nearby while you sip a cold drink and fight off the urge to just shut your eyes."

Building materials and textiles seamlessly tie everything together. "A clean and simple color palette of ebony, pearl and charcoal with a small pop of citrus in mainly solids lends itself to the relaxed, not-overdone look," points out Gentile.

"My clients have been having get-together after get-together since completing the yard," she adds. That's high praise indeed, considering the home's inviting interior, which Gentile took from traditional to a "Hollywood glamour-meets-modern" style.

The project started a few years ago when the couple, both business owners, called upon Gentile to redo the wife's office, which looked high-end but stuffy with its cherry built-ins, paneling and coffered ceiling.

For high drama, Gentile chose lacquered black built-ins and black grass cloth walls. Add to that a gray shag carpet from Stark, a Ralph Lauren desk and a drop-dead custom chandelier with silver beads and crystals that "drips from the ceiling," and her clients were sold.

The rest of the house followed. Starting with the bedroom, which is a sexy retreat featuring a floor-to-ceiling fireplace lined in pewter and copper mosaic tiles. Plenty of other custom touches were also added, like an extra-wide bench from Ironies—now part of the company's permanent line—to the living room, which no longer revolves around a flat-screen and is outfitted in soothing shades of mocha, orange, lemon and gray.

It was also Gentile's first kosher kitchen. "I met with the rabbi's wife, who helped me understand the design requirements," she says. (Dairy- and meat-related items must be stored separately.) Clean-lined wenge cabinetry complements the intricately patterned parquet flooring, while Lucite pullouts and curtains made from black-and-lemon Kelly Wearstler Ikat are dazzling and unexpected details.

Though Gentile deserves the credit for every last luxurious touch, she credits her clients' taste as well. "They are dream clients with exceptional style." ■

**INSIDE OUT THINKING**  
From left: Gentile used flocked wallpaper for the dining room ceiling and a Barlas Baylar-designed chandelier from Hudson Furniture. Oceanside Glass tile was used for the fireplace in the master bedroom. Opposite page: The main lanai area was built for large-scale entertaining with two custom-made tables and chairs from Mamagreen.