



Jason and Laura O'Dell transformed a traditional A-frame in Big Bear, California, starting with the outside, which they painted black. Exterior paint, black in flat finish; dunn edwards.com.

A REVIVAL

WHEN A PAIR OF **FUN-LOVING** DESIGNERS TAKE ON A CLASSIC CABIN IN THE WOODS, THE RESULT IS A **NEW ICON** IN THE MAKING.

BY **CHANTAL LAMERS**
PHOTOGRAPHS BY **THOMAS J. STORY**

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The first time Jason and Laura O'Dell checked out a mouse-friendly, woebegone 1963 A-frame at the edge of Big Bear Lake, they swept their two young kids into their arms so they wouldn't touch anything. Yet as fans of the iconic architectural style, the couple was smitten. "A-frames are modern yet rustic," says Jason. "And it's hard to beat 28-foot-high ceilings with triangular windows." Less than two years later, following a major shake-up inside and out, he and Laura have created a weekend retreat for themselves and their two kids—Shaun, 6, and Layla, 3—that's worth braving the bumper-to-bumper traffic from their home in Los Angeles.

Jason and Laura aren't ones to pass up a design challenge. Shortly before discovering the cabin, the couple—who sell their own line of wallpaper and clothing at their Silver Lake shop, The O'Dells (theodellsshop.com)—ventured into the house-flipping business with Tony Kanal, the bassist of No Doubt, and his wife, Erin Lokitz. "They came over for our daughter's birthday, and we discovered we share a love for architecture and design," says Laura. Their firm, Four + Four, was born shortly after.

When it came to modifying their own woodsy home, however, the O'Dells went it alone. The first thing to go? A second floor that had been added years prior, giving the home a dark, claustrophobic feel. Once they removed the second story and raised the crossbeams, "the house really came to life," says Jason. To amplify the natural light, he worked nearly three-dozen windows into the design. And to make up for the square footage lost by nixing the loft, they extended the ground level, altering the A-frame's profile to create space for a wing of bedrooms, a wing of bathrooms, and a large area to entertain.

Along the way, the couple found smart, stylish ways to stay within their budget. "By putting brass screws in the cheapest light cover, you've just customized every light switch in your house for the price of a nice bag of coffee," says Jason. "And mixing small porcelain light fixtures with huge globe lightbulbs adds so much more character than installing regular recessed lights."

Some of the home's most ingenious features, though, are those that cater to the couple's young "clients"—their two kids. For their bedroom, Jason dreamed up custom bunk beds, complete with built-in cubbies for toys. And in the living room, he installed a series of tricked-out features that allow the space to magically transform into a movie theater. A hidden screen can be lowered from the crossbeams, a low-hanging light gets raised by a pulley for showtime, and



subwoofers tucked beneath the couch mean that when a spaceship passes by during a *Star Wars* screening, the family can feel the rumbling beneath them.

But the living room doesn't stop inside. Just outside the space's bifolding glass doors, extra-wide stairs "act as a sort of bleacher for the lake," says Jason. "Having them so

wide creates a great space to lounge on in the summer."

It may come as no surprise that the couple has so many friends requesting to stay at the house that they've started a running calendar of their visitors, says Laura: "Let's just say there haven't been many weekends when the house hasn't been well used."

PROP STYLING: MERISA LIBBY



DESIGN IN LAYERS

"I'm a big fan of mixing colors, prints, and texture," says Laura. "We chose our sofa and rugs first before letting the other elements, such as throws, artwork, and accessories, come into play." Among those extras: a rope-and-wood swing for the couple's kids. LRG sofa and SQG42 coffee table;

artlesscorporation.com. Akari light (similar to shown), from \$160; shop.noguchi.org. Loxo pillow; brookperdigon.com. Custom wood swing (similar to shown), \$60; theoriginaltreeswing.com.

KEEP IT LIGHT

Open-weave chairs prevent the tight dining nook from feeling

crowded. Laura fell for this high-impact Morrissey image by photographer Michael Muller, whom Jason (a former photographer) used to assist. Sidera chairs, \$249 each; cb2.com. Custom tripod table, Studio Hus; studiohus.com. Photograph; mullerphoto.com. Vintage ceramics; amsterdammodern.com.



COZY UP CORNERS

A freestanding mid-century fireplace (left) is in keeping with the cabin's roots and adds architectural dimension to the living room. *Malm fireplace (similar to shown); dwr.com.*

CREATE A PLACE TO LAND

The original kitchen, says Laura, "had terrible lighting and low ceilings and felt dismal." Jason anchored the revamped room (above) with a sprawling island built from three slabs of Calacatta marble in a natural waterfall pattern. He contrasted the coolness of the marble with warm walnut

cabinets. *Sektion cabinets; ikea.com. Lewis Hardware Bar Pull Collection, from \$7; myk nobs.com. X2 Stools; artlesscorporation.com.*

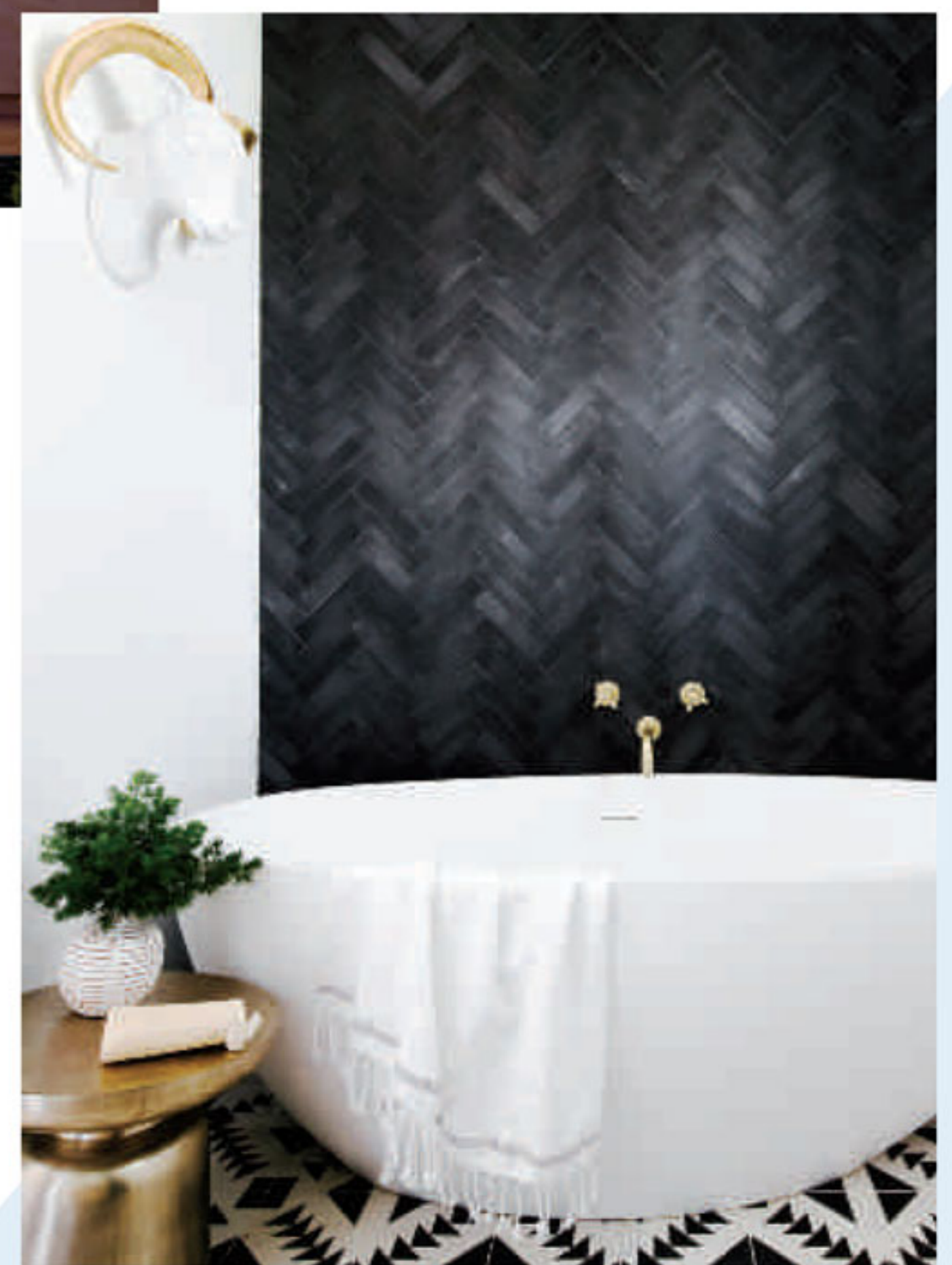
PARE DOWN

"Since it's a weekend house, we didn't need big bedrooms," says Jason. To prevent the master bedroom (far right) from feeling cramped, the couple opted for a low-slung bed and vintage floating side tables. A macramé wall hanging by Emily Katz and pottery on a vintage dresser (right) bring a boho spirit. *Alchemy Bronze Bed, from \$649; cb2.com. Magical Thinking Net Tassel duvet cover*



"I HAVE A **REAL LOVE** FOR THRIFTING, SO THE HOUSE IS ALL ABOUT THAT **HIGH-LOW MIX.**"

—LAURA O'DELL



(similar to shown), \$149; urbanoutfitters.com. Pendleton blanket; pendleton-usa.com. Vintage orange kilim pillow; dekorla.com. Custom wall hanging; modernmacrame.com. Dream catcher; torchlightjewelry.com.

GO WILD

The home's openness creates a sense of freedom that's harder to come by in L.A., says Laura. The kids can play outside until dusk, and when the stairs (opposite) are covered in snow, they slide down the makeshift hill on saucers.

KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE

Jason designed double plywood-and-steel bunk beds (left), which include

a middle console—ideal for toys or an iPad—with inset cup holders.

CREATE A SCENE

In the entry (below left), dark wallpaper with an oversize floral print from the couple's line acts as a prelude to the exterior. *Paenonia wallpaper*, \$149/roll; theadellsshop.com. *Fladis basket*, \$20; ikea.com.

SOAK IN STYLE

To accommodate guests, the couple made space for two bathrooms, giving one of them (below right) what Jason calls "the best tub you could ever want" and installing a large shower in the other. *Halo tub*; blubathworks.com. *Tile in Tulum*; cementtileshop.com. ▾

DIGITAL BONUS See more details from inside the home at sunset.com/afame.