

GO WEST

Creature of Comfort

The Rustic Canyon home of the Elder Statesman's Greg Chait is as warm and inviting as his designs.



We don't actually have a couch," says Greg Chait, standing in

front of the massive wooden table that dominates the living room of his home near Santa Monica. "We haven't quite figured it out yet—we usually end up on the floor anyway." Chait, who designs quirkily classic sweaters, blankets, and sundry other fashionable items, all in cashmere, under the label the Elder Statesman (his efforts won him the 2012 CFDA/Vogue Fashion Fund Award), recently moved to this 1920s Spanish Revival ranch house with his partner, the actor Laura Ramsey, and their three-year-old daughter, Dorothy. And in fact Dorothy, wearing her brand-new apple-green fairy-princess dress, demonstrates how superfluous a sofa can be, leaping off the table and running outside to turn cartwheels on the lawn, followed by Ramsey, who is clad in jeans and a wonderfully simple wheat-colored Elder Statesman pullover.

It was actually Ramsey who found the house, and just in time: The three of them had been living in cozy—OK, insanely cramped—quarters on the beach on Malibu Road. ("Steps to

the sand, but really small! Maybe 600 square feet," Chait says.) Believe it or not, though their new neighborhood, Rustic Canyon, is wildly desirable and has virtually zero housing stock available, Ramsey spied the place on Craigslist. Chait could hardly believe his luck. "Everybody loves this canyon—the schools are good, it's striking distance to the best beaches and restaurants, and it's only 20 minutes from West Hollywood."

Inside, one is struck by the stark simplicity of the decor, frankly not always the case when a toddler is in residence. Vintage patchwork Japanese flea-market rugs grace the floors, while the master bedroom's single extravagance is a sinuous rope lamp by the Dutch designer [view >612](#)

THE LIVING IS EASY
CHAIT AND RAMSEY LOUNGE ON THE LAWN IN THE ELDER STATESMAN; DOROTHY WEARS HER OWN VINTAGE DRESS.

SEBASTIAN KIM: FASHION EDITOR; SALLY LYNDELEY: HAIR; CHI WONG: MAKEUP; SANDRA LANZNER: DETAILS; SEE IN THIS ISSUE.

VIEW

Living by Design



LA VIE EN ROSE

CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: THE COUPLE IN THEIR FLOWER-STREWN GARDEN; A CHAIR PICKED UP ON VACATION; AN AMISH BENCH.

Christien Meindertsma for Thomas Eyck. Dorothy's playroom contains little but a balky 1920s hand-cranked Victrola, currently awaiting the ministrations of Ramsey's father to get it going again: "When it's working, we have great dance parties," she says.

"All we dreamed of when we got this place was to keep it really sparse—it feels so good not to have a lot of stuff around us," Chait explains, though when pressed he admits that the family has belongings stashed in storage spaces all over town. The comfortably austere decorating scheme and Chait's designs both exemplify a modern idea of luxury: His sweaters, rendered in the most desirable yarn available, brook no extraneous details; his house manages, like the pullovers, to be both warm and clutter-free.

It may well be that preconceived notions of the good life—e.g., being surrounded by a surfeit of expensive things—are now just as outmoded, as moribund, as the idea that Los Angeles is some kind of style backwater. "I love being a designer in L.A.," Chait says. "It's an extremely creative place with a brilliant support network." This new L.A. just kind of happened in the last six or seven years, he adds, citing the burgeoning art scene, the presence of the Gagosian, and the arrival of Hedi Slimane. "People shop here—they buy art! And L.A. is so much more central to the world if you view that world through the eyes of China, Japan, and Korea."

While Dorothy curls up on a linen throw bed, Chait and Ramsey retell their classic American success stories—Ramsey drove out here at nineteen with a friend from Wisconsin with dreams of acting; three days into a waitressing job, a customer suggested an audition, which proved to be the beginning of a very successful acting career. This real-life *Star Is Born* saga is more than matched by Chait's own story—raised by South African parents who emigrated to Arizona, he has been, among other things, an intern with Whitney Houston at eighteen; a junior executive at the Firm (he started in the mailroom); and a North American partner for Ksubi jeans. His full beard is a souvenir of more peripatetic days—he hasn't shaved since he was bumming around Indonesia more than a decade ago.

Though the house has been updated many times in the last 80-odd years, Chait and Ramsey have kept their changes to a minimum. "We're moving slowly to make it ours," Ramsey says, allowing that she might add, say, some flowers, or maybe even a picture in the bedroom. Right now, the three of them are happy with things exactly as they are. "I don't think anyone would argue that this isn't a perfect place to live," Chait says with deep contentment. "You can surf and go to LACMA the same day."—LYNN YAEGER

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BEARING FRUIT
RAMSEY'S GRANDFATHER HAND-MADE THE KITCHEN TABLE.



AGUA FRESCA
LEFT, DOROTHY FILLS THE BIRDBATH. ABOVE, THE HAND-PAINTED GATE TO THE GARDEN.

