

ARCHITECTURAL DIGEST

THE INTERNATIONAL DESIGN AUTHORITY

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SPECIAL ISSUE

COUNTRY HOUSES

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from Classic to Contemporary

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Stylish Ranch**

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Dream Project**

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in Laguna Beach**

**AD TRIBUTE:
Design Legend
Albert Hadley**



“TRUE AUTHENTICITY
IS A LACK OF PERFECTION,”
says architect Gil Schafer.



Kelso Lounge Chair
by Munder-Skiles

Hemings Chairs by Munder-Skiles

Above: Munder-Skiles chairs accompany a skirted table on the ground-floor glazed porch.

Opposite: The kitchen features Schafer-designed cabinetry and light fixtures by Ann-Morris Antiques; the hood and range are by Wolf, the microwave is by Viking, the sink is by Waterworks, and the barstools are by Mulligan's.

organized sight lines that belie the rambling façade. Solid-brass hardware, purposely left free of lacquer so the metal will develop a mottled patina, was used on all windows and doors, and even the woodwork was designed to appear venerable. "We sourced several 1820s Federal mantelpieces for the principal rooms," the architect explains. "These determined the molding program."

Entrusted with the decoration of the interiors, too, Schafer spiced the comfortable gentleman-farmer schemes with notes of worldly sophistication. In the formal dining room, sepia-tone scenic wallpaper portraying views of Moghul India makes an exotic backdrop for a gleaming Regency table. The quietly refined living room, accented by Gustavian chairs and jewel-hued fabrics, gets an unexpected jolt thanks to a large Walton Ford mixed-media work depicting a cassowary attacking an emu; the piece hangs above a sofa, precisely where an equestrian painting or a bosky landscape would customarily hold court. That outsize work of art might seem off-kilter to some visitors—especially in a space that otherwise exhibits all the attributes of traditional gracious country living—but in Schafer's opinion, its curious subject lends just the right touch of personality. "I like a vernacular that feels slightly monkeyed with," the architect asserts. "True authenticity is a lack of perfection." □

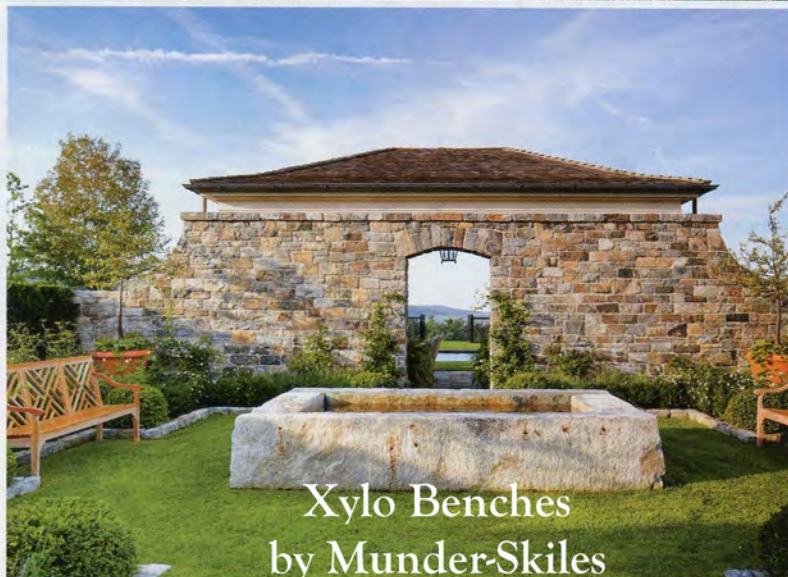




Aiken Sofa and Hayden Lounge Chairs
by Munder-Skiles

From top: A columned cabana is situated alongside the discreet swimming pool. Behind the cabana is the Fountain Garden, designed by Alexandra Kasmin; the granite basin is by Stone Structures, and the benches are by Munder-Skiles.

Opposite: A Greek Revival veranda overlooks the rolling landscape.



Xylo Benches
by Munder-Skiles

woodland and then opening onto a clearing with black-stained fences stretching in all directions. Winding past cornfields, a paddock, a barn, and that sparkling pond, the road finally reaches its destination: a 12,000-square-foot, six-bedroom manor set behind a gravel courtyard ringed by low stone walls and punctuated at its corners by a quartet of sycamore trees. (Garden designer Deborah Nevins, who frequently works with Schafer, developed the landscape plan.) A parterre with boxwood clipped into cloudlike mounds signals the main entrance; opposite the parterre, on the other side of the courtyard and facing the house, is an apple orchard. Nearby are a fenced cutting garden and a vegetable patch that spreads across a third of an acre. "We now grow 50 varieties of heirloom tomatoes and other organic produce," the husband says, adding that Schafer is overseeing the development of a four-acre plantation of oak and hazelnut trees on the farm, for the cultivation of Burgundian truffles.

The house's internal details are a tribute to Schafer's neotraditionalist credo, each room and corridor contributing to a unifying sense of warmth and elegance, but with evocative twists. Stately enfilades, for instance, provide



SPECIAL EFFECTS

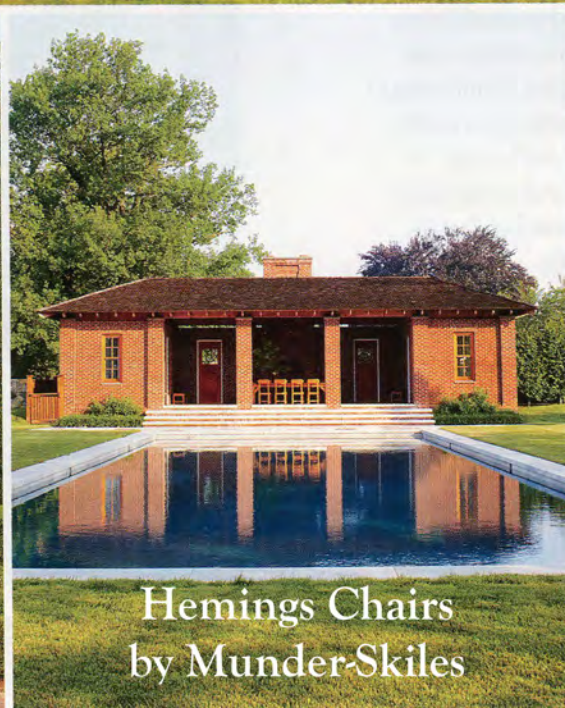
Filmmaker M. Night Shyamalan enlivens
a storied 1930s Georgian Revival estate near
Philadelphia with a romantic array
of English architectural styles

TEXT BY DAVID COLMAN
PHOTOGRAPHY BY ERIC PIASECKI
PRODUCED BY ROBERT RUFINO





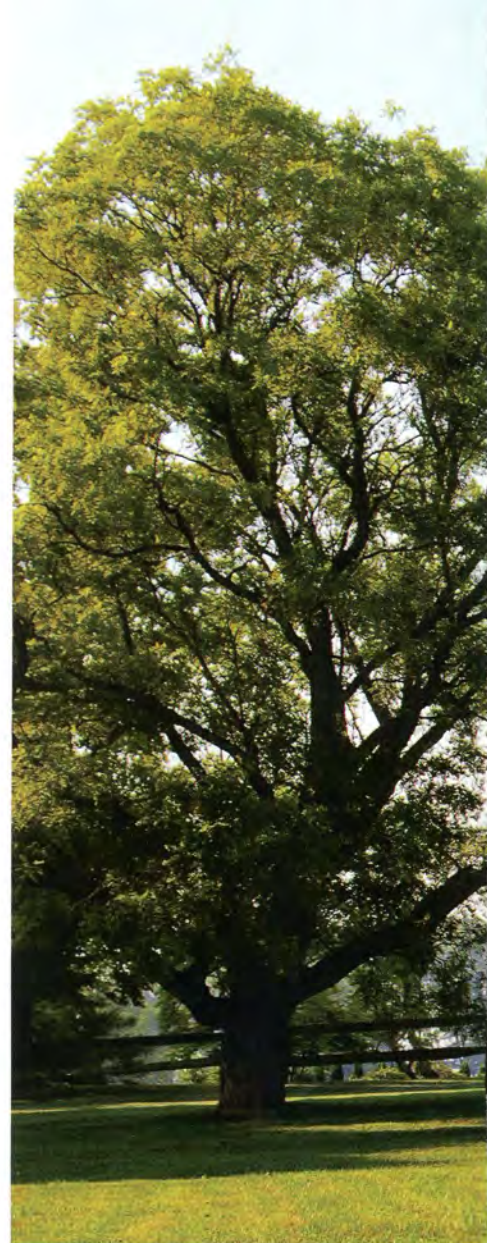
Garden Design:
Barbara Paca



Hemings Chairs
by Munder-Skiles



Kelso Dining Chairs
by Munder-Skiles



SOME FILMMAKERS, especially those known for uplifting dramas or screwball comedies, would no doubt be happy for their lives to imitate their art. But M. Night Shyamalan? His eerie works, filled with unthinkable monsters and unshakable frights, do not exactly go hand in hand with domestic bliss. So it may be surprising that, not long after completing *The Village*, his unsettling 2004 thriller, the writer/director/producer chose as his home a property rather reminiscent of the movie's setting.

Eight years ago Shyamalan and his wife, Bhavna, bought Ravenwood, an idyllic 125-acre estate in the rolling horse country west of Philadelphia, not far from where he grew up. Clad in aged red brick, the handsome 1937 Georgian Revival residence felt centuries away from the modern world, and yet a major turnpike snakes by just a mile down the road. *The Village*, for those unfamiliar with the plot, takes place in a seemingly preindustrial hamlet whose inhabitants are unaware that beyond the fearsome woods and the wall that surround them are (spoiler alert) present-day suburbs.

Seated in Ravenwood's oak-paneled library, Shyamalan smiles at the parallel. "It seems so obvious now, but we didn't think of it at the time," says the youthful auteur, whose cheery manner is quite at odds with the ominous bent of his work. (He is currently filming *After Earth*, starring Will Smith.)

In fact the couple's real-estate quest began with a humble goal. For years they had kept a weekend retreat in the

Clockwise from top left: Shyamalan and his wife, Bhavna.

Boxwood-edged parterres define the kitchen garden.

The brick-and-half-timber gatehouse is connected to the main residence by an orangerie. A trio of pendant lights in an outdoor dining area. The poolhouse. Cameron added the double-height library wing, at left; the bench in the foreground is by Munder-Skiles.



**Jeffersonian Bench
by Munder-Skiles**