

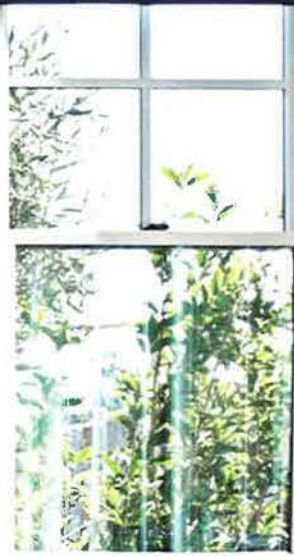
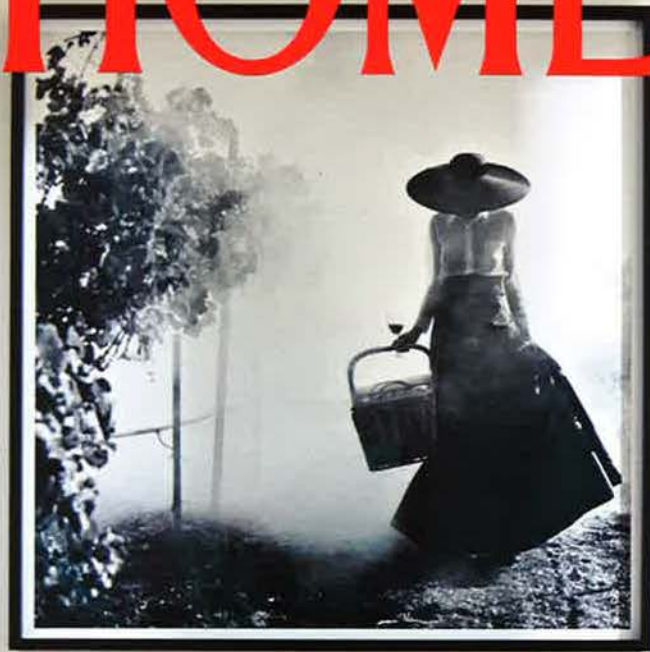
DESIGNER SECRETS FROM NEW YORK TO NASHVILLE TO NAPA

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July/August 2015

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 appiness flows in St. Helena, California, and not just from the wine bottle. For Jean-Pierre (J-P) Conte, Hillary Thomas, and their six children (four his, two hers), this Wine Country community is shorthand for haven and all the pleasures that go with it. In fact, the name of their second home, Contento, means “happy” in Spanish. “J-P is half-Cuban and half-French; his last name is Conte, and my nickname as a little girl was Happy,” says Hillary. “Contento seemed like a good name on so many levels.”

The San Francisco couple bought the three-acre property as the house was nearing completion four years ago, just in time for Hillary, an interior designer, to make the decorating decisions. A striking and consistent theme is the house’s overscale light fixtures. “Lighting played an important role throughout the design, from the outdoor rooms, where we spend most of our time with our children and friends, to the indoor living spaces,” she says. “Because the ceilings are so high, we needed big, meaty lighting.”

Dining area “Sphere in Sphere” chandeliers from Coup d’Etat hang above the custom dining table. **Courtyard** A pair of olive trees carried by crane to the site and replanted provide shade for seating on Sutherland’s Poolside Collection. Striped pillows are from Janus et Cie. **Table setting** “Pearl” dinnerware by Costa Nova blends with Riedel wineglasses for a casual outdoor dinner. **Contento gifts** Preserves, pickles, and honey made with ingredients raised on the property are given as gifts to visiting friends. **Homeowner** Interior designer Hillary Thomas. **Preceding pages** The entrance leads directly into the open courtyard. The lantern is from Paul Marra.



vintage, a Cabernet, was bottled in 2012. Since then, a Contento Cabernet (what better name for the private label produced only for their family and as gifts to friends?) is a staple at dinner parties held in the outdoor dining room. Beautiful yet casual settings always grace the banquet table, enhanced by dramatic lighting from an enormous pair of bronzed chandeliers that hang above. The eye-catching fixtures crafted from a complex entwinement of vintage iron wagon wheels perfectly capture the conundrum that is Napa's rustic sophistication. "A third, even larger wagon-wheel fixture hangs over the outdoor living area," says Hillary, whose overscale lighting theme weaves all the home's spaces—outdoors and indoors—together.

Sometimes more intimate family-only gatherings take the stage at Contento. "One of the fun things we do as a family is pizza-making day," Hillary says. "We make pizzas from scratch on the outdoor kitchen island, then bake them in the pizza oven." Everyone loves Thanksgiving when the entire clan heads for Contento, where they've been known to cook their turkey in the pizza oven, just for fun. "We truly are the Brady Brunch. Quite the brood," Hillary says.

Guest house Indoor and outdoor spaces flow together at the California Wine Country home. Palm trees bookend the inviting pool.

Outdoor kitchen One of the home's busiest spots is a natural gathering place for cooking and socializing. **Outdoor living area** A glimpse of the interior shows the close connection between indoor and outdoor areas.

Stone oven Cooking pizza outdoors is one of the family's favorite activities. The oven was part of the nearly completed structure when Hillary and J-P bought the home. **Outdoor oasis** Ideal weather makes growing easy here. **Poolside** A fleet of Janus et Cie umbrellas adds shade and style.

