

# Linda Hunt's Hollywood bungalow a welcoming blend of whimsy, elegance



"NCIS: Los Angeles" costar Linda Hunt, right, with her partner, Karen Klein, and their dogs sit in the living room of their recently renovated Craftsman home in Hollywood. (Robert Gauthier / Los Angeles Times)

By **LISA BOONE**

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**I**n a historic Hollywood neighborhood filled with modest side-by-side period revival homes, the 1919 bungalow of Linda Hunt and Karen Klein stands out for its refreshing mix of old and new.

From the street, the one-story home looks like a traditional Craftsman, but step inside and colorful interiors offer a profoundly modern greeting. It is a jewel-box home filled with carefully considered details and custom finishes ranging from antique door pulls to lavender-colored walls and graphic wallcoverings in surprising hues of purple and green.

"This house has whimsy and a special kind of elegance," said Hunt, an Oscar-winning actress. "It's welcoming."

The couple appreciates the home's bright and sun-filled interiors, which set it apart from other Craftsman homes in the neighborhood.

"We lasted six months in a dark Craftsman down the street," Klein, a retired therapist, said with a laugh.

They bought their current two-bedroom home with a plan to make better use of the cramped floor plan. They wanted a home that made sense, with free-flowing movement from room to room that would be suitable for them, their houseguests and dogs.

"We wanted to make better use of the space," Hunt said. "We wanted to use the house in a different way."

After touring a Hancock Park kitchen and den designed by Linda Brettler, the couple turned to the architect to help them rethink the living spaces.

Brettler began by moving the central hallway south, which added 3 feet of space to the corridor. This provided room for a washer and dryer and storage closets. Formerly a dark space, the hallway is now illuminated by a colorful stained-glass skylight and a framed mural-like stretch of wallpaper designed by cartoonist Saul Steinberg for Schumacher.

Reconfiguring the hallway also allowed Brettler to transform a bedroom located off the living room into a den and library that doubles as a guest room. These subtle changes helped to simplify the home's circulation and provide a circular path in which to navigate the house.

Inspired by Art Deco and Viennese Secessionist styles, Brettler installed black-and-white cabinets in the den, painted the walls a vibrant purple and hung graphic sunflower wallcoverings by Designers Guild.

She also worked with Hunt to paper the walls of the den's en suite bathroom with Hunt's extensive collection of New Yorker magazine covers from the 1960s and '70s. "From the minute I started saving them, I knew I wanted to do something with them," said Hunt, who meticulously laid them out on the floor and painstakingly selected each cover for placement on the walls. While the end result is a kaleidoscope of illustrations, the installation proved arduous: Every cover had to be individually laminated and framed to create the grid-like format.

To expand the floor plan further, Brettler added a 200-square-foot sunroom in place of an underutilized deck. The challenge, Brettler said, was to make the 13-by-15-foot space feel open.

She succeeded. The sunroom feels like an airy alcove with dramatic Designer's Guild wallpaper detailing intricate topiary trees, clerestory windows and vaulted ceilings that bring in a surplus of natural light. Playful sliding barn doors installed between the kitchen and sunroom allow the room to be open or closed off, and add to the room's outdoor feel.

The exterior of the sunroom features gray board-and-batten siding and a saltbox pitched roof often found in New England, where Hunt and Klein grew up.

Like their home, their fourth in this neighborhood, the New England vernacular of the addition honors the couple's past while staying rooted in the present.

This is not lost on Hunt, who, standing outside, takes the addition in with a smile. "I often go to the guesthouse to practice lines," said Hunt, who reprises her role as Hetty Lange in the season premiere of "NCIS: Los Angeles" on Monday, "and look at the window of the sunroom and think how pretty it is."

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