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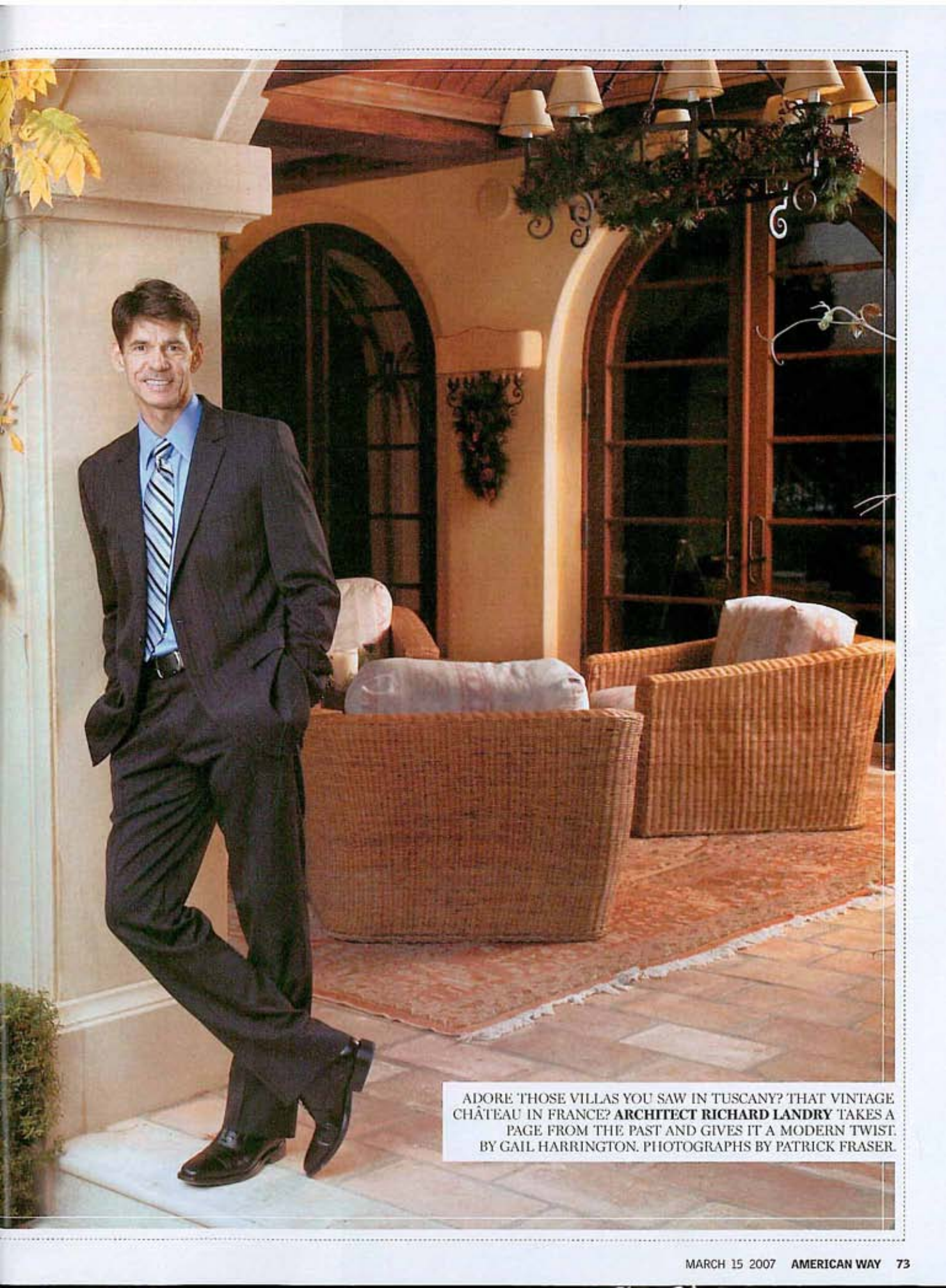
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# THIS *Old* HOUSE



ADORE THOSE VILLAS YOU SAW IN TUSCANY? THAT VINTAGE CHÂTEAU IN FRANCE? **ARCHITECT RICHARD LANDRY** TAKES A PAGE FROM THE PAST AND GIVES IT A MODERN TWIST. BY GAIL HARRINGTON. PHOTOGRAPHS BY PATRICK FRASER.



## FEATURES

**44 » ALIEN NO MORE »** On one of her first visits to Paris, *The TV Set*'s Sigourney Weaver grew homesick for New York. Now she can't wait to get back to the City of Light.

BY MARK SEAL

**60 » DINING THROUGH THE AGES »** If you're on the hunt for the latest and greatest restaurant to hit today's dining scene, you can stop reading now. But if you do, you'll miss out on those nine eateries that have outlasted the test of time because they serve the finest food there is — and offer the truest sense of place you'll ever find. BY LARRY OLMSTED

**72 » THIS OLD HOUSE »** Adore those villas you saw in Tuscany? That vintage château in France? Architect Richard Landry takes a page from the past and gives it a modern twist. BY GAIL HARRINGTON

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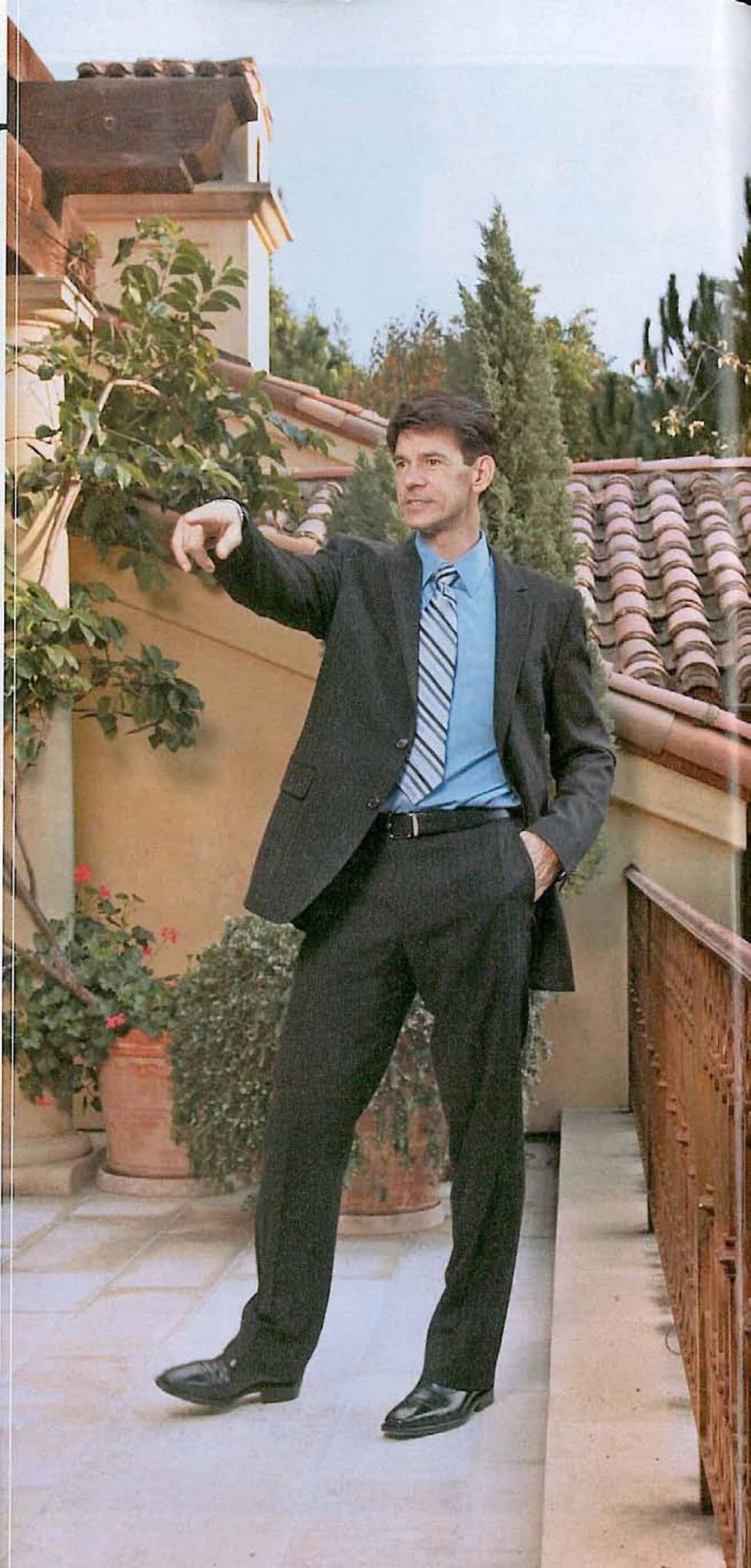
hen California native and designer Lorna Auerbach was shopping for an architect to design a home, she happened to attend a Christmas party at a Tuscan-style villa. But it was in the chic Los Angeles enclave of Brentwood, not in Italy. Not long after that, she went to a school-committee meeting at a French-country-style house in the same area. Next, a friend told her about her parents' place, a gorgeous French Normandy home in the Pacific Palisades Riviera.

The common thread in these uncommon dwellings? Richard Landry.

Landry is one of the most sought-after residential architects in the world, with clients such as NFL star Keyshawn Johnson, Eddie Murphy, and Sylvester Stallone as well as business moguls in Russia, Saudi Arabia, and Asia. The Los Angeles-based French Canadian is the go-to guy for über-homes inspired by a historical period or a country — especially England, France, Italy, and Spain. "Quite often, the homes I design are built around clients' most treasured travel memories," says Landry. "A Tuscan villa, a Spanish hacienda, or a French château brings back the feelings of carefree times in a familiar place."

Unlike many of the world's top architects, Landry can't be pigeonholed into a signature look. Equally comfortable with contemporary and traditional, he navigates design across many architectural styles with all the ease of a global traveler who speaks a dozen languages.

"After I met Richard, he took me to see Sugar Ray Leonard's home, an Italian villa loaded with beautiful architectural antiques, like 300-year-old door surrounds and columns, reclaimed doors, and old fountains," Auerbach says. "I thought: 'He's the one, an architect who designs totally for the client.'"



**WITH ARCHITECTURAL DEGREES** from the University of Montreal and the University of Copenhagen, Landry started his career in Montreal and later also worked in Edmonton. But after a building boom that went bust in 1984, Landry sold his few possessions, drove his Honda Civic to Santa Monica, California, and quickly found a job in theme-park design. A year later, he went to work for another firm, where he specialized in the design of custom residential estates. Then in 1987, Landry went out on his own, working at first from his studio apartment. Five years later, musician Kenny G commissioned Landry to design a 12,000-square-foot waterfront home in Seattle inspired by Greystone, a 1920s Tudor-style mansion in Beverly Hills, as well as a 5,000-square-foot guesthouse. That project was featured in *Architectural Digest*, leading to many prominent commissions from celebrities such as Rod Stewart, Leonard, and, later, hockey legend Wayne Gretzky and his wife, Janet Jones, for whom he designed a 14,000-square-foot red-brick Georgian manor house with a French-influenced interior. Landry's 10,000- to 100,000-square-foot homes typically run anywhere from \$400 to \$1,000 per square foot to construct — excluding the cost of the acreage.

Landry says he developed his architectural philosophy at an early age, and it was readily evident when he designed his first home. "On a visit to my small hometown in Quebec, I noticed a 100-year-old barn that was falling down and about to be demolished. Suddenly, all my happy childhood memories of playing in barns came flooding back in vivid detail. And I thought it would be so wonderful if I could capture that feeling in a home. So I bought the timber and shipped it to California. Aged by decades of wind, rain, and snow, that old barn wood became the main building material for my hill-top Malibu home, which still comforts me. I've learned that what matters most is that the architecture should soothe your soul."

And that's something the 49-year-old Landry excels at — homing in on what makes his clients feel entirely relaxed, whether the style is influenced by a favorite travel destination, their heritage, or the place where they grew up.

Landry and his 30-member team at Landry Design Group spend a lot of time talking with clients, learning about their life experiences, travels, lifestyle, and the way they want to feel in their home. "And if they come to us and say, 'We want a Tuscan



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villa, or a French château,' I want to find out why," Landry says. "Is it because it's trendy, or is it that they've spent time there and love the mood? During our process of reviewing architecture books from different cultures, storyboards, pictures of old castles and villas, photos that get across different moods and landscapes, I want them to go more than skin-deep and to end up with a home that transforms them."

**LANDRY'S DEDICATION** TO his clients and to the homes he designs for them is so great that sometimes a little out-of-the-office exploring is required. In 2000, Auerbach, an avid traveler who'd spent a lot of time in Mexico, Morocco, and southern Spain, commissioned Landry to design a 10,000-square-foot home in the Pacific Palisades Riviera. But she wanted a residence inspired by Andalusian architecture — a style Landry was less familiar with. "After giving him 1,000 digital images I'd taken on past trips," says Auerbach, "I convinced Richard to join me on a shopping and scouting trip in Spain, visiting dealers, artisans, and sal-

vage sources I'd discovered in my work as an interior designer."

They stayed in hotels that were converted old mansions; measured rooms and ceiling heights to make sure they had everything in scale with sixteenth- and seventeenth-century design; found an artisan who makes beautiful tiles using centuries-old techniques that make them look hundreds of years old; and spent seven days buying antique doors, wrought-iron grilles, door surrounds, and chandeliers — all of which brought an aged character to the home Auerbach calls Hacienda Andaluz.

"While the home is large, it's very romantic and informal, with great flow and lots of arches. Plus, every room has a patio or balcony," explains Auerbach. "I feel like I'm on vacation in southern Spain or living on an old Spanish estancia dating back to early California, where the cattle and horses are gone but the house is still there."

Landry explains that many of the homes he's designed seem like they've always been there because he incorporates centuries-old wood, salvaged doors and grilles, antique

mantels, rubble stone, and old roof tiles and uses custom wall finishes that add to the old-world vibe. "One couple who spend a lot of time in Europe had been buying architectural antiques for a home before they even contacted me," he says. "They asked me to call their dealer in France to get all the dimensions so we could incorporate those pieces into our design. Fortunately, when the shipment arrived, we documented every item, and the measurements were correct. The home is a simple, rambling Italian villa, but what makes it unique isn't just the 15,000-square-foot size but the architectural antiques and reclaimed materials such as the roof tiles from a convent in Italy."

Landry currently has about a dozen homes under construction, including a French château in Beverly Hills that is the third home he has designed for business entrepreneur Alec Gores. "We spend a lot of time in France and love the architecture," Gores says. "So we asked Richard to design a home right out of the French countryside, something very informal. Whenever we're in France, we take photos of things that move us — a stone or

## MEET FAMILY OF FUTURE IN "MEET THE ROBINSONS"

*Have the time travel of your life! New Disney animated film in theaters March 30*



In "Meet the Robinsons," the new animated family comedy adventure from Walt Disney Pictures, a brilliant young inventor and orphan named Lewis has always dreamed of finding the family he never knew. Directed by Steve Anderson, its screenplay is based on the book "A Day With Wilbur Robinson" by William Joyce.

"Meet the Robinsons" voice talents include Angela Bassett, Tom Selleck, Harland Williams and Laurie Metcalf. The film's score is by three-time Oscar-nominated composer Danny Elfman and its original songs are by Danny Elfman, Rob Thomas and Rufus Wainwright.

Lewis' journey to find his family takes an unexpected turn when a mysterious stranger named Wilbur Robinson whisks him away in a time travel machine to the future — a world where anything is possible. There he encounters an incredible assortment of characters, including a bowler who is a wearing villain who gives evil a bad name. In the future Lewis meets the Robinsons, a family beyond his wildest imagination, who lead him on an amazing and hilarious adventure with heartfelt results.

"Meet the Robinsons"...if you think your family's different, wait 'till you meet the family of the future. To find out more about "Meet the Robinsons" see scenes from the movie, go behind the scenes with the filmmakers or buy tickets online go to...

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slate roof, a spectacular entrance, a garden — and give them to Richard. He's a genius at taking all this data and understanding our vision." And Landry not only designed the ultimate château, but he also created a wonderful cobbled street between the home and the guesthouse. "It's unbelievable," says Gores, who is eager to move in this summer. "You'd think you're in Europe — an old-world street built from French stone, and wrought-iron-and-glass entry doors on a rubble-stone home that looks like it's been there for hundreds of years."

**THOUGH MANY OF** Landry's traditional-style projects are inspired by European architecture, he also does a fair amount of contemporary design; the entire spectrum of his work is showcased in the new coffee-table book *Modern to Classic: Residential Estates by Landry Design Group*. But when it comes to European-inspired homes, Landry is quick to point out that he's not doing historical re-creations. "If we were doing an authentic château, the windows would be small and you wouldn't have a house full of bathrooms — visit Versailles and you'll see that. Our clients want the charm and character of the old world, but they also want city or ocean views through large panes of glass, plus spacious bathrooms, open floor plans, generous closets, and outdoor loggias with fireplaces and televisions — features you wouldn't find in centuries-old architecture. If you study floor plans of these old homes, you'll see many things that wouldn't be practical today, [such as] a big ballroom. While we pay attention to historical precedent and use authentic materials, we must adapt to contemporary lifestyle, so we break some rules. Granted, breaking the rules is a risky thing to do. One must walk a very fine line, but I believe diverse architectural styles can coexist. I often refer to these resulting homes as hybrid architecture, influenced by the past but not pretending to re-create it."

Even Landry's barn-inspired home has contemporary adaptations. At each end of the house, there's an aluminum-clad silo — one features a marble-floored master bathroom with contemporary fixtures, and the other houses a steam room, which adjoins a high-tech gym that has wall-to-wall mirrors and a rubber floor.

"I'm pretty much inspired by music, art, and everything I see, especially when I'm

traveling," notes Landry. "I got a great idea from visiting old wine caves, which were often paved with gravel. For one client's wine cellar, we're using huge stepping-stones surrounded with gravel, adapting the original concept to today's lifestyle; that way, you get the same casual feeling without ruining your shoes. Not only is this a practical solution, but the cellar will make

a beautiful place to entertain."

Although he didn't start traveling until later in life, Landry says the more he travels, the better he gets as an architect. "I realized how much you can learn from the world — every journey broadens my view and brings new inspiration." **AW**

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GAIL HARRINGTON is a writer based in New York.

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