



lasvegas home&design

INTERIORS  
+  
EXTERIORS  
+  
DETAILS





SALTMAN  
RESIDENCE

DESIGNER: LUIS ORTEGA

ARCHITECT: BEHROUZE EHOAIE

STORY: CHUCK TWARDY

PHOTOGRAPHY: JEFF GREEN

5,500 SQ. FT.





painting of raindrops by Clare Kirkconnell over the fireplace and the late sculptor Luis Jiménez's expression of immigrant pride, "Border Crossing," stationed by the sliding doorway to an adjacent media room.

The Saltmans' dining room forms a wedge with the main living room, with an outdoor patio situated between the two. This bright room is as contemporary as any other part of the house, but again, features antique touches, such as an opulent 18th-century chandelier. There is also, in the words of their interior designer, Luis Ortega of Luis Ortega Design Studio in Beverly Hills, "a wonderful old teacart." The brass cart is early 20th-century, European,

**Opposite page:** The shelves and coffee table in the home office were custom designed by Luis Ortega Design Studio. The couple's two original Wessily chairs are complemented by a sofa from Nolan Arnold. **Above:** One of Sonja Saltman's favorite pieces, a photographic print by Jean-Marc Bustamante of France, hangs in the comfortable family room that shares an open space with the kitchen. The sofa is by Mexalto at Diva, while the leather Dandy lounge chair is from B&B Italia. The maple wood blocks that function as a coffee table were custom designed by Luis Ortega Design Studio. See Resources.

probably from a bistro or pastry shop, he says. "It was a totally odd little piece, but it added to the eclecticism." In fact, the juxtaposition between modern, antique and ethnic pieces can be found throughout the home: here a pair of original Wassily chairs, there a Balinese basket.

Duffy, who has cultivated a significant art collection of his own with partner Wally Goodman, knows why the eclecticism in the Saltman's collection is at peace in a home designed for calm and comfort. "If it's of quality," he says, "it will always fit in symbiotically with the collection. No matter what the period, it will always fit next to other

works of quality." Duffy has nothing but praise for his friends' collecting skills—this despite the Richter that got away. "That's the most wonderful thing about it—I think it's more sharing than competitive."

And although they enjoy sharing their love of art with others, Sonja says that for them, collecting art remains "a private, emotional, passionate thing." As in their careers, Sonja values the opportunity to find "harmony and balance in complexity," and perhaps that speaks to the couple's taste in art. It certainly captures the ambience in their private gallery home. **10**



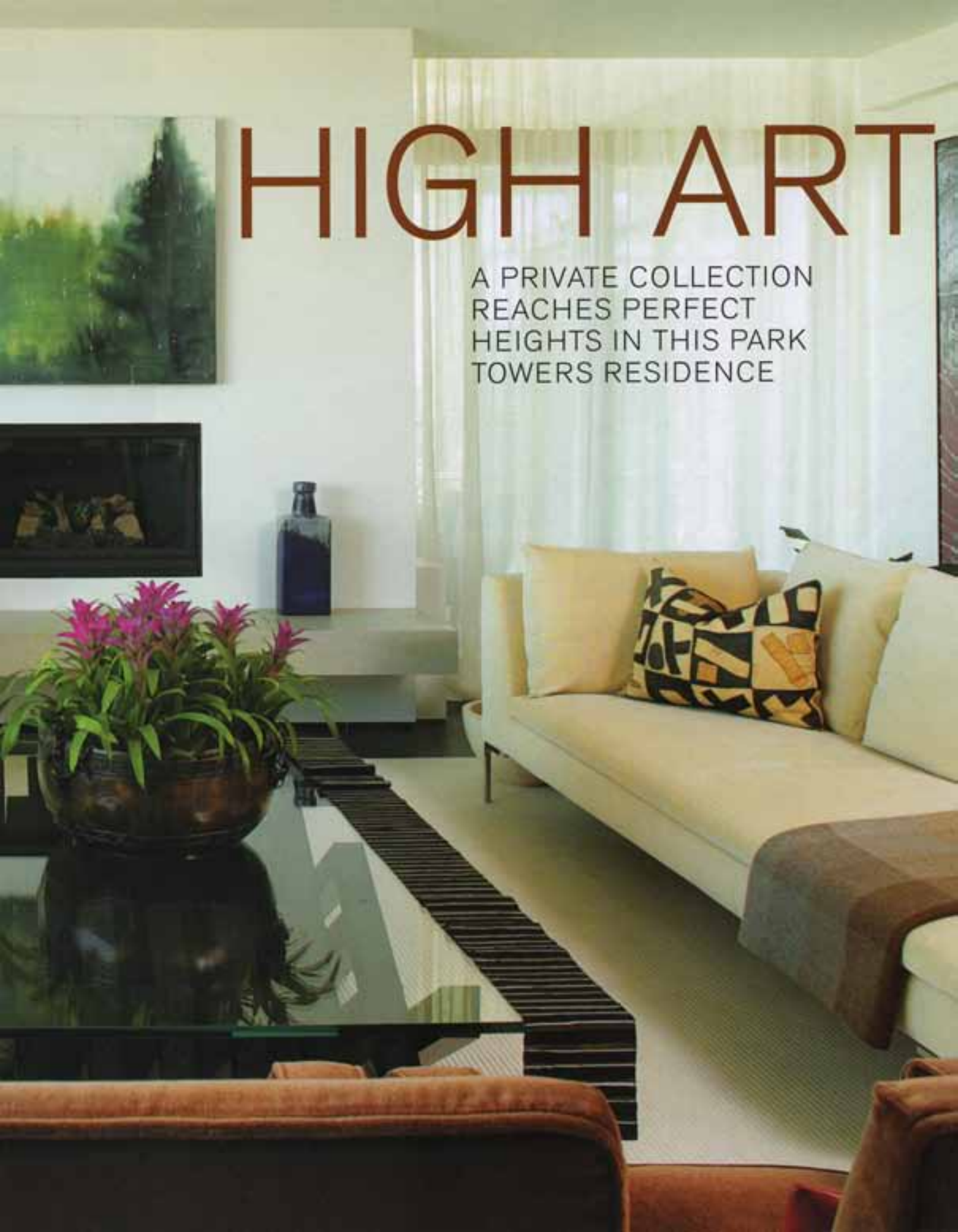
**Above:** One of the guest rooms in the home features a Womb chair in pearl, designed by Eero Saarinen for Knoll and purchased at Jules Seltzer Associates in Los Angeles. The wenge bed is by Maxalto at Diva, and the custom linens are by Chaz Stevens Design. **Opposite page:** The leather Beltini Cab chair in the guest room is from Cassina. See Resources.





# HIGH ART

A PRIVATE COLLECTION  
REACHES PERFECT  
HEIGHTS IN THIS PARK  
TOWERS RESIDENCE







MARK ROTHKO





**A terra cotta replica of a Qin Dynasty warrior** tells guests arriving at the residence of Michael and Sonja Saltman what they might expect beyond the weathered-wood doors facing them—for beyond unfolds a dwelling that derives its grace from a delicate balance of contradictions. Airy with ample light, despite the oak wood floor stained a rich, dark brown. A modern floorplan, accented with antique and ethnic furnishings. Simple and uncluttered, yet home to dozens of paintings, photographs and sculptures.

Sonja Saltman says that she and her husband passed on plans to build a house either in Green Valley or in Summerlin because the couple travels in and out of town so frequently. Instead, they became among the first to buy into Park Towers, the Irwin Molasky project near the Strip that jump-started the high-rise boom in Las Vegas. "We knew the quality of the product," she says of the apartment, located on the 18th-floor. "It's a very peaceful, away-from-it-all environment, once you close the doors."

Their architect, Behrouze Ehdale of Ehdale & Gandara in Laguna Beach, who has also worked on a condominium

in San Francisco and a Newport Beach cottage for the couple, says that making the most of their passion for art was key to creating this particular space. "The house needed to be able to exhibit their collection," Ehdale says. "I didn't want the house and the details on the walls to become the focal point."

He translated this into a design that not only expresses lightness but which fades into the background. The result, he says, is that you walk into an art gallery. Those large front doors, which came from a 200-year-old barn in the Northeast, open into the home's central hallway, which connects bedrooms and a home office at one end with a dining room, kitchen and sitting area at the other, and a large living room in the center. And this hallway, Ehdale observes, serves as a prime display space for the Saltmans' considerable and eclectic collection. "I like to put what you like where you see it every day."

**What the Saltmans see every day, passing from one part of the 5,500-square-foot home to another, is a range of mostly contemporary artworks, including Ed**

**Previous page:** "Every object in our home has either special meaning from our travels or has been with us for many years," says Sonja Saltman of the home's welcoming mix of art and antiques, furniture and accessories. "We really like having personal items throughout the home, it's important to us." **Opposite page:** "Madame X" by Max Coyer hangs in the main living room behind the Charles sofa by Antonio Citterio for B&B Italia. **Above:** The painting "Sunset on the Big Dry" by Bill Schneck hangs in the home's gallery hallway. See Resources.



Ruscha's white-on-black declaration, "Scales of Justice," and a large-scale photograph of a bridge by Elgar Esser. For guests, there are visual surprises with every step, around every corner. Most noticeably, there's a man, seen from behind, who turns out to be a flat figure on a large mirror that leans against the wall at the end of the hall gallery—"Man in the Mirror", by the Italian artist Michelangelo Pistoletto, is one of Michael's favorites. Sonja Saltman is inclined to a large, photographic print by Jean-Marc Bustamante of France, which shows a number of people standing in an informal group. "I'm

more interested in forms and figures, and to me, this is a great combination of both."

Although the assortment seems weighted toward Europeans, the Saltmans' collection also includes work by American artists William Wiley and Richard Tuttle. Still, the couple has strong European ties. Sonja, a psychotherapist, was born and raised in Austria, and Michael, president of The Vista Group, lived in Europe in the late '60s and early '70s. They still travel to Europe frequently and work with art dealers there, a luxury any art lover would cherish, and a passion they share with one



**Above:** The main living room is furnished with sofas from the Charles system from B&B Italia, two mohair chairs from Mazallo at Dive and a green coated-steel side table from Leavitt Weaver. The glass coffee table is a custom piece by Luis Ortega Design Studio. **Opposite page:** The La Basilica dining table is by Mario Bellini for Cassina and the Pat chairs are by Flexform. The 18th-century chandelier and antique rug are from the client's personal collection. See Resources.











The custom Bulthaup kitchen functions as its own piece of art, says Michael Saltman of the sleek design and perfect balance of materials. The leather Johanson bar stools are through Paston/Rawleigh/Everett in Los Angeles. See Resources.





friend in particular—for while considering an enamel-on-glass interpretation of the German colors, “Black Red Gold,” by Gerhard Richter, they discovered that more than one pair of Las Vegasans had had their eyes on it.

“A friend of ours, Patrick Duffy, saw it in Munich and said he regretted not buying it,” says Sonja. “We were there a couple of months later, went to the same gallery and it was still there! We bought it because we both liked it.”

The Saltmans, who only buy pieces they both agree to, were art lovers before they got married in 1974, and they’ve been supporters of the arts ever since, including service on the board of the defunct Nevada Institute



of Contemporary Art. In addition, Michael served as chairman of the board that selected artwork for McCarran International Airport.

**The airport is now framed in the view from their spacious living room, the centerpiece of a South Valley vista. The room is lined with paintings, with one corner dominated by a piano. The walls appear to float an inch above the wood floor, creating an effect that is both lively and tranquil. It’s a room in which you’ll find Ghost chairs designed by Philippe Starck for Kartell next to a wooden chair made by an anonymous Chinese craftsman; a moody**