

RUG SHOPPING TIPS

DESIGN TIMES

THE ART OF INTERIORS

WWW.DESIGNTIMES.COM

AT HOME *with* MEATLOAF



SOLUTIONS

NEWS

SOURCES

NEW KITCHENS AND BATHS

FLORIDA DIARY

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2001

10 >



0 09281 03110 9

US \$4.95 CANADA \$5.95

LARRY LASLO: THE GLAMOUR BOY OF DESIGN

MEAT LOAF SURPRISE

One would not expect something so refined and low key for a rocker with hits like “Bat Out of Hell” and “Paradise by the Dashboard Light” under his capacious belt.

By Louis Postel, Photography by Mark Lobman

The décor in the dining room exemplifies the soothing quality that designer Darren Henault sought to give the interior of Meat Loaf’s Los Angeles home. “The whole house is a combination of reflective surfaces and flat surfaces,” Darren explains. “The trim is lacquer, the walls are flat. It’s a soft, easy, demure look.” For the dining room walls, Darren chose paint from an English company, Farrow & Ball, which specializes in recreating 18th- and 19th-century colors. The lacquered trim and paneling “perks it up a bit” and glimmers in the candlelight to bring out the fine interior architecture. The rug is Safavieh, the chair fabric from Scalamanère and the table comes from Greene Street Antiques in New York.

Designer Darren Henault (opposite page, middle)

Meat Loaf had his LA residence designed with a New England home in mind. (opposite page, below)



Over the past seven years, noted interior designer Darren Henault has created six houses for the rock musician Meat Loaf, his wife Leslie and their family. Each house has been totally different from the others and each has reflected different facets of their lifestyle. For their new LA house the family really wanted an East Coast-style house similar to the ones that Darren designed for them in Connecticut and New York. They selected a house that was in very good condition, built in the 1920s. While the interior was dark, Darren found that a key to lightening the place was to use a pale cream lacquer paint on moldings and wainscoting throughout the house, giving each room a sense of



“Though it’s cold and lonely in the deep dark night/I can see Paradise by the dashboard light.”

"Oh, I would do anything for love, but I won't do that/No, I won't do that."



fusion with the others. Darren then used matte finishes to complete the rooms' backgrounds. Meat Loaf and his family love to entertain friends and colleagues—usually at very informal dinners at the big table in the kitchen. Leslie is known for her cooking, so filling seats at their dining table is never a problem. Although Darren created a very special dining room in the house—the spectacular candelabra on the dining room table is 17th-century Swedish—the room isn't used very often. Even so, Darren proudly shows off the pinpoint spotlights that he embedded in the dining room ceiling. There are eight of them and they shine directly on the place settings of the eight guests seated at the dining table, casting each guest in a warm glow while their food is well lit. Darren found four



antique dining room chairs that his client loved. So he merely had his furniture-maker replicate four more of the same design. These days Meat Loaf is away a lot, making movies around the world, and appearing

in stadiums and concert halls in Europe, Asia and Latin America, where he is a huge international star. So when Meat Loaf is at home, he really wants to relax. That often means listening to music or catching up on movies.

Darren saw to it that every room in the new house is wired to the hilt to accommodate virtually every kind of electronic entertainment. And there is a pool, of course. In surveying the house initially, Darren saw little need

for major construction. He did add lots of cabinetry, turned a maid's room into a home office, and converted a second floor bedroom into a media room. Some of the furniture was brought in from previous

homes, but Meat Loaf and Leslie really wanted a different look, so Darren went on full alert looking for pieces that he thought they would like in top stores around the world and in some really unexpected places.

The porch design (far left) fits in with Meat Loaf's desire for the feel of a New England home. The floor is old, salvaged brick. The long sofas in the back feature bookcases on either end and special pillows with mottoes from the turn of the century. These needle-pointed phrases such as "Home Sweet Home," the Ten Commandments and a map of the East Coast had been framed and hung on the wall of Meat Loaf's Connecticut home. "We took them out of the frames and made them into pillows," Darren says. "It was quite a decadent thing to do. Mottoes are quite valuable." The leaded glass window behind the sofas, etched with the image of a pelican, was part of a church in South Carolina.

The music room (left) also exudes an old New England air (not featured in the picture is Meat Loaf's baby grand piano that gives the room its purpose). The dark wood of the fireplace is actually faux bois, a wood that has no graining, so the graining effect was painted on. Darren found the chairs at Theron Ware Antiques in Hudson, NY, and upholstered them in a tapestry fabric from Clarence House in New York. The Biedermeier table comes from Greene Street Antiques.

*"Let me sleep on it/Baby, baby, let me sleep on it/
And I'll give you an answer in the morning."*

The bed in the master bedroom comes with a custom-designed headboard. The checked fabric on the ottoman—actually a pop-up television—bails from Clarence House. The fabric for the bedding comes from Coraggio. Darren says he spotted the mahogany table in a barn in Pennsylvania and added a custom stool.



The marble counter featured in the photo (left) is actually twice as long as it appears—it has a matching sink on the left. The floor and the surface of the Jacuzzi bathtub are also marble, while the side of the bathtub is lacquered wood. The custom-built mirror opens to a medicine chest.

The lacquered woodwork and the marble on the fireplace (below at right) give off a warm glow by lamplight. The plush chaise was a "junky piece of furniture" that Darren had reupholstered in Coraggio fabric. The folding wood screen from Sutter Antiques in Hudson, NY features late 19th-century pen and ink drawings, matted and framed. Fortuny created the unusual floor lamp featured on the left.



Having worked with Darren on putting together six houses, Meat Loaf and Leslie have learned to respect Darren's taste. A dressing table was found in a Pennsylvania attic. When Meat Loaf was in New Orleans filming "Crazy in Alabama," a first-time directorial effort by Antonio Banderas starring his wife, Melanie Griffith, he came upon a 19th-

century frame sofa that he liked and had Darren fly to New Orleans on the spot to approve. Now the newly covered sofa looks utterly splendid in Meat Loaf's LA living room. The art in the house consists mostly of American Post-Impressionist paintings collected over the years with Darren's consultation. The media room walls are hung with Meat Loaf's collec-

tion of original oil paintings of cover art that were produced for 1940s crime magazines and novels. It is now one of the largest and most important collections of its genre. From the beginning Meat Loaf and Leslie wanted Darren to create a family home, a place where everybody, even the youngest visitors, would feel comfortable. Although Meat Loaf and Leslie's

two daughters are grown, they nevertheless asked Darren to turn one of the bedrooms into a nursery where visitors' kids can frolic and where they hope their grandchildren will eventually stay when they are at the house. Where is Meat Loaf today? Probably somewhere on the road, wishing he were at home. ♣