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THE GUIDE TO LIVING WITH STYLE

August 2008

# domino

## 263 SMART DECORATING IDEAS

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# down-to-earth glamour

Caught between the desire for a cozy, child-friendly home and a sophisticated style, television producer Mara Brock Akil spent months experimenting with colors and furniture. After a few decorating mistakes, she arrived at a scheme that satisfies the whole family: a lush, neo-Hollywood take on easy functionality.

photographs by MELANIE ACEVEDO prop styling by KIM FICARO text by ARIANA SPEYER

“People tell us that our home is very peaceful, which we love. I hate it when things feel untouchable. We want to relax without being afraid of ruining something—that’s not living.”

When Mara Brock Akil, creator and executive producer of sitcom *The Game*, and her husband, Salim Akil, the show’s director, first moved into their 1920s house in L.A., they decorated trial-and-error style. After hiring professionals who “didn’t listen” and then an unfortunate—and unforgiving—all-beige phase, Brock Akil realized, “you’ll never be happy with your house until it works with the way that you live.”

The busy couple wanted a calm day’s-end retreat for TV and pizza—but one that still lent itself to impromptu hosting. Their 4-year-old son, Yasin, meanwhile, needed space to “jump, flip and run.” And the beige debacle left them longing for more adventurous decor. So with a palette of rich earth tones and metallic touches, Brock Akil invented her own take on livable luxury.

In the living room (opposite), a lounge-y sectional, art (a lot of it by Salim) and taupe walls establish a pulled-together comfort, while an Oushak carpet provides a spot of color. But much as the room is geared toward kicking back—with inviting chocolate polyester (yes, polyester!) fabric on the cushy sofa—it doubles as an entertaining nexus, as guests spill over from the patio.



Brock Akil in the back garden, site of family meals and dinners with close friends.

FASHION STYLIST: SUE TSAI/DEFACTO HAIR: CYNDRA DUNN MAKEUP: KERRY MALOUF/EXCLUSIVE

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The multicolored basket to the left of the doors is a well-disguised receptacle for toys, while a bench along the sofa back spares couch potatoes from having to lean forward to deposit their drinks.

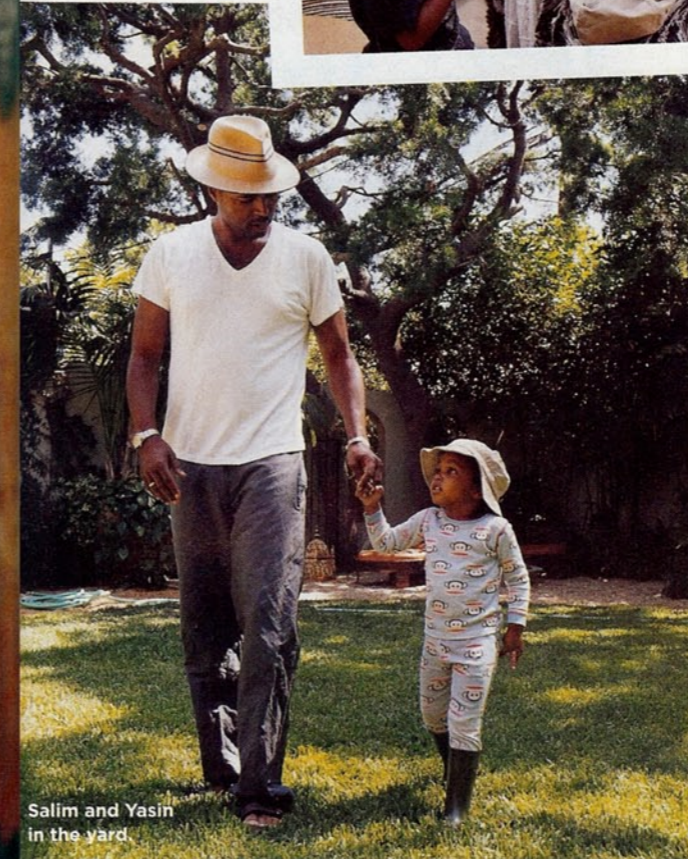
SOFA (similar to shown) Custom sectional \$3,960 (excluding fabric), Plantation (323) 932-0511 SOFA FABRIC “Columbia” in Pinecone about \$30.40/yard, Fabricut (800) 999-8200 for information BASKET (against wall) Rattan “Large Bell Jar” \$175.95 Maison Midi (323) 935-3157 ARTWORK (right) Salim Akil pencil and photocopy on paper “Mas #1” and “Mas #2” \$1,000 each, e-mail baraka7@mac.com CARVED

STOOL (similar to shown, outside) Mango wood \$169.95 zgallerie.com WALL PAINT Weimaraner #AF-155, benjaminmoore.com for stores

opposite page: TABLE Wood and iron \$2,995 Inner Gardens (310) 838-8378 NAPKINS Kerry Cassill cotton \$10 each, Lala (949) 464-9220 OTTOMANS Leather \$175 each, badiadesign.com fashion: EARRINGS Tourmaline \$2,400 bochic.com for stores

Cross breezes keep the cement-floored living room cool in the summer.

**PIVOT DOORS** Custom about \$4,550 (as shown), e-mail [kirk@lannenconstruction.com](mailto:kirk@lannenconstruction.com) for information **ARTWORK** (right wall) Salim Akil acrylic and photocopy on canvas "Grandma Waiting at a Bus Stop in Heaven" \$10,000 e-mail [baraka7@mac.com](mailto:baraka7@mac.com) fashion: **TOP** Silk chiffon \$346 [castlestar.com](http://castlestar.com) for stores **opposite page:** **TILE** 12" travertine mosaic in Mayan Gold \$21.49/square foot, United Team Tile and Stone (323) 257-8181 **fashion:** **CARDIGAN** Cashmere \$995 [tsecashmere.com](http://tsecashmere.com) for stores **NECKLACE** Turquoise and ruby "Seahorse" \$475 [shoppadevavra.com](http://shoppadevavra.com)



Salim and Yasin in the yard.



In the entryway, a caddy that once held mail and keys at a Paris hotel has been cleverly repurposed for shoe storage.



The murmur of the fountain helps mask street noise.

“When you walk into our home, you can see right through to the garden, which is very simple. Trips to Italy and Morocco inspired how we want that area to feel—it’s all about being outside and enjoying each other’s company.”

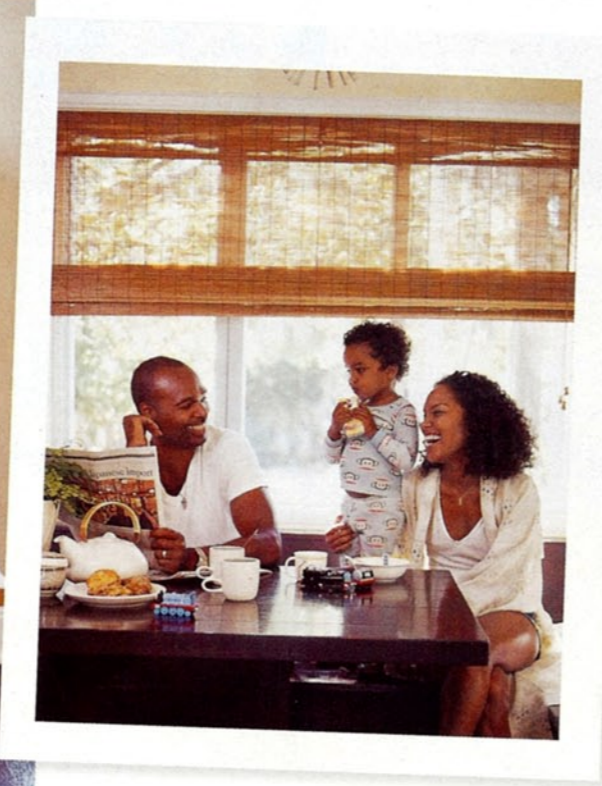
In the living room, seamless transitions from relaxing indoors to hanging out on the patio are key. Custom pivot doors, part of a small-scale remodel, replaced existing aluminum ones, which “were so ugly,” Brock Akil recalls, “I didn’t even want to go in the garden.” She also had the door frames extended toward the ceiling to emphasize the idea of a “big open space.” At 1,500 square feet, the backyard has sections for lounging, playing and eating *en famille*. When it comes to caring for her not exactly weather-resistant poufs, Brock Akil is characteristically mellow. “One of the benefits of L.A.,” she says, “is it never rains for that long, so I don’t worry about the furniture getting ruined.”

“We’re laid-back, but if you look closely, we appreciate quality. I like when fabrics look good and feel good.”

Throughout the house, gleaming textures, tactile fabrics and the occasional splash of saturated color punch up the neutral scheme. In the dining room (right), the shiny blue silk on the chairs, the ebony-stained table and a custom-blended peachy pomegranate wall color were inspired by a Thelonious Monk album cover. A crystal chandelier, which came with the house, and gold candlesticks add Old Hollywood allure. The bedroom (far right) profited from the genius of Brock Akil’s friend, set designer Barbara Miranda: a ‘40s sunburst mirror, pale-bronze custom bedding and an etched Moroccan drum table fashion a boudoir aura. Luminous copper silk-dupioni window treatments were the final piece of the puzzle. “People should impress themselves before they impress others,” Brock Akil says. “Waking up in this room every morning just makes me happy.”



In the bedroom, a stool reupholstered in copper silk dresses up a wooden George Nelson secretary.



STOOL FABRIC (similar to shown) Como silk in Spice Brown \$29/yard, and CHAIR FABRIC (similar to shown, above) Gandoura cloth in Bluebird \$49/yard, silktrading.com CHAIRS (similar to shown) “Peyton” \$369 each, roomandboard.com DINNERWARE Bodo Sperlein fine bone china “Grandiflora” \$60 to \$120 each, tartontheweb.com CHANDELIER (similar to shown) Crystal “Maria Theresa” #A83-156/12+1 \$497 gallery84.com

Although Brock Akil stuck to muted browns, coppers and golds in the bedroom, reflective fabrics and metallic accents radiate quiet drama.

DUVET FABRIC “Kerala” in Fawn about \$75/yard, Home Fabrics (213) 689-9600 for information LARGE PILLOW FABRIC (similar to shown) Silk velvet in Moose \$156/yard, SMALL PILLOW FABRIC (similar to shown) Como silk in Ivory \$29/yard, CURTAIN FABRIC (similar to shown) Como silk in Golden Twilight \$29/yard, and BED FABRIC (similar to shown) Silk and linen ottoman in Ivory \$54/yard, all at silktrading.com for stores BED (similar to shown) “Delano” \$2,420 (excluding fabric), Plantation (323) 932-0511 MIRROR (similar to shown) Gold-leaf “Pope” \$2,250 Mecox Gardens (800) 487-4854 WALL PAINT Barley #199, benjaminmoore.com for stores

