











or Cindy Crawford, driving through the gates of her Brentwood, California, home toward a grove of olive trees in the property's entry courtyard is better than sinking into a bubble bath. "It's like ahhh," says the supermodel turned supermom. "Once the gates are closed behind me, I could be in the South of France. I could be in Portugal, I could be in Italy."

When Crawford bought the 4,000-square-foot bungalow six years ago, it was a symbol of newfound independence. The 1927 Spanish Colonial-style architecture reminded her of the Hotel Bel-Air, where she lived for a year after her divorce from actor Richard Gere. But by the time Crawford and longtime friend Michael S. Smith got around to properly decorating, she had a new family: husband Rande Gerber, proprietor of a string of nightclubs, and three-year-old son Presley and one-year-old daughter Kaia (both of whom were born on the premises via natural childbirth).

The family has a beach house in Malibu and an apartment on Manhattan's Upper East Side, but "this is home, this is where we live," says Crawford, and it's the site of everything from paperwork (Gerber has an office there) to play groups to pool parties. Smith thus had the challenge of melding Crawford's taste, which he describes as "romantic and practical," with her husband's more "theatrical, sexy" preferences while ensuring their home was a place where the children could be, well, children. Presley, for instance, is fond of plopping down in the driveway with a toy dump truck, playing with the gravel for hours. "It wasn't about

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having a big, grand house," says Smith. "There was the sense that they were going to adapt and grow."

This being Los Angeles, the expansive, flexible feeling begins and ends with the outdoors. The interior's terra-cotta and wood floors spill outside onto terraces, encouraging wide-open doors and lazy afternoons. "The property is not huge—it's like a big garden with a house set in the middle," says Smith, who worked with Beverly Hills landscape designer Christine London to create sensuous, slightly unmanicured spaces. "I love looking out every window and seeing something beautiful," adds Crawford. Ramblers are rewarded with the wafting aroma of Lavandula dentata bushes, fragrant bougainvillea, and a rose cutting garden that includes the spicy 'Taboo' variety, a velvet-red hybrid. Crawford isn't ready to don clogs and whip out a trowel just yet, but she does enjoy wandering outside and snipping a few roses so she can bring the voluptuous smells indoors.

The air here is usually redolent with food as well as flora.
"When you stay with Cindy and Rande, everybody cooks, and it's a lot of fun," says Smith, a frequent guest at their barbecues. On chilly nights, they gather around the outdoor fireplace for cocktails. Even when the action moves inside to the sunny butter-colored kitchen—originally a staff space that was entirely redone so that visitors could share in the process of entertaining—there is an informal, almost campfire feeling, thanks to the central stove where Crawford whipped up Passover dinner (Gerber is Jewish) for 14. "I do shiksa brisket," she says with a laugh. "I have my mother-in-law's recipe—it's quite good." She was also insistent that their dining room table, a Regency bought from Sotheby's, be round, ensuring guests an easy, democratic atmosphere.

The common threads that run through the house wrought-iron sconces, antique patterned rugs—give it a













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fluid, modular quality that suits a couple with young chlldren who haven't completely said goodbye to youth themselves. They tucked a swing set into an alcove, "so it isn't the first thing you see," says Crawford. For Gerber's 40thbirthday party last April, they removed the living room furniture and had people dancing until four in the morning. "I can move all this furniture around," she says, "And I can use it in different ways. I'm appreciating Michael more the longer I live with this stuff, because it's not so specific that it can only be 'here.' "

"It's very kid-scale," Smith says of the overstuffed chairs and low-lying cocktail tables that fill the house. "Everything is kind of soft, and there's a lot of space around the furniture." And while the Turkish rugs and the Indian-floral sofa upholstery certainly evoke the exotic destinations the couple has visited, they reflect practical considerations, too. "I always tell Michael, with fabrics, it's like, can a kid throw up on it?" Crawford says. "I mean, yeah, I try to teach Presley not to take the Sharpies to the wall, but I don't want to freak out if he does. It's just stuff, you know?" -

