

erched at a rakish angle on a boulder in a quiet corner of Orange County, nestled in rosemary and lavender in the otherwise perfectly manicured landscape, is a pacifier—left, no doubt, by three-year-old Ailee Sun when her mother, Chi-Lin, wasn't looking. When that might have been is hard to imagine as Chi-Lin Sun's world revolves around her family; husband Donald, five-year-old Olive, Ailee and Mr. Tomten, their Goldendoodle. "I always knew I'd be a stay-home mom with my kids. I couldn't imagine not!" says Sun, who works from home as a photographer.

The desire to nest is strong with the Suns, which made their choice to settle in Irvine's quietly exclusive Shady Canyon a natural one. The rambling topography is California lush, but offers the craggy terrain and saturated colors of the Southwest. "Five years ago, our realtor showed us this lot and it reminded me of Nevada—open and spread out, facing a natural hill with chaparral. Plus the breezes are perfect," says Donald. "When I saw the hawks and the heard the wildlife in the early morning, I knew this was it," adds his wife.

Shady Canyon, considered a "preservation development," encompasses 16,000 acres of pristine wilderness managed by the Nature Conservancy. Laced with idyllic sounding streets like Blue Heron, Golden Eagle and Cop-

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Parchment and dove grey Venetian plaster walls in the master bath embrace a sleek Waterworks tub. OPPOSITE The master bedroom's custom bed complements the 19th century Gustavian settee.

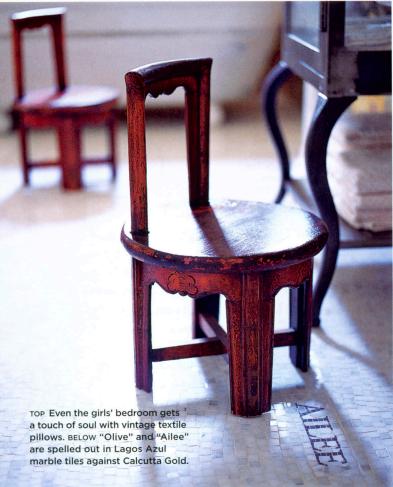
per Creek, its bucolic openness (and Tom Fazio-designed golf course) have made it a coveted address for prominent sports figures and young business titans looking for spacious sanctuaries. Exactly five harmonious styles of architecture, inspired by rural mountainous regions as varied as Provence, Tuscany and Santa Barbara, are sanctioned by the community's review board, allowing each to blend so seamlessly with the surrounding landscape, you'd think the structures had sprouted straight from the earth. In fact, the board is not only diligent about the exterior colors and plant choices, but also insists on 12-inch-thick exterior walls. Wendi Young, the couple's interior designer, notes

Chi-Lin essentially held the reins on the project and that Donald's only requests were for a grassy yard, a lap pool and what he calls "Hobbit" decor. "Like an English cottage, cozy and small with fires going. That's kind of what I always wanted, but I settled for this," he says with a wink. At 6,800 square feet, the house qualifies as Grand Hobbit.

Young and Chi-Lin met at a mutual client's home four years ago and instantly connected. Although that particular residence was ultra-contemporary, Chi-Lin and Young agreed on a soulful aesthetic for the Suns' interiors. Once the property was purchased and the French Provence style determined, Young dug into research.











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The family thwarts Mr. Tomten's efforts under the soon to be wisteria-covered iron trellis. OPPOSITE An Indonesian tropical wood daybed inspires daydreaming shaded by the Irvine Ranch 16,000-acre preserve.

"Although it's not typically what you think of as Provence, it is authentic—the fabrics, colors, architectural details." Even Provençal scents waft through the house. As Chi-Lin rearranges herself on the 19th century Gustavian settee, lavender-filled pillows release their soft aroma, causing Mr. Tomten to peer his nose over the back to investigate. Textures are deliciously organic and imbued with tactile sensations on every surface. Chi-Lin's photographer's eye has clearly shaped the couple's art collection; Chagalls converse with paper sculptures from Merja Winqvist and Bernadette Chene along with photographs taken by their 4-year-old.

As the rooms unfold, the textural play deepens. All

the fireplace mantles are antique French limestone; the floors reclaimed terra cotta tiles from French homes; the powder room walls covered in burlap trimmed with nail heads and the bed linens are vintage hemp. The infusion of provenance and life stories, whether inherent or implied, drives Chi-Lin's environs and inspires her work. A 30-year-old snapshot of her mother grocery shopping is her favorite, speaking volumes of her ability to find depth and beauty in everyday life.

The home's heart, though, lies in the children's suite. A common play area is dominated by two massive chalkboards that Chi-Lin and the girls CONTINUED ON PAGE 127

