

Jennifer Amodei

The interior designer shows us her
Southern California home and
tells us about her love of classic
design and how she likes to entertain

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Flower: You live on a beautiful property just outside Santa Barbara. Tell us a little about your home and the setting. **Jennifer Amodei:** The house is nestled in a 30-acre lemon orchard with two acres of formal gardens surrounding it in a small town called Somis. It truly feels like you have entered a European setting with soft, rolling hills and acres of farmland. The look is California coastal with a Provençal attitude, mixed with an Italian influence. The Italian vibe is from my husband,

who was born in Sicily, so he'd prefer to call it more Italian, but my true heart is for French design, which tends to pop up when he is not looking!

How would you describe your design aesthetic? I love things that are classic, not trendy. There are certain periods in architecture that will forever be beautiful because of the attention to symmetry and simplicity. What I love most about European design is that it was built over the centuries, so houses grew and changed with the ideals and social standing

The home of designer Jennifer Amodei, located outside Santa Barbara in Somis, California, is a mix of California, French, and Italian influences.



ABOVE: Amodei chose a blue-and-white theme in the outdoor sitting area, which she filled with furniture from Sunset West and pieces from her collection of blue-and-white porcelain. BELOW: A fountain surrounded by 'Iceberg' roses and 'Green Beauty' boxwood graces the home's entrance.



of the times. Homes felt collected and soulful versus decorated by catalogs.

Regarding decorating, what do you think makes a room successful? When it accurately reflects the heart, soul, and dreams of the people living there. I spend a great deal of time getting to know my clients, what motivates and inspires them, and most importantly, what makes them feel comfortable. Art is meant to rejuvenate, and our home is art that we live in. The greatest joy and fulfillment for me as an artist is to see someone completely connected to a space I helped them create.

You had a pivotal experience when you were an 18-year-old in Paris that shaped your future. Tell us about it. Paris is for artists, dreamers, lovers, and, for me, it was an awakening to my inner creative self that I never knew existed. I grew up in the San Fernando Valley in a funky farmhouse with a very conventional childhood. When I went to Paris, I realized the world was so much



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: A pair of charming stone buildings serves as changing cabanas for the pool area, set off by an olive tree and a pretty French-inspired fountain. • The blue-and-white theme continues on the dining table with the linens and a basket of hydrangeas. • Amodei enjoys frequent outdoor entertaining at her home.



bigger—there was so much more to life and, more importantly, so much more to me. My passion for design and understanding the historical aspect of why it moved and changed over the centuries delighted me. My mom is a historical novelist, which is why I love all things in the past. My dad is an inventor, which may be why I'm always coming up with ways to innovate.

What is your entertaining style?

I love big, long tables and family-style serving. Being in California, we are a bit more casual, so the focus is on food,

family, and good conversation. I watch people at parties, and they like to have intimate chats, so even in a large space I like to break things up and create more private areas—spaces that feel comfortable enough to spend hours sharing thought-provoking ideas.

Do you entertain a lot outside in the lemon grove? Yes, we mostly live outside. We have lots of room to put on a great spread, and the weather more often than not cooperates. My mother-in-law is from Sicily, so when I had children (boy/girl twins Christiano and

Julia), I was entrusted with centuries-old Italian recipes, which are surprisingly easy to make—salt, pepper, garlic, basil, and wow! But I do have to say that she has the magic touch, and her food is always the centerpiece of a great party.

How do you incorporate flowers into your parties? This past summer my husband and I celebrated our 20th wedding anniversary. I did burlap tablecloths and cream-colored roses from the garden. I pulled lavender to wrap the menus on the plate, and, of course, lemons are always a part of the show, since we have plenty. You only have to look to the garden for inspiration.

Tell us about a favorite project you've worked on. My favorite project has as much to do with the people I worked for as the home itself. I honestly feel I'm now a part of the family. The home is a 12,000-square-foot French Provençal-style home in the canyons on the way to Malibu. We did two-ton crystal chandeliers from Paris, 18th-century credenzas, and tapestries from Tuscany. I got to work with true artists throughout the project. It was a dream come true. Even now, years later, I go to the home and am cheerfully welcomed and get to see how much my clients have enjoyed it. I see a part of myself that I left there, and it warms my heart. 🌿