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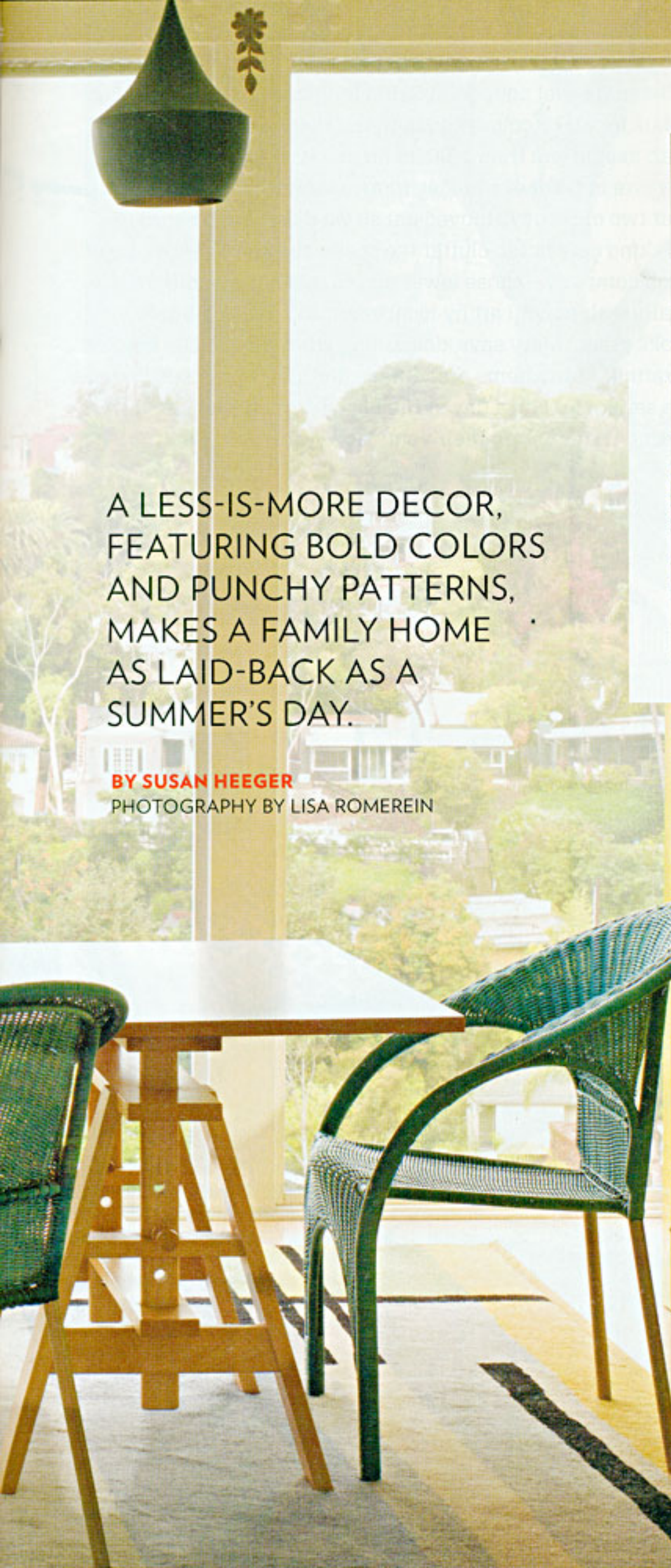
DISPLAY UNTIL JULY 5, 2011

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A modern dining area featuring a light-colored wooden table with a sawhorse-style base. Four green wicker chairs with curved backs are arranged around the table. On the table, there is a large bowl of lemons and limes, and several small vases with colorful flowers. The room has large floor-to-ceiling windows that offer a view of a city with greenery and buildings. Three dark, teardrop-shaped pendant lights hang from the ceiling. A colorful striped rug is partially visible on the floor.

spare change



A LESS-IS-MORE DECOR,
FEATURING BOLD COLORS
AND PUNCHY PATTERNS,
MAKES A FAMILY HOME
AS LAID-BACK AS A
SUMMER'S DAY.

BY SUSAN HEEGER

PHOTOGRAPHY BY LISA ROMEREIN



Mary and Tom
Korsan on the deck
with their son, Hank.

bright thinking

For the dining room Mary went with teal-blue wicker chairs that would also be right at home outdoors on the sun deck. Tom Dixon sculptural brass pendant lamps hang above an Achille Castiglioni work table that displays a group of ceramic pieces by local potter Moya Thompson. "We left clutter behind in our old house," Mary says. "In our new place the rule is, if something new comes in, something else goes out."

Downsizing to a three-level 2,000-square-foot cottage in Santa Monica, California, gave Mary and Tom Korsan a clean slate for kinky colors and patterns that had been missing from their life. Joining forces with design-pro friend Sasha Emerson, Mary scrapped the bland furnishings she'd had for years in favor of a bolder, more contemporary look that emphasizes feet-up comfort. "Our two older boys moved out so we didn't need bedrooms for them anymore," Mary says. Taking care not to clutter the space, the couple—owners of Great Guns USA, a film production company—chose fewer pieces that serve multiple functions, and they jazzed up walls with playful art by local emerging talent. "Whatever you put on clean, white walls looks great," Mary says, describing what friends call her and Tom's "brave" approach to decorating. Many items are vintage. Nothing's precious. Not one thing demands to be taken more seriously than a day at the beach. Which is where they often are when not at home—hitting the surf with their youngest, 11-year-old Hank.



bold moves

A fresh coat of Benjamin Moore Decorator's White made the living room feel larger, though its odd shape and multiple doors created a design challenge. Previous owners had solved the problem with a family-friendly sectional sofa, which the Korsans bought from them. To pep up the gray upholstery, they covered rear cushions in a graphic linen and tossed on bold-patterned pillows. Sasha added a Christopher Farr striped rug and soft custom poufs, which multitask as footstools, tables and extra seating. The vintage Eames chair in seafoam leather was a find from a Palm Springs shop.



fresh air

A side patio becomes an alfresco dining spot, complete with sturdy teak furniture, hanging lanterns and fishing floats from a flea market.



lofty thoughts

The built-in sofa—designed by Sasha to resemble old-fashioned window seats—makes the upstairs loft a cozy lounge and place for kids' sleepovers. The seats lift up for storage and cushion covers made from linen and denim remnants zip off for easy cleaning. A beaded Moroccan-style box—a repurposed food crate snagged at a flea market—holds board games.

youth movement

With its storage bed and compact desk, Hank's room is all about getting maximum use from limited quarters. His choice of bedspread inspired the graphic mix of patterned pillows and furnishings in gray, orange and black.



ENDLESS SUMMER

Hank opted for skate decks—mounted on racks so he can change the display of boards from month to month—as wall art.



dream suite

"In our own bedroom," Mary says, "the goal was serenity, keeping it calm." Starting with a subdued Christopher Farr rug as neutral ground, she and Tom added only the basics: a bed with storage drawers, swiveling reading lamps, laminated checked shades to screen the early-morning sun and some beach-themed art.



SASHA ON STYLE

The designer gives her strategy for casual living.

A simple all-white backdrop lets colors and objects pop with personality.

A small space like the Korsans' cries out for less stuff. Before filling a home with things you don't really need, ask yourself what will be fun, unique and define your family's style.

An uncluttered house allows you to kick back and relax. It's also unpretentious and fun because there's just not as much to take care of.



art smart

Mary and Tom wanted to start collecting art by young and emerging artists but didn't know where to begin. Sasha put them in touch with art consultant Cris McCall (tinlark.com), who helped them find pieces within their budget. Here, four acrylic-on-panel paintings by Marcie Paper.