





TURNING THE PAGE

With an eye toward the future—including the release of her third book and a new nonprofit promoting innovation among women—**Angella Nazarian** opens her home to reflect on a life well-lived.

BY LESLEY MCKENZIE
PHOTOGRAPHY BY DOUGLAS FRIEDMAN

“What is the key to a well-lived life?” is a question that drives Angella Nazarian forward on a daily basis. It’s one that the Iranian-born, Los Angeles-based author and speaker constantly asks herself, whether she’s interviewing subjects for her upcoming book or reflecting on her own daily joys as a mother, wife, philanthropist and entrepreneur.

The answer, in part, can be found in the Bel Air manse that Nazarian and her husband, David, have called home since 2003. “This is the space where we wanted to raise our kids,” she says, referring to the couple’s sons Phillip and Eli (now ages 22 and 19, respectively), who guided their decision to buy the hillside sanctuary perched just two blocks above thrumming Sunset Boulevard, offering expansive vistas of the twinkling Los Angeles skyline.

“I think a home should be really calm and inviting. It should give you an understated sense of elegance,” says Nazarian, who enlisted interior designer Joan Behnke to update the home’s existing traditional decor (think: gold-leaf surfaces) with a more simplified aesthetic that’s as glamorous as it is comfortable. “I like the focus to be on specific pieces in each room,” she says, turning her attention to the soft floor-to-ceiling curtains in the living room, which trail off into cascading layers of ruffles. They were modeled after one of her dresses, she notes, and hand-sewn by a couturier-turned-drapery maker.

This refined decorative approach is on display throughout the property, from the sweeping Persian-inspired garden and 18th-century-inspired tea pavilion that flank the house (a project that took seven years to complete) to the sprawling organic vegetable garden and abundance of fruit trees. Late last year, the basement-level entertaining room and wine cellar were remodeled, inspired by a striking black-and-gold 1960s Modernist Italian console that now takes center stage in the newly reimagined bar and dining area.

Nazarian’s strategy for viewing things with a fresh perspective has served her well not only on the homefront, but also in her professional endeavors. A former university psychology professor, Nazarian left her illustrious academic career in pursuit of new opportunities to inspire people in areas of personal growth and development. Eleven years later, that has come in myriad forms, including two best-selling books, speaking engagements and the development of a personal coaching app.

Most recently, Nazarian’s efforts have been channeled into her new nonprofit, Visionary Women, which is designed to bring together leaders in the fields of women’s growth and innovation. The organization is a follow-up act to the now-defunct Women A.R.E., a nonprofit and salon series she co-founded that culminated in a hyper-successful, sold-out summit in Los Angeles in 2013 that focused on female trailblazers across all fields.

“After Women A.R.E., it was all about taking stock and figuring out what we wanted to do next,” says Nazarian. “When you have a nonprofit, everyone knows that the money goes toward women’s initiatives, which was really important to me. And it enhances our fundraising capabilities, which was equally important.” The group’s



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Books and keepsakes line the built-in bookshelves in this elegant gathering space.

official launch kicked off in February with a "Women at the Forefront of Technology" panel discussion featuring female industry titans, including Dawn Ostroff, president of Condé Nast Entertainment, and Pauline Fischer, vice president of original films at Netflix.

Other speakers on Visionary Women's spring docket include Liberian peace activist Leymah Gbowee and Iranian cotemporary artist Shirin Neshat, who is also one of the subjects featured in Nazarian's new book, "Visionary Women," which lands on shelves this October. It's a highly anticipated follow-up to her tome, "Pioneers of the Possible: Celebrating Visionary Women of the World," which honored 20 females who have made a difference in their fields.

"I thought I was finished after the last book," explains Nazarian. "I missed the introverted aspect of writing. I missed having

these women as friends. When I read about a person, I think about them all the time. In my office I have a clipboard with their pictures. I look at it and think about them, and I quote them all the time. They live inside me and I kind of missed that."

Spanning women across the globe in a variety of fields, her newest book delves into the lives of 25 vanguards, from performance artist Marina Abramovic to Sandra Day O'Connor, the first woman to be appointed to the U.S. Supreme Court.

But there's another common thread running through the group. "They all had a defining moment, or changed careers, or had something drastic happen that changed their perspective," Nazarian says. "I think that is really interesting for all of us as women to remember. We're all in need of reinvention once in a while."



Nazarian blends modern elements with antiques to create a look completely her own.

"WE'RE ALL IN NEED
OF REINVENTION
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HAIR AND MAKEUP BY BERNARD ICHKAN



The Persian-inspired garden and 18th-century-inspired tea pavilion serve as a space for reflection at Nazarian's Bel Air home.



