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DINING ROOM

THE CLIENT requested a traditional dining room, but with a twist, and Charles Allem was happy to oblige. "It's very now, very edgy, very classic," says the interior designer. "I love to put opposites together that work." At the center of the room, he juxtaposed a Murano chandelier with a simple oak dining table. "That's the twist," he says. "The table is plain but contemporary. It isn't dainty." For the Bel-Air residence, Allem incorporated elements from eras past, such as 18th-century urns and a pair of 1930s wall sconces that frame a 1930s British painting. "If good pieces from every period are used, they will all connect," says the designer.

There is a hint of vintage Hollywood in the gray and white palette accented with glass, platinum, and Lucite, but the design is versatile enough to adapt to casual or formal dining. The striped wallcovering and Greek-key pattern on the backs of the chairs convey subtle elegance, and the room appeals to both sexes. "It's masculine," says Allem, "but also glamorous in a way that a woman in a Galliano gown would love sitting here." The table seats eight, and Allem



stresses that a dining room has to do more than simply look good. "It works fabulously when you are using the room," he says. "It's not just a pretty picture." Allem, who splits his time between Los Angeles and New York, finds as much satisfaction in the installation as in the creative process. "My biggest high is being given the opportunity to design a project and then produce it."

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