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A graduate of Harvard and UCLA, Brettler opened her architectural practice in 1996. Although her ground-up projects have a contemporary tone, she is reputed for her bespoke renovations of historical properties, and she applied that detail-oriented thoughtfulness to the renovation of her own home. "Old Spanish-style houses tend to be dark," she says. "The trick is to bring back the glamour of the original design while opening up the spaces to bring in light and create an indoor-outdoor connection, which you really want in a California house."

In the kitchen, she modernized the space to fit the large family's needs by removing a formerly adjacent maid's room and pantry to create a large prep area, eat-in space and an expanded breakfast room. However, Brettler insists it is equally important not to lose the integrity of a room's original intention. "I don't like blowing open everything," explains Brettler, who defined the kitchen area with beams. "My big thing is for spaces to feel distinct."

The configuration and volumes of the main rooms—living, dining and library—remained essentially the same, but upstairs a long dormitory-style hallway was entirely reconfigured to house a master suite and three children's bedrooms. Brettler also transformed a room perched above the pool into a study for her husband with a new ceiling and window-backed shelving, and, in a creative repurposing of space, she opened up a former mirrored workout room just off the pool to create an indoor-outdoor loggia complete with a bar inspired by The Musso & Frank Grill.





Brettler kept the dining room's original patterned ceiling and grounded the space with a rug she purchased at auction from the estate of Charles Bronson. Draperies made with Schumacher's Chiang Mai Dragon lend color to the space, as does a blue-painted wall treatment. The dining set is antique.