

THE GRAND TOUR

# This Rug Curator Mixes Southern Traditions and Colorful Patterns in Her L.A. Home

Each room is a visual treat

By Morgan Goldberg

Photography by Jones Crow

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Emmy Ellison always dreamed of traveling to Morocco. When she finally visited the North African nation, it was as transcendent as she'd imagined. "When I landed, something clicked," she remembers. "It transformed me. The sounds, the sights, the colors, the textures, the call to prayer, the people, the layers, the sunlight—it just was so overwhelming."

This inexplicably strong link led Emmy to launch De Maroc, a luxury collection of handmade vintage Moroccan rugs available online and through a private "diafa" hospitality experience that she hosts in the detached garage-turned-studio of her Los Feliz, Los Angeles, abode. With an original redwood ceiling, a peacock green velvet sofa, and tons of rugs showcased on stands by Cooper Reynolds Gross, the retail space is cozy and welcoming for customers to sip on tea and discuss their prospective purchases.



"My mom was an interior designer, so our house was always perfectly curated and designed," Emmy remembers. "So without knowing it, I grew up in a beautiful environment."



In Emmy's rug studio, a wicker coffee table is topped with a silver tea set from her childhood.



The rest of Emmy's 1927 Spanish-style dwelling, which she designed with Barrie Benson, is equally inviting—yet even more striking. Bold color combinations and graphic patterns are juxtaposed with a formal, segmented layout inspired by the traditional homes she grew up around in North Carolina. “I miss the South,” she admits. “I miss that pomp and circumstance, but I’m also contemporary. I’m taking those two parts of me and trying to meld them.”



“It’s starting to wear and tarnish, which I love,” Emmy says of the brass hardware in the kitchen. “It makes it feel like home. I want my house to be lived-in. I don’t want it to be a gallery. I want it to be functional, but beautiful.”



Black notes in the light fixtures and window treatments intentionally acknowledge the black beams in the living room.

Though each room is intentionally distinct, subtle commonalities forge a connection between them. Dusty lilac cabinets in the kitchen nod to shades of eggplant and lavender in the lounge-y den, where one of Emmy's first-ever Moroccan rugs is displayed. “It’s jewel purple with this green Greek key border and little accents of orange,” she describes. “It’s really faded in one area, and I love that. That’s where the window was and the sun came in. That just makes it so alive. It gives it soul. This rug had a life before it was here.”

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Emmy wanted a formal dining room with a modern twist.







The Fromental wallpaper is hand painted specifically to fit the dimensions of the room.

Although grasscloth also tethers those two spaces, the biggest wallpaper moment is the hand-painted, custom-fit Fromental Rockface mural in the dining room. It features a dramatic, abstract depiction of California's mountainscapes, mixing vivid blues, earthy browns, and moody mauves. The hues informed multiple design decisions, from the azure velvet used to reupholster Louis-esque chairs from Emmy's childhood home to the Farrow & Ball Peignoir paint that covers the expansive living room.



"That bookshelf, I can spend hours reorganizing it depending on the mood or the season," Emmy says.



The aforementioned salon is so long that it includes two generous sitting areas beneath the glossy black beams. The first is helmed by a curved-back, teal loveseat adorned with India Mahdavi pillows. It's ideal for curling up with a book from the wall-to-wall, peach-colored, built-in shelf behind it. The other acts as an entertaining hub, with a tufted, sheeny sofa and a zigzag fabric armchair beside the fireplace.



"I don't think I should only have Moroccan rugs in my house," Emmy says. "My house isn't a showroom. It's an arm of me."

It's the art, however, that really steals the show. A four-part progressive series by Emmy's brother is exhibited alongside portraits by [Alex Katz](#) and [Nano Hernandez](#), the latter of whom hand-embroidered two images of Emmy's daughter. The result is an eclectic and personal aesthetic that perfectly embodies the dichotomy of her modern quirky and Southern formal sensibilities.



The family room, where Emmy and her kids watch *Paw Patrol*, is filled with poufs crafted from salvaged Moroccan rugs.