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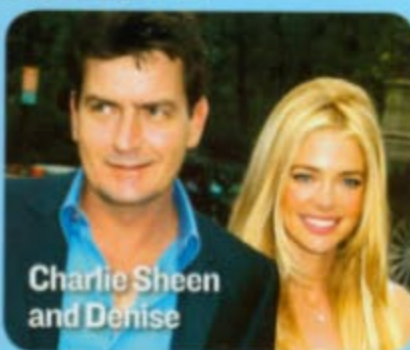
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When it comes to interior design, Linda Hogan—VH1's newest reality star—knows best

Home Sweet Hogans



Designing woman Linda strikes a pose with daughter Brooke, the Hulk and son Nick.

"Building code limited how large I could make the fire-box part, but I had the fireplace opening enlarged to make it like an old-fashioned hearth."

"It gets cold in France, so they used to build an area around the fireplace with lower, angled ceilings and closer walls."

"I hate the whole idea of hunting. But this stag was already dead when I found him, so what can you do?"

"I had a team of Mexican woodworkers create this mantel out of wood from an old inglenook in France."

"Brooke is the pianist in the family. Hulk's mother gave us this pretty black-lacquered piano."





"When I saw this chandelier with its iron work and copper pieces in an antique building in Santa Monica, I had to have it."

"I wanted the dining room not to be that formal. There's a lot of morning sun, and we have coffee in here."

"The table was custom-made in France; the top is antique, a center-cut from a really old pine tree."

"The pillows are handstitched needlepoint, and I picked them for their country French themes."

Twelve years ago, Linda Hogan had been pining to return to her native Los Angeles, but husband Hulk feared that his East Coast-centered wrestling dates would mean too much time away from family. So Linda, who admits that Hulk's career "had turned into a much bigger monster than we'd anticipated," agreed to remain in Clearwater, Florida—but in exchange, she says, she pinned her husband to the mat. "I said OK, but then let's really dig in and make a home we love."

Only a half-mile from the house they'd lived in for eight years, on a neighboring street she never knew existed, Linda found an old Spanish villa, complete with views of Tampa Bay and the Gulf of Mexico. But \$2 million later, when her contractors advised her to tear the neglected structure

down and build anew, Linda immediately drew on the memory of a California house she'd once fallen in love with: an authentic French chateau, dismantled and incongruously reassembled among Lake Arrowhead's log cabins. She hired an architect specializing in European-style buildings, and told him she wanted Old World wood construction—"not a new house with a French facade like at Disney World. I wanted it to feel authentic, like you're stepping back in time when you enter." And to get that authentic feeling, she spared no expense, hiring, among other help, a limestone carver named Francois to shape the massive quantities of stone



and tile she imported from France.

The resulting \$12 million mansion—now a familiar sight to the many fans of VH1's *Hogan Knows Best*—did require a bit of modern-day steel framing, but otherwise, says Linda, "it's really a replica of a 17th-cen-



"Birds are a 'country home' thing, but this antique birdcage actually housed my parrot for years."

"I wanted the kitchen to be open, without many upper cabinets. I store my cookware in the center island."

"The stools are English-style reproductions; French styles were too delicate for teenagers and wrestlers."

"I looked all over to find the widest oak planks I could for the floor, which is laid out in a checkerboard pattern with imported French terra-cotta tiles."



"I may have a sink full of dirty dishes, but whatever," says Linda. "We're a family."

ture French farmhouse." An 18,000-square-foot farmhouse, that is—up to four stories tall in parts, with a 4000-square-foot guest house and a boathouse half that size, as well.

To furnish the interior, Linda traveled abroad with her mother, L.A.-based designer Gail Claridge, and shopped French flea markets, ultimately shipping home two furniture containers, each the size of a

biel hunt: elk heads, antlers and pastoral tapestries. And roosters. Lots and lots of roosters—"a south of France trademark."

And though there may be some fine porcelain scattered about, Linda can't afford to get too precious in the Hulk's domain. "My husband is 6-foot-6 and 300 pounds," she says, "and his friends are just as big. I needed to think ahead and get large-scale

semi. "I didn't know if we could use it all," Linda recalls, "but when I saw things I loved, I knew I could find a place for them somewhere." And her favorite accoutrements? Ceramic pottery, known as green- and yellowware. Crock pots once used for making butter. Farm tools, and the barrels she uses as end tables. Anything alluding to the proverbial

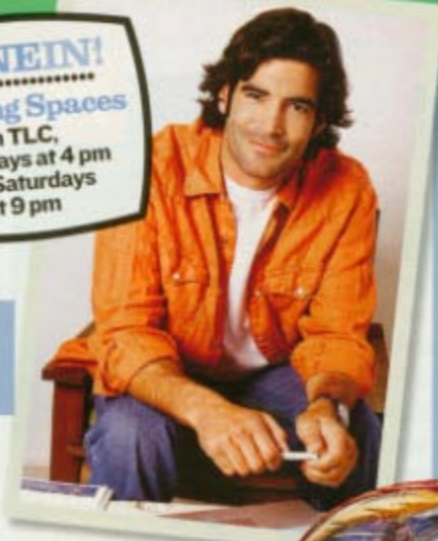
furniture." Yet despite precautionary measures, the occasional wrestler's body slam has caused a few domestic injuries. "After plenty of snapped legs and spindles, I'm on my second set of kitchen barstools," she laughs. "And I learned the hard way that I needed 18-inch tall, turbo-flush toilets, instead of the standard 14-inch size. You get a big guy who goes to sit down, and at some point just falls—and I've had two cracked toilet bowls!"

Wrestling-related furniture casualties aside, Linda says that she and her husband still love to entertain in their oversize family and dining rooms. And she's happy that daughter Brooke, 17, and son Nick, 15, enjoy hanging out there, too. "When you have a family, you want to keep up some kind of tradition, like eating Sunday dinner with a real tablecloth," she says. "I like having the pretty stuff, but I like using it even more. I may have a sink full of dirty dishes, but whatever—we're a family." ●



TUNE IN!
 Trading Spaces
 on TLC,
 weekdays at 4 pm
 and Saturdays
 at 9 pm

Stag chandelier;
 blackforestdecor.
 com, \$1799



Get the Hogan look



Dinner plate (\$55);
 cup/saucer (\$30);
 pierredeux.com

Country-French accents are widely available and affordable, says Carter Oosterhouse of TLC's *Trading Spaces*



Ceramic rooster;
 pierredeux.com, \$95



Renaissance chair;
 pierredeux.com, \$995



Sunflower wire basket;
 ndi.com, \$448



Pewter mug and dinner plate;
 shirleypewter.com, \$50 each



Rooster pillow;
 pierredeux.com, \$350

Dream Houses

If, like Linda Hogan, you've got a theme in mind, here's what to consider, says Carter

Research You don't need to hire a decorator if you're willing to do a little homework. There are books available on every decorating style imaginable at your local bookstore or on Amazon.com. It's important to study the history of the look you want to achieve so you're not overly influenced by today's trends.

Decide It may make sense to begin experimenting with your dream look one room at a time. You'll flesh out your ideas, learn from your mistakes, and decide whether you're really ready to commit to an extreme style that you're not used to living with. Start with a small den or living room where you can play with a number of diverse pieces.

Shop! If you're a true stickler for authenticity and decide to purchase in parts unknown (like, say, Europe), know where to shop, what to look for in terms of quality pieces, and approximate shipping costs (which can be exorbitant) before you go. It probably pays, notes Carter, to thoroughly investigate your many U.S. shopping options prior to booking a costly and potentially futile trip.