

ELLE DECOR

MARCH 2019



MARY MCDONALD'S BILLION DOLLAR DECORATING

THE GREAT AMERICAN DESIGN ISSUE

CHANDELIERS: FROM THE BATHROOM TO THE BALLROOM
WOOD FLOORS AND HOW TO LOVE THEM

CANADA

A PERFECT

MARY McDONALD
CREATES A MAXIMALIST
MANSE IN SOUTHERN
CALIFORNIA FOR A PAIR
OF VIVACIOUS—AND
WILDLY SUCCESSFUL—
BEAUTY ENTREPRENEURS.

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PHOTOGRAPHS BY DOUGLAS FRIEDMAN



The entry hall in the Mary McDonald-designed Corona del Mar, California, home of Jeremy Johnson (left) and Jerrod Blandino, cofounders of the beauty brand Too Faced, seen here with their dog, Clover, a Chihuahua. The table is by Quatrain, the custom wallcovering is by de Gournay, and the 19th-century English crystal chandelier is from Dimitri Stefanov.

In Johnson's office, the desk is custom, the desk chair is by De Sousa Hughes, and the pair of Henge chairs is from Mass Beverly. The 1960s desk lamp is by Jacques Adnet, the sconces are by the Urban Electric Co., the chandelier is by Lucca Antiques, and the rug and wall paint are custom.

PALETTE



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TO SPEND AN AFTERNOON TÊTE-À-TÊTE WITH Jerrod Blandino and Jeremy Johnson, the cofounders of the California-based cosmetics brand Too Faced, is to understand that their phenomenal success in the beauty industry is as much a matter of a heartfelt ethos as it is a result of innovative products. This may sound obvious to some (many consumers, millennials in particular, are known to put their dollars where their mouths and hearts are) and silly to others (is a lipstick not a lipstick by any other name?), but it goes a long way toward explaining how they built Too Faced from a start-up offering 10 eye shadows, 10 lipsticks, and eight nail polishes into a powerhouse that was purchased in 2016 by Estée Lauder for \$1.45 billion—the most expensive acquisition in the company’s history. And it also helps account for the 17,000-square-foot modern French fantasia of a home the couple recently completed with the help of Mary McDonald—a star of the Bravo series *Million Dollar Decorators*—in Corona del Mar, a coastal enclave eight miles from Too Faced’s Irvine headquarters, where they both still run the show (Blandino as chief creative officer/dreamer and Johnson as CEO/action man).

When the couple launched Too Faced in the late 1990s, the beauty landscape was composed of tasteful nudes, somber browns, and minimalist packaging. Blandino and Johnson blew this stale line of thinking to pale pink-packaged smithereens. Both men had worked at Estée Lauder department-store counters before Blandino, a former art-school student, came up with Too Faced’s first product: Ooh and Ahh, a glitter eye shadow.

“Makeup is power, and that was the whole philosophy of what we started,” explains Johnson of the brand, which quickly became known for its clever product names (including a foundation called Born This Way and a blush dubbed Peach My Cheeks), unabashedly whimsical packaging, and cruelty-free formulations.

Of course, the kind of unfettered creativity that lends itself to a billion-dollar business doesn’t



In the formal living room, the sofas are by Soane Britain, and a Scala Luxury cocktail table is topped with a Jeff Koons *Balloon Dog*. The stools are by Mary McDonald for Chaddock, and the tables are by Donghia (left) and Dessin Fournir (right). The 19th-century French marble mantel is from Jamb, the chandelier is by Charles Spada, and the curtains are of a Jim Thompson fabric. The custom rug is by Beauvais Carpets.



Johnson's master bathroom has a custom counter and mirror by Urban Archaeology and a faucet by Waterworks. The stool is from Carl Moore Antiques, the sconces are by Ralph Lauren Home, and the pendant is by the Urban Electric Co.





In the master bedroom, the bed is by Jasper, the sofas and chairs are custom, the 19th-century Carrara marble mantel is French, and the 1970s chandelier is from Jean-Marc Fray. The curtains are of a Scalamandré silk moiré, and the artwork (left) is by Jill Moser.

necessarily make for a harmoniously appointed abode. In the five and a half years it took to build and furnish the couple's new home, McDonald often found herself tempering Blandino's more-is-more impulses. "I had to exercise a fair bit of editing so they could have all these fun, fanciful colors and patterns in their home," she says, "without ending up with too much of everything in every room."

The project was as complicated as it was ambitious. After riding out two years of permit nightmares, Blandino and Johnson also had to contend with a neighbor who snuck onto the property right before they began demolition of the smaller, older house and poisoned 11 Torrey pine trees (an endangered species) that were blocking his ocean view. They spent a fortune trying to rehabilitate the trees and were able to save almost half of them. Once the main drama was over, McDonald, working with the architect John Ilkagla, set about realizing the couple's dream of a home with historical French-style interiors with a modern twist.

A grand entryway featuring a marble staircase flanked by a custom de Gournay wallpaper with a pastoral landscape leads to a column-lined marble hallway and a

central living and dining atrium. At one end is a formal living room whose contemporary touches—midcentury-modern *Orthoceras* fossil lamps, a Jeff Koons *Balloon Dog*—accessorize a pair of pink velvet Soane Britain Vendome sofas, a nod to the colorway of Too Faced's signature packaging.

Across a vestibule is Blandino's lavender office, an ode to Elizabeth Taylor's famous Ping-Pong diamond rings, which Johnson bought at Christie's in 2011 as a gift for Blandino (he also proposed to him with a ring inspired by Taylor's trio of baubles). There is a photo of Taylor in the room, along with chairs upholstered in a lavender tweed from the same factory where Chanel gets its fabric ("You

can't sit in them, because it's not upholstery grade," Blandino says). Johnson's office is peacock blue and resembles an old-world library.

Not all of the spaces—there is also a gym, an underground garage, a massage room, a pale pink gift-wrapping room, two separate master bathrooms and connecting closets, two guest bedrooms, and a separate guesthouse, to name a few—get an equal amount of use. In fact, to hear Blandino and McDonald tell it, most of the furniture in the home remains

**“We put a cross
and a Smurf inside
every wall.”**

JERROD BLANDINO



FROM TOP: Italian stools from the 1950s pull up to an antique desk in Blandino's office; the vintage mirror is by Karl Springer, the antique French sconces are from Galerie Glustin, the de Gournay wallpaper is custom, and the pair of chairs are in a Scalamandré checked silk. A guest bedroom features a bed by McDonald for Chaddock, a pair of vintage tole palms, and Julian Chichester nightstands; the walls and ceiling are sheathed in a Schumacher striped paper.

in mint condition a year and a half after the couple officially moved in. The dining room's custom black-lacquer table that seats 10 has, to date, never been used.

"I go, 'When are you going to use this?' And [Jerrod] goes, 'I don't know if I can. I really don't want anyone to mess up my house,'" explains McDonald. There are also two full kitchens, each with its own La Cornue stove. The spare was intended as a chef's kitchen, so Blandino wouldn't have to see the mess that comes with food preparation. "He's particular," McDonald says. But the space has yet to be used. "We planned to hire a chef when we moved in," Johnson says, "but the room seemed too delicate, so we decided not to."

Lest anyone have the mistaken impression that Blandino is the only "particular" one, consider the media room, the sole space for which Johnson insisted on having a say. Over a period of eight months, McDonald had the walls coated in 17 layers of green paint, in part because Johnson was never quite satisfied with the color. But it was worth it, because now it's his favorite space in the house—plus, he jokes, "It's the only room where I feel like I can actually sit on the furniture."

All of this particularity came with a price, of course. "For the first two and a half years, we tried to stick to a budget [for the house]," Johnson says, "but once we threw it away, I began to enjoy the process more."

To be clear, neither man is to the manor born. Johnson and Blandino both grew up nearby in the towns of Yucaipa and Walnut, respectively. Blandino describes his upbringing as "total middle-class suburbia," while Johnson's household subsisted on a very modest income. "We got evicted one Christmas Day," he recalls. "It was a constant struggle for my family to even afford electricity." The couple met through a friend in 1995 and have been inseparable ever since.

If their current home has a grandeur in keeping with the level of financial success they have achieved, it is also a manifestation of the same sense of playfulness and wonder that infuses their every endeavor. While the house was being built, "We said a prayer in every room and put a cross and a Smurf inside the walls before they put up the drywall," Blandino confides. "I grew up loving Smurfs, they're lucky for me, and I thought, If I were a kid dreaming of this house, I would put some Smurfs in the walls." ■



A kitchen's range is by La Cornue, the hood is custom, the stools are by Brabbu, and the pendants are by Soane Britain. The custom diagonal-striped marble floor is by Noteworthy Marble & Tile. For details, see Resources.

