

LIVING

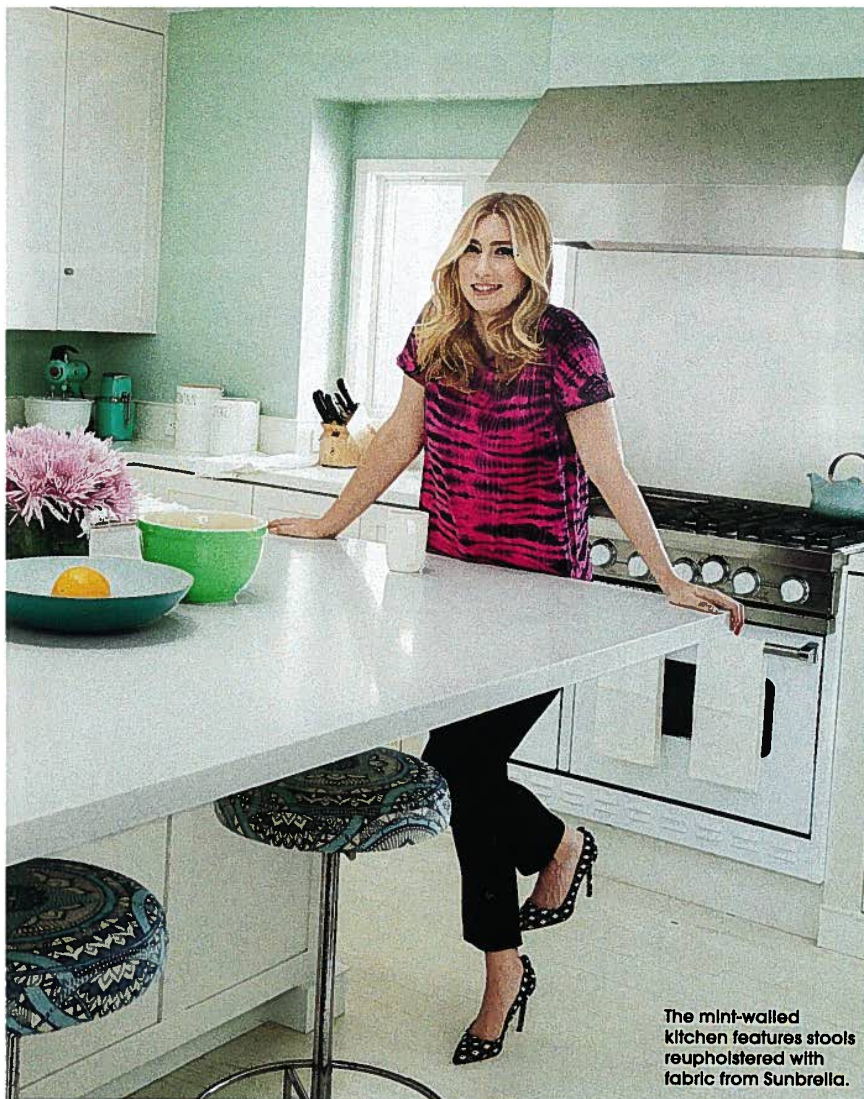


Photographed by Brigitte Sine (styling by Sarah Schussheim; hair by Colie Noble at Jed Root for John Frieda; makeup by Marissa Machado at Celestine Agency; prop styling by Spencer Vrooman)

FUN HOUSE

When *New Girl* creator Liz Meriwether purchased her L.A. home last year, she wanted to fill it with touches as funny as her hit show—without going cuckoo for kitsch

Meriwether, in an Alexander McQueen dress and Alejandro Ingelmo sandals, thumbs through her vintage record collection



The mint-walled kitchen features stools reupholstered with fabric from Sunbrella.



(From top) What she's spinning these days; patron saint Brigitte Bardot oversees a script revision



"Try not to use *quirky* too many times in this story, okay?" intones Liz Meriwether as she adjusts a framed poster of a unicorn in front of an unfurling rainbow in her dining room on a recent Saturday afternoon.

The request would be easy enough to comply with if it came from anyone other than Meriwether, the bespectacled creative genius behind FOX's *New Girl*, whose own small-screen alter ego, Jess, is played by the reigning queen of quirk, Zooey Deschanel. Perhaps not surprisingly, the adjective also applies rather nicely to the home Meriwether purchased last year, an otherwise sleek three-bedroom midcentury ranch house in West Hollywood, punctuated with touches such as a backyard statue of an alligator; a kitchen chalkboard upon which the ominous REDRUM is scrawled; and an unapologetically fake *Mona Lisa*, complete with gaudy gold frame, that hangs in a powder room. "I always try not to take anything too seriously," says Meriwether. "My house included." (For

the record, Meriwether's quibble with the Q-word? It denotes "something a little too contrived.")

Those among the 6.7 million fans who tune in to *New Girl* weekly will appreciate what an upgrade the new digs are for the writer. The show, now in its third season, chronicles the hijinks that ensue after the endearingly offbeat Jess walks in on her boyfriend with another woman and is forced to move in with three male roommates. It's loosely based on Meriwether's four years living in various Craigslist sublets around L.A. (Upon graduating from Yale, the Michigan-raised Meriwether moved to New York, then relocated to the West Coast.) "I had completely exhausted my patience with Craigslist," she says. Ironically enough, Meriwether, 32, was able to get out of that situation by writing a show that glorifies it.

She ultimately settled on the first house she'd viewed—after it went on the market, then off the market, then on again. "It was like a boyfriend I

couldn't get over," she says. (This being L.A., the house's previous resident was Selma Blair.)

Still, the move presented a few problems for Meriwether. For starters, "I could literally fit all of my belongings into my Honda when I moved in. All I had were clothes and some weird mugs." And writing a hit TV show—Meriwether has a reputation among her coworkers for routinely spending the night on the couch in her office on the FOX lot—doesn't exactly leave much free time to, say, spend hours scouring 1stdibs.

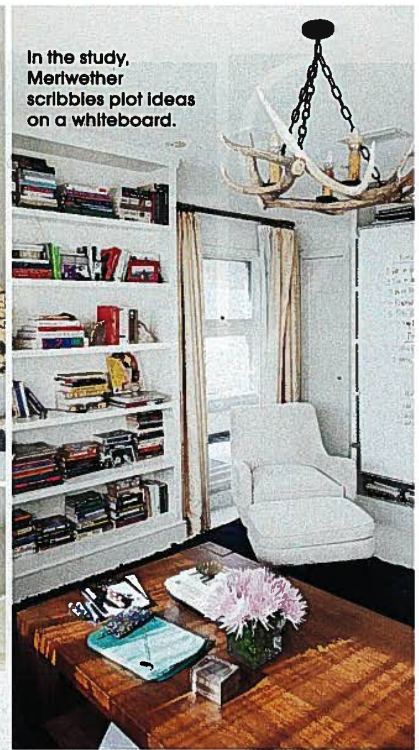
So she did something very grown-up—and not quirky at all: tapped L.A. interior designer Sienna Oosterhouse, who worked with Tom Ford on his Santa Fe home and was recommended by friend and fellow TV writer Deb Schoeneman (*Girls*). Oosterhouse turned her client on to accents such as a black leather Oviedo chaise lounge and a custom sectional in teal-colored velvet. ("At first I thought it would look like a weird '70s love den" says Meriwether.) Meriwether also held



Meriwether's version of gardening; (below) mixed messages on the kitchen chalkboard



(From above) Books with the head of one of the writer's idols, Gertrude Stein, made for Meriwether by her mother; a bedroom nook outfitted with a Patti Smith poster



In the study, Meriwether scribbles plot ideas on a whiteboard.



An Art.com jackalope in the foyer; (right) Meriwether's signature mode of transportation



on to some pieces left by Blair, including an antler light fixture in the study and a master bed outfitted with a retractable flat-screen TV embedded in the footboard. ("I was worried it was kind of douchey at first," she says.)

Still, the writer managed to work in some quir—er...eccentric touches. She bought the aforementioned alligator after visiting New Orleans and seeing the real deal up close, and she covered walls throughout with finds from Art.com (in addition to the unicorn, she found pictures of outer space and a jackalope).

Of course, like any good writer, Meriwether walks a fine line with her comed "I had my mom over for Thanksgiving, and the whole time she was like 'Liz, please take down that unicorn.'"

—AMANDA FITZSIMONS

Alligator, bra cloche display, plate: Jeffrey Westbrook/Studio D (prop styling by Sabrina Grande at BJ Bennett Represents); remaining images: courtesy of the designers. Meriwether wears: In kitchen, Proenza Schouler shirt, Stella McCartney pants, Manolo Blahnik/Lisa Perry shoes; in backyard, Rag & Bone shirt, Helmut Lang pants, Prada sunglasses for Casadei shoes.

WHY SO SERIOUS? Make like Meriwether and add some humor to your home



LITTLE LOL

Skip garden-variety yard decals (which can skew ironic anyway) and opt for a kicky gator, just like Meriwether's. *Painted Aluminum Alligator*, \$595, mecox.com



With its scalloped edges and fine New Zealand wool, this postage-stamp rug (get it?) is ornate enough to hang on a wall if it actually is too small for your floor. *16p Stamp Rug*, \$1,075, stamprugs.com



It's hard to pinpoint what makes sculptor Holly Laws' tiny bra inside a tiny cloche funny—but it's sure to give you a tiny PG-13 giggle every time you see it. *Black Bra*, \$1,600, shopgreyarea.com



Take the piss out of fussy tolle with this print, which features the traditional French country style... depicting muscle-car wrecks. *Tolle de Derby*, \$125 per roll, flatvemaacular.com



Realistic enough to pass as an heirloom yet creepy enough to be a prop from *The Shining*, this plate from artist Nir Hod is for the host who enjoys tormenting guests. *Genius Plate*, \$300, nirhod.com



TOTALLY TWISTED

It takes commitment to dedicate an entire piece of furniture to novelty. If you're game, we recommend a chair that says it all. *Jimmie Martin Love Hurts Chair*, \$4,100, maison24.com

When it comes to wacky touches, it's about location, location, location: Oosterhouse recommends placing smaller items on bookshelves so it looks "less like clutter" and larger items in removed nooks so "it's a surprise."