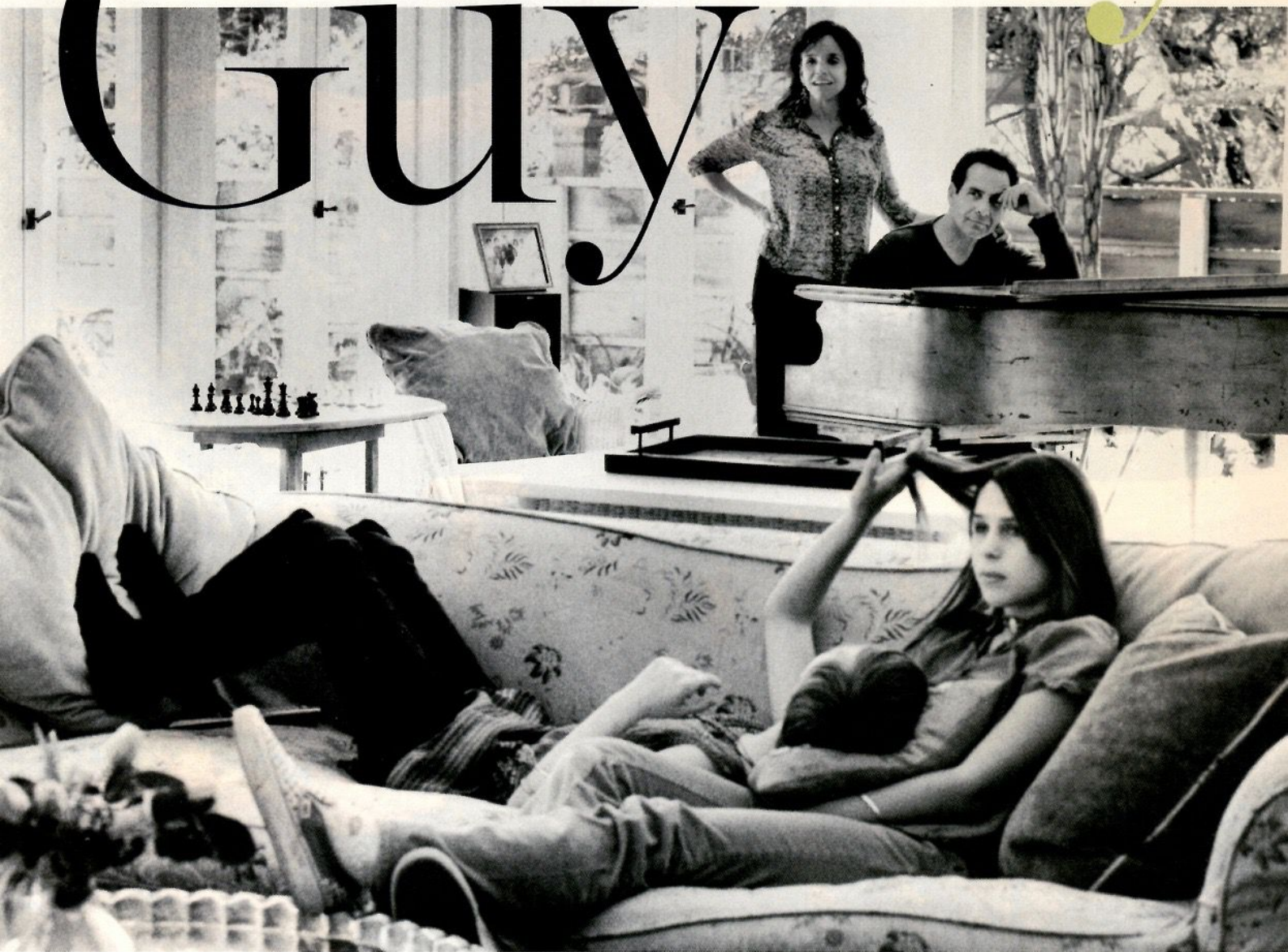


Family

Guy



As his loved ones can tell you, *Monk's* **TONY SHALHOUB**—unlike his TV counterpart—has no quirky tendencies. Unless you count the constant sweeping. Or the irrational fear of milk. Or...

written by JAY A. FERNANDEZ • photographed by BOBBY FISHER



THE KITCHEN FACTOR

"She's the motor," says Shalhoub of his wife, Brooke Adams, and her decorating drive. (The newly renovated kitchen is her handiwork.) Opposite: The family kicks back in the sunroom.



DINING OUT An outdoor kitchen boasts teak pillars and a rotisserie grill (above). “We used to mess around with little Weber grills. You’d have 90 people over and have to move 45 hot dogs,” says Shalhoub. “This is fantastic.” Opposite: Bouncing around in the yard.

LIFE-IMITATING-ART MOMENTS DON'T GET MUCH richer than this. Actor Tony Shalhoub stands under a trellis in his backyard, animatedly discussing his role as Adrian Monk, the private detective known for his amusing catalogue of obsessive-compulsive traits, when suddenly he stops mid-sentence. “I’m sorry. This thing is driving me nutty ...” he mutters. He then climbs onto a short wall to fix a wood joint that has come slightly unstuck, whacking at it over and over as if it will magically realign.

His wife, actress Brooke Adams, watches knowingly and assures him she’ll have it fixed. “He’s much worse than Monk—much more neurotic,” she says, laughing.

“There *are* parallels,” he admits dryly.

“For example, sweeping,” Adams says. “He sweeps. A lot.”

“I walk around barefoot,” he says. “We have beautiful floors with radiant heat. In the mornings the floor is nice and warm, but it’s spoiled by sticky, gravelly, chunky, hairy things. I have to confess: I love to sweep.”

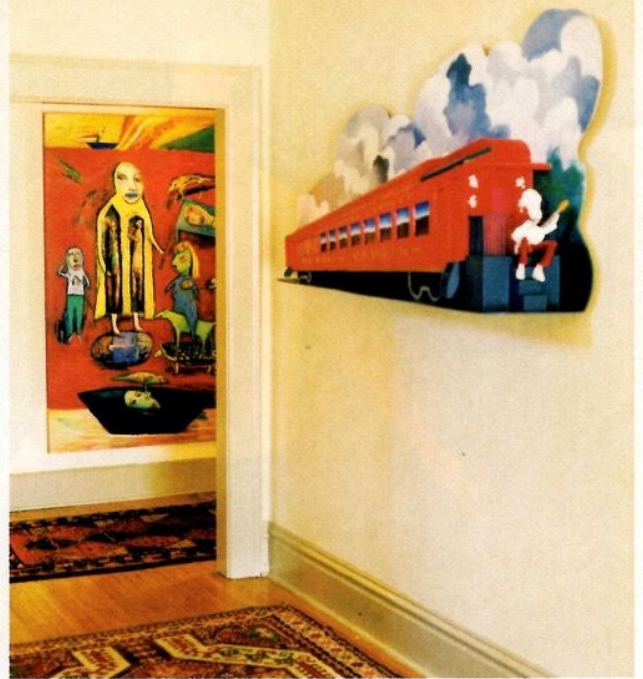
The floor to which he is referring is indeed striking—a tiled kitchen space that opens out onto the expansive backyard. Shalhoub, Adams and their two daughters—Josie, 17, and Sophie, 12—have lived in this two-story traditional home for a dozen years. (“This was one of the choice houses on the street,” Shalhoub says.) Built in 1922 in an area of L.A.’s Hancock Park once dubbed Pill Hill because of the many doctors who lived there, it boasts four bedrooms as well as a painting studio upstairs.

Shalhoub, wearing a white tank top, University of Michigan sweatpants and Nikes (he just returned from his weekly Superslow workout), begins pointing out the many renovations that have defined the last year and a half of his home life. At the back of the house, the kitchen was blown out to three times its original size, consuming several small rooms in the process. Adams then painted it a minty green to match the hand-painted Moroccan tiles that adorn the wall above

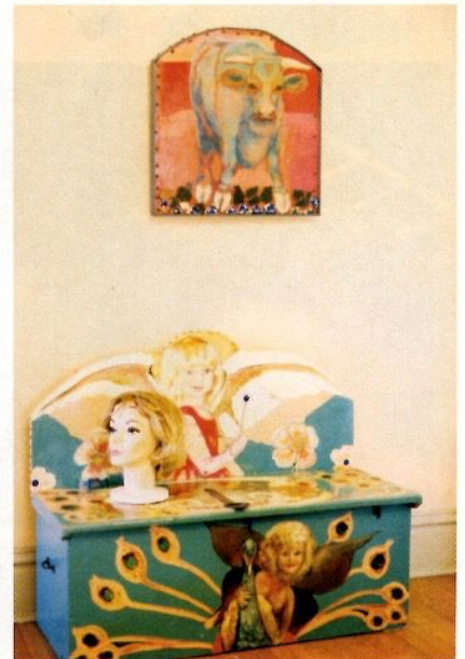


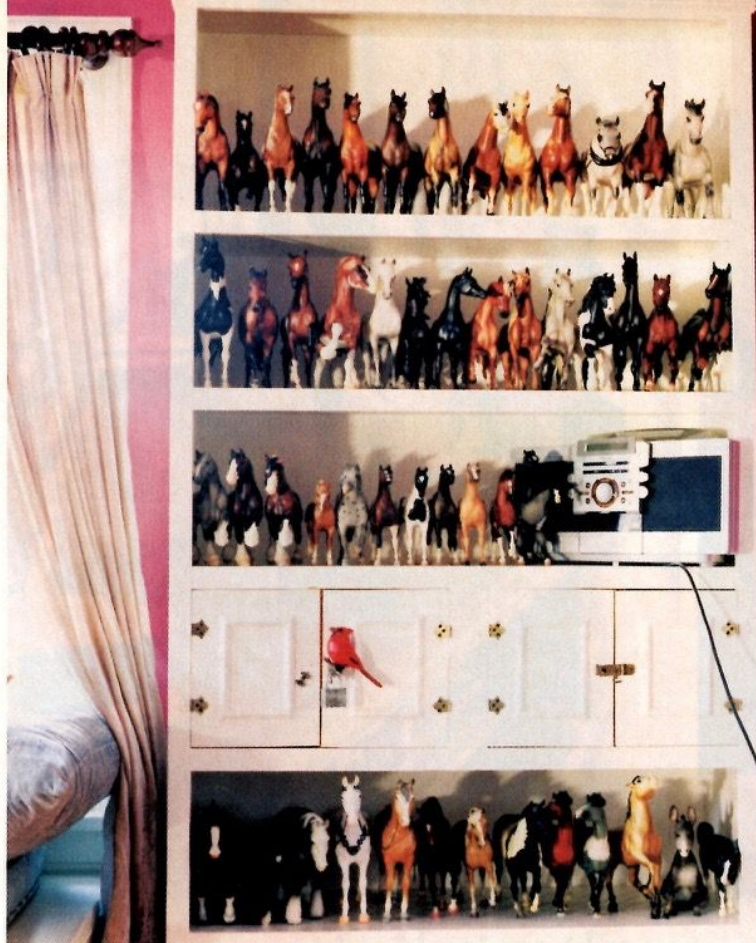
“I would much rather play games than just sit around and watch movies and TV. That you can do anytime.”



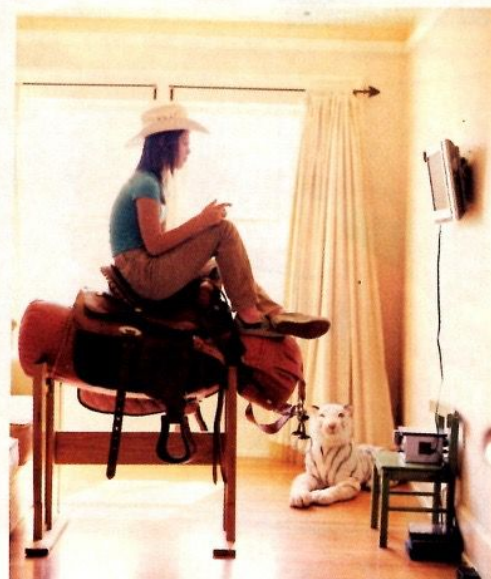


AFFAIRS OF THE ART A serious art collector for decades, Adams began studying painting 10 years ago with L.A.'s Mission: Renaissance. Much of her work—which includes self-portraits and pieces inspired by painters like Monet and Manet—is displayed throughout the house (below). “Most of the paintings I do now I either sell or give away,” she says. Left: Adams in her upstairs studio, where she spends much of her free time. Above: *The Beijing Express*, by Walter Gabrielson, which Adams won at auction, hangs in the foyer; the other piece, by a Norwegian artist, she purchased in a New York City gallery.





A HORSE IS A HORSE ... Sophie, the couple's younger daughter, is an avid athlete who plays softball. She's also a devoted equestrienne and rides her Icelandic mount, Ghia, every Saturday morning. "Sophie is quite competitive and great with the horse," says her admiring dad.



the stove. Birch floors from a previous renovation were traded for the tiles, a large island was created with built-in bookshelves and coated black marble countertops, and dark wood accents were used to give the space a warm, "French *boulangerie* kind of feel," as Shalhoub describes it.

Another major transformation took place outdoors. Landscape design team Abigail and Bob Marshall convinced Shalhoub and Adams that all the fences and gates in their segmented backyard had to go. The charming grassy space that resulted has a two-tiered, free-flowing design and smooth, curved stairs leading from the back patio to the pool area, which includes a still-under-construction tiled cabana. There is a newly planted garden, and the side yard features a sunk-in ground-level trampoline. Objets d'art unobtrusively pepper the lawns. "We wanted the house to have exotic elements and look like it was one of those colonial homes sitting in some tropical place," Adams says. One favorite new piece is an altarlike mosaic fountain made of red, black and turquoise stones commissioned from Portland, Ore., artist Jeffrey Bale, one of the few Americans who do this kind of work.

The newly unobstructed backyard now better reflects the

openness of their household in general. Visitors drop by constantly, and Shalhoub and Adams frequently invite friends and family over for events like their annual Easter egg hunt. "The pool has been the major centerpiece," Shalhoub says. "The pool has been the major centerpiece," Shalhoub says. "Lots of kids, lots of barbecues—everybody learned to swim in our pool." In fact, family and socializing take priority in Shalhoub's private life. He prefers game nights—spirited competitions of Scrabble, Monopoly and Taboo—to movies or TV. On Sunday afternoons, he watches Sophie play softball. "I go nuts at the games. It's the highlight of my week," he says. "I'm sort of an assistant coach. I kind of wormed my way into it, so I get a little ..."

The highlight of many viewers' week is Shalhoub's sweet and quirky USA Network show, *Monk*. It has earned him two Emmys, two SAG awards and one Golden Globe, all of which are perched on the mantel in the living room. (The show, which Shalhoub also executive produces, begins its fifth season this month.) A veteran of three sitcoms and 30 films, Shalhoub is as eclectic in his work as Adams is in her design tastes. So while the 52-year-old Lebanese-American actor easily moves from TV comedies like *Wings* and *Monk* to film dramas like *The Siege* to children's fare like *Spy Kids*, actress Adams similarly



Brooke's better at disciplining our younger one; I'm better with the older one. But we're both soft touches.

enjoys a free-ranging decorating style. She shrugs when asked to define her home's décor. "Mishmash?" Shalhoub offers. "Yeah, mishmash," she says simply. "I find things."

Many of the cozy rooms and cool niches display artwork from around the world. Overlooking the Middle Eastern-inflected furniture in the living room is a wall of more than a dozen paintings, including three by Adams. One hexagonal end of the family room—or sunroom, as the couple call it—houses a gilt piano and an old photo of Shalhoub's large family from his childhood. Josie, a budding actress, and Shalhoub's niece-in-law, Heidi, a former punk-metal musician, are curled up on a sofa watching the plasma-screen TV over the fireplace. Around the corner and down a short hallway hangs a dark, multilayered painting, by a Norwegian artist, that Adams found in a New York City gallery.

The rapport between Shalhoub and his wife is openly affectionate. He rubs her arm tenderly as she talks about the death a few days before of their 12-year-old terrier-Lab mix,

Lollie, a dog rescued from a shelter. In 2002 Shalhoub made his directorial debut with *Made-Up*, a film written by his sister-in-law and starring Adams, whom he met in 1989 when they worked together in *The Heidi Chronicles* on Broadway. "I was the bigger celebrity at the time," says Adams, who was also featured in the films *The Dead Zone* and *Days of Heaven*. He deadpans: "I don't remember that." Adams frequently chuckles at his dry jokes, and he often turns to her when asked a question, even about his personal tastes. For instance: Does he have a favorite room in the house? "I don't," he says. "Do I, Brooke?"

Then a better answer occurs to him. "The dining room has a lot of good memories, a lot of good family and holiday meals," he says, noting that the table is from his childhood house. "One summer home from college, I stripped, sanded and refinished the table because it had gotten so scratched up. You can imagine 10 kids doing their math in the varnish. When my parents passed away, everybody thought I should



ALL THE COMFORTS OF HOME Left to right: Sisters Josie and Sophie cuddle on the couch; Shalhoub's many acting awards are displayed on a living room mantel; a different kind of pillow talk; the couple get some reading done in the kitchen, recently expanded to three times its original size.

have the table." On weekends he'll serve up his specialty there: pancakes made with thinly sliced peaches, bananas or a variety of fresh berries. "I've been on a lifelong search for the best new and interesting pancake recipes," he says.

It's another mission worthy of his obsessive television doppelgänger. "He's a complicated character," Shalhoub says of Monk, whom he seems to be channeling throughout the afternoon. At various times Shalhoub turns the dial on the outdoor grill about a millimeter so it stands precisely at 12 o'clock, rotates an Emmy so the placard is facing outward, and spends several moments straightening one painting in the living room. According to Adams, he doesn't drink milk (one of Monk's more glaring phobias too) and is always snooping around the fridge convinced something has gone bad. As for Monk, "he's brilliant but very vulnerable," Shalhoub says. "He personifies people who feel overwhelmed by everyday life. I'm an anxious person. I'm a worrier. The show is kind of like free therapy." ■

ALL THE DETAILS

WHY HE'S HANDY AROUND THE HOUSE: "I restore old furniture," says Shalhoub. "When I was poor, I couldn't afford new things, so I'd buy flea-market-type stuff and redo it. I loved it."

AFTER-DINNER ENTERTAINMENT: A great Christopher Walken impression, which Shalhoub agrees to do only after much begging from his daughter and wife.

ALWAYS IN THE FRIDGE: Lubne, a Lebanese yogurt. "My mother and grandmother would make it," he says.

IF THERE WAS A FIRE, THEY'D SAVE: "Movies of the kids," says Adams. "The plasma screen," cracks Shalhoub.

WHAT'S IN THE CD PLAYER: The Eagles, the Byrds and the Beatles. "I used to be a George, then became more of a John," says Shalhoub. "I never liked Paul."