

ELIZABETH TAYLOR

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story residence nestled in a grove of pine trees and California cypresses, is smaller than one would expect a star of Elizabeth's magnitude to own. Flowering shrubs surround a wide, attractively planted stone terrace.

Inside, the house has a charming, intimate atmosphere; it looks comfortable. To the left of the entrance is the kitchen—long, rectangular, warm and cozy—which one of Elizabeth's household staff calls "the nerve center of the house. We all congregate here and laugh a lot."

The impressive sitting room is decorated in off-white and combines traditional decor with a touch of California informality. The furniture is the best eighteenth-century English; a heavy Aubusson carpet covers the mellow parquet floor. Hanging in the room is enough fine art to make a small museum envious—a Renoir, a Van Gogh, a Degas, a Monet, a Modigliani and several Utrillos.

Everywhere there are exotic flowers, photographs in silver frames, comfortable cushions, needlework-covered stools. It could be the drawing room of an upper-crust British family but for the spectacular view through the bank of French doors that takes up an entire wall. At sunset, the enormous swimming pool outside the window appears dark violet, the color of Elizabeth's celebrated eyes. The pool is ringed by white hydrangeas, which look like clouds reflected in the water.

Even the bathrooms have been decorated with loving care. Dozens of orchids and lilies are delivered every few days; their heavenly, heady scent fills the powder rooms. And the bathrooms have their own precious artwork: an Augustus John hangs over one washbasin.

Elizabeth's private rooms—her large bedroom, bath, dressing rooms and sitting room—occupy the entire second floor of the house. There are guest rooms on the main floor and the third floor. A small library and TV/projection room complete the house.

The household is exceptionally well maintained and organized—cleaning women arrive in relays throughout the week. The star's secretary/housekeeper, Elizabeth Thorburn, runs the house, answers the telephone, does the grocery shopping and sorts the mail, which is later passed on to Taylor's staff for replies. Although Elizabeth is reputed to be a tough, demanding boss, her staff insists that it's just not true. "She's one of the nicest women in the world," one longtime employee says.

The star hasn't always managed so efficiently. But that was before Thorburn, an attractive young Scotswoman who formerly worked for Princess Margaret, put some order into Taylor's life. "I've gone from a princess to a queen," Thorburn once said.

Scripts and current mail are labeled and stacked neatly on Elizabeth's desk in a room off her bedroom, instead of scattered all over the house. The menagerie of animals, including a Burmese cat and a Pekingese dog, have been properly house-trained. Meals are balanced—Thorburn is also a Cordon Bleu chef—and a far cry from the high-carbohydrate fare Elizabeth used to favor. Every day, tea is served English-style at 4 P.M.

But not *everything* is regimented. Except for teatime, the proper Miss Thorburn has not been able to keep the Taylor household on a meal schedule. Elizabeth is too much of a spur-of-the-moment person—deciding not to eat, or to have ten guests, or to dine out, or to fly to New York, Florida or England on a few hours' notice.

When she's not filming, Taylor's day starts at nine, earlier than one would expect for such a wealthy and cosseted woman. She breakfasts in bed on coffee, toast and juice, and before dressing generally smokes at least one (continued)

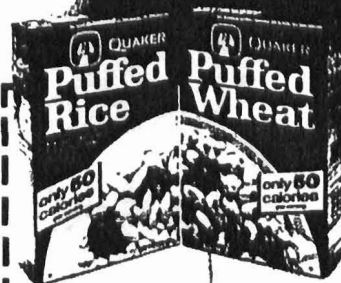
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