



ALEC AND HILARIA BALDWIN ESCAPE FROM CITY LIFE—AND HOLLYWOOD'S PRYING EYES

After years in the spotlight, the Baldwins find refuge inside an 18th-century farmhouse on Long Island, and they've invited ELLEDecor.com in for a tour.

By Emma Dibdin NOV 1, 2016

It's a sun-soaked October afternoon in East Hampton, and Alec and Hilaria Baldwin are doing something common to many married couples – they're gently bickering over parenting styles.

"You know what our house is? It's one long, endless psychotherapy lesson in Spanish," Alec jokes, as he and Hilaria sit side by side in a corner of their living room. "I'll go out to work and the whole time my wife is psychoanalyzing our children: 'But why do you feel this way? Why?'"

Hilaria, who spent much of her childhood in Spain and is raising the couple's three children as bilingual, turns to him: "Well, you do it your way, I'll do it my way, and we'll see how they turn out! Kidding. I just feel like kids learn by example, and if you want to teach your kid to be kind, you can't be mean at them."



Alec Hemer

Just off of the living room, in a space that's been dubbed the "wine banquette," Alec, Hilaria and their daughter, Carmen, are joined by designer Daniel Romanoff and builder Brian Mannix.

I'm spending the day at the Baldwins' sprawling, newly renovated farmhouse in Amagansett, East Hampton, which they've expanded to make room for their growing family: 3-year-old Carmen, 1-year-old Rafael, and newborn baby Leonardo.

Now four years into their marriage, Alec and Hilaria seem firmly grounded by one another, their deep affection palpable even as they disagree. The renovation of the house is a reflection of the couple's shifting priorities, with Alec in particular making a conscious decision to spend more time here and less time in Manhattan, where work always beckons. Alec, like this house he's called home since 1995, has been gradually transformed by Hilaria's presence.

"Do you think I'm too 'Namaste'?" asks Hilaria.

"No, I think you're very patient," Alec responds.



Alec Hemer

The hallway outside of Alec and Hilaria's master bedroom epitomizes the home's farmhouse-meets-transitional style with a reclaimed barn door and a chunky selenite chandelier by Ron Dier.

Her patience is one of her defining characteristics. Earlier, I watch as Hilaria spends several minutes persuading Carmen – in Spanish – to change out of her beloved princess costume for the photoshoot.

"It's a generational thing," Alec explains. "I'm a lot older, and when I grew up there was none of this bargaining and negotiating you do with kids now. Making them understand. My father was like 'Oh, I'll make you understand!' My mother used to hit us with a curtain rod, you know, people used to hit their kids with kitchen utensils. But [Hilaria] is the best mommy, she respects them, she honors them."

The "Namaste" approach has even rubbed off on Alec. Since meeting Hilaria in 2011, he is, by his own admission, a transformed man: more centered, more

focused on family than work, and less quick to the kind of anger that had begun to define his public image.

"Getting angry doesn't solve anything," he notes, as the conversation turns to Hilaria's recent experience of backlash on social media. After she shared unfiltered selfies of her pregnant body, a vocal minority responded by slamming her photos, calling them "too perfect" and "shameless."



Alec Hemer

A silken wool Moroccan rug from ABC Carpet & Home anchors Hilaria's office, which is also outfitted with a mohair chaise from Holland & Sherry and a desk by Christian Liaigre.

[Hilaria's response](#) was a measured but firm call-out. "We may never meet and you can have any opinion of me you want, but I find that when we project negativity, we miss out," she wrote. "I know I open myself up to all sorts of body shaming when I post like this. So why do I do it? Because I want to be real."

Today, Hilaria admits that she still doesn't know if her response was the right one. "I don't know if I have the right answers, but I can tell you that I try to not respond in a moment of being angry." This, it seems, is a lesson she has learned from Alec as much as anyone.

Elle DÉCOR - Alec and Hilaria Baldwin Escape From City Life—and Hollywood's Prying Eyes

"If you get angry, they win," he says, implicitly referencing his own much-publicized confrontations with the paparazzi. Hilaria's strategy now is to write an angry draft response, show it to Alec or a trusted friend, then hit delete.

A MUCH-NEEDED ESCAPE FROM THE CITY

The family spent much of the summer here, having put everything on hold after Hilaria gave birth to Leonardo in September. For Alec, East Hampton has been home since 1982, when he began renting in the area. He still votes here rather than in Manhattan. In 1995, he bought this farmhouse — Hilaria moved in after the couple started dating — which they gut renovated with the goal of transforming into a bright, modern family home.

The shingle-style house was built in 1753 with a saltbox design — long, pitched roof that slopes to the back — before its conversion to a full, two-story home in the 1790s, according to local historians. A team of oxen later moved the home to its current location, and around 1913, architect Joseph Greenleaf Thorp, of Grey Gardens fame, remodeled the home.

"Before, it was a lot of tiny little rooms, there wasn't a lot of flow to it," Hilaria explains, and so architect Fred Throo and interior designer Daniel Romanoff worked together to create "this really open space that I definitely wanted. I want to walk into my house and be able to breathe." Everything about the house is perfect, she says, except for the crabgrass: "It's Alec versus the crabgrass, every single year."

The couple plans to renovate again next year, because their now one-month-old baby Leonardo will need more space — specifically, a room that's precisely the same size as his two siblings' rooms. "We want all of our kids to feel like they're equal, so we're going to make his room exactly the same square footage as theirs, so that he can't say 'I'm third, I'm last, you guys don't care,'" Hilaria says, with a self-effacing laugh. "I'm very nervous about any complex my kids might have!"

The Hamptons house has become an increasingly vital escape from the city, where paparazzi habitually stake out the couple's Greenwich Village apartment building. Having grown up without a television, Hilaria had only a vague understanding of how famous Alec was when they met, and found the adjustment jarring: "Coming into this world, it was kind of scary at the beginning. Alec had his relationship with the media—"

"Fast forward!" Alec interjects.



Alec Hemer

In baby Leonardo's room, the crib and dresser are from Restoration Hardware, the rug is from ABC Carpet & Home, and the framed animal illustrations are from Etsy.

HILARIA, THE FAMILY'S "ALPHA"

That fraught relationship with the media is not evident today. In person, Alec is warm and engaging; prior to our interview he spends twenty minutes with me on the family's patio, asking me whether I miss my native England and how I've adjusted to New York living. His answers to my questions are laced with humor about himself, his career and his children, with whom he is clearly infatuated.



Alec Hemer

Wood paneling in the media room is original to the house; wingback chairs from Holly Hunt offer a cozy perch for family movie nights.

"I'm so in love with this kid," he murmurs, as we watch Rafael swaying gleefully to the Backstreet Boys' "I Want It That Way" – a favorite that Alec plays from his phone. "He's such a good-hearted little kid, everything with him is just warm and positive – he's the greatest gift I've ever been given."

Though both Alec and Hilaria readily acknowledge their 26-year age gap, it's not evident in the way the couple communicates. Hilaria is a sharp, quick-witted conversationalist, her approach to the world underpinned by a no-nonsense quality that puts her in clear command of her family. "He realizes that I'm there with the kids the majority of the day, and he's very, very good at letting me be the alpha," she says.

"Well, I've just never been spoken to the way you speak to me sometimes," Alec responds, awestruck rather than annoyed. "It's really just incredible."

Alec does not give a lot of sit-down interviews nowadays. After his friction with the media escalated in 2013, he bid [a very definitive farewell](#) to public life, vowing never to talk about his personal life in an American publication again. Hilaria, on the other hand, is known for her radical openness, her unfiltered Instagram chronicles of her daily life, which she says has helped to temper the scrutiny.

I THINK ABOUT HOW MUCH I USED TO WORK, AND HOW MUCH I USED TO MAKE THAT THE PRIORITY... NOW, THIS IS THE PRIORITY.

"Everybody always says, don't let that world change you," she muses, as we move into the house's immaculate back yard, taking seats in the covered patio from which Hilaria recently [Instagrammed herself in a yoga pose](#) alongside Carmen. "I was open before, I would have shown you my kids before, so why can't I show you my kids now? The more guarded you are, the more people want to say 'Oh, are you hiding something?' It's better to say well, here you go, it's not as exciting as you think it is."



Alec Hemer

Restoration Hardware chairs surround the dining table from Fishers in Sag Harbor.

"WHAT I HAVE NOW IS REAL"

Both Alec and Hilaria have books in the works. His, a memoir, has helped clarify what's different about his marriage to Hilaria. "The people I was involved with before always fit into a kind of program – I was married before, and everything was a transaction, it evolved around work and career, and everybody came in with the same set of values."

Those values were to focus on work above all, and fit each other in around the edges. Now work is the afterthought. "What I have now is real," he says. "I have a real family, a real marriage, I love my wife more than anybody I've ever known. She's the best person I've ever known."

While Hilaria's centered influence is clear, much of Alec's newfound calm has come from no longer caring what people think of his career. "All actors have a significant amount of vanity about work, and necessarily so," he muses. "Things they will do and won't do, and I've completely lost all of that. I don't care." While shooting ABC's *Match Game* this summer, he says, "I was standing there

thinking, this is not a parody, I'm hosting a game show! It was so bizarre to me... and they're the nicest people I've ever worked with."

Though *Match Game* and other projects like *Alec Baldwin's Love Ride* on Comedy Central ("People get into a limo with me, and I give them relationship advice. It's the silliest thing you've ever seen.") aren't high art, what they do is afford Alec the chance to make good money without spending much time away from his family.

"I think about how much I used to work, and how much I used to make that the priority... Now, this is the priority," he says, gesturing around at Hilaria and their house, at Carmen who is curled up quietly in his lap throughout much of our conversation. "If I won the lottery tomorrow, I probably would never work again."



Alec Hemer

A portrait of Hilaria painted by contemporary artist Brendan O'Connell hangs above the fireplace in the formal living room.

But there are still opportunities he can't refuse. When *Saturday Night Live* creator Lorne Michaels offered Alec the role of Donald Trump in the show's election run-up skits, he initially turned it down, determined to keep his fall schedule light following the birth of Leonardo. "And then Lorne, of course, did his Jedi mind trick and convinced me to do it."

While he has no illusions about *SNL*'s power to influence the election, Alec does hope it will change the mind of voters who may have decided to stay home on Election Day. "I'm not out there campaigning against Trump by doing this, but I hope people who might be going 'I'm not interested in the election because both candidates seem questionable,' I hope that it motivates them to vote. Now maybe they're going to see Trump in the right context [on *SNL*], which is that he's just wrong for the job. Pretty much anybody but [him], at this point."



Alec Hemer

Alec and Hilaria's master bedroom features a bed by Charles Beckley, bedding by Sferra and Frette and nightstands from Profiles. The blue velvet club chairs are a custom design by Daniel Romanoff.

Throughout our day at the house, both Alec and Hilaria are doing the kind of cheerful multitasking that is familiar to any working parent, keeping their three children – and two dogs – entertained as they take care of business. "We're just obsessed with our kids," says Alec, "but I always say to my wife, you're still my girlfriend. We need to have our life and do the things that we want to do, although the kids always win. We're aiming towards balance."



Alec Hemer

The bright master bath features Spanish-inspired blue and white tile from Stone Source and a bubble chandelier from Home Nature.

With three children under the age of four, it's no surprise that sleep has been in short supply in the Baldwin household. Leonardo sleeps with the couple at night, because Hilaria is breastfeeding, but it's the older children who make mornings eventful – as Alec murmurs faux-darkly, "everything changes when Carmen wakes up." And so, as the day is winding down and Hilaria busies herself in the kitchen, Alec falls asleep on the couch.



Alec Hemer

In Carmen's room, creamy white wainscoting offers a strong, sophisticated counterpoint to the more dainty lavender textiles found throughout the space. A mirrored nightstand is from Lillian August.

Photography by [Alec Hemer](#)
