



Photographed by

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This is a woman who knows how to stand her ground, in many ways. “I’ve never lived more than five minutes from where I grew up,” she says. She was 24 when she bought her house—located, like her childhood home, in Laurel Canyon—with her earnings from her role as Kelly Bundy. At the time, she was fleeing a relationship that turned scarily abusive. “I just had to leave,” she says.

Applegate has lived in the house for 17 years, but never alone. There have been roommates, boyfriends, a husband (actor Johnathon Schaech, to whom she was married from 2001 to 2007), cats, dogs, actors, rockers and her beloved mom, who visits almost every day. Protective child gates now crisscross the landing above the cavernous great room where *le tout* young Hollywood once partied. It’s a home that has adapted to a series of upheavals and changes in Applegate’s life and kept her centered.

Resolutely, this is “Christina’s World.” In November of 1971, singer-actress Nancy Priddy and record producer Robert Applegate named their only child after the muse in the Andrew Wyeth painting of that title. But Applegate shares little else with Wyeth’s solitary, handicapped woman crawling across a windswept field.

“She’s extremely vulnerable and has always been that way,” Priddy says of her daughter. “But she’s very strong.”

Applegate cried in Priddy’s arms when she got her cancer diagnosis, but soon she took charge. She was facing a four-month lag between her lumpectomies and the double mastectomy she had decided to have; she was busy working, and doctors were confident the delay wasn’t dangerous. Still, she assembled her nearest and dearest and laid down the law: “There was to be no stress in this house. The heart rate had to stay even, and *don’t piss me off*. I didn’t want to feel my blood pressure go up. I still had cancer, and I didn’t want to accelerate cell growth. I just wanted to stay calm. I think for the most part I’ve kept that philosophy.”

It’s a practical outlook that goes back to her early childhood. Her parents divorced when Christina was three months old, and Priddy found herself perched, with her infant, in a tiny house



ALBERTA FERRETTI chiffon top with lace and satin detailing; Boutique Tere, 239-262-6994. Pages 70–71: AZZEDINE ALAIA wool-knit dress; Barneys New York, 212-826-8900. CHARLOTTE OLYMPIA bikini; number: 212-744-1842. DEVILLE FINE JEWELRY 18k gold, black diamond and white drusy ring; devillefinejewelry.com.

on Lookout Mountain Avenue. At that time Laurel Canyon was home to many single mothers, for whom those ‘60s summers of love had morphed into rent bills and thirdhand Toyotas. Christina first appeared on TV when her working mom had to haul her to a soap opera job as a babe in arms.

“The canyon does have homes like this one,” Applegate says. “But it also has 800-square-foot broken-down houses. We all lived in shacks here. And all those mothers struggled to provide for

their kids. For most of them, the father was not really a role in their lives.”

Applegate spent weekends with her dad until he moved to Northern California when she was about 10; she still maintains a close relationship with him and two half-siblings, who live in L.A. Despite the civility of her parents’ split, there was more trouble at home.

“Bad stepdad,” she says. “From three to seven, I had a stepfather who caused a lot of damage to my mother and to me. I think that put her off, and she never had another relationship.” A more benevolent male presence was a man she knew as Uncle Stephen and whom she still calls her godfather, musician Stephen Stills, whose early romance with her mother settled into a lifelong friendship. Back in the day,