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Hollywood’s 25 Most Interior Designers

In a city where the dinner party is a key element in how the industry socializes, the design of a house can be one of the biggest signals of where you stand in the Hollywood pecking order — be it in terms of sheer power (think the palatial houses in Beverly Park) or aesthetic cachet (such as an offbeat hair in Venice). When it comes down to it, the entertainment world is all about taste (and the marketing of it), from the choosing of a script and the perfect cast to the small-beer details of set design. A house that telegraphs the right image completes the picture in a statement-making way.

THR’s inaugural design issue profiles the top 25 Los Angeles-based designers who create that image for Hollywood’s players. Ten of them — plus three emerging design stars and renowned architect Robert A.M. Stern — are part of THR’s first designer showhouse, “Design Hollywood at the Century,” which opens Oct. 30 in two luxury residences at the Related Companies’ Century tower in Century City. For the showhouse, open to the public through Nov. 19, the designers worked for four months, creating renderings, collaring vendors to donate furnishings and hammering up until the last minute. What’s striking is the level of craftsmanship and detail that went into the project, from custom wallcoverings and finishes (a grid of iridescent plaster; brass over gold paint) to fine-cabinetry built-in bookshelves and leather-covered beds.

These pages, in addition to the cover story spotlighting the residence of Ryan Murphy, also give a glimpse of the living environs of two of film’s high-powered producers: Nina Jacobson, producer of the Hunger Games movies, and Spider-Man franchise mogul Alex Arad. What’s apparent from interviewing these design elite is not only their global reach (from the stars of the Bravo show Million Dollar Decorators, which premieres its second season Nov. 13, to Jeff Andrews, whose refreshingly high-design houses for the Kardashians reach millions of viewers), but also how style in the city has come of age. Gone are the days of lockstep French provincial or midcentury modern, L.A., which has one of the world’s greatest and most varied collections of residential real estate (from Tudor to Tuscan to Spanish to modern), today has a deep creative bench to match it. The designers showed here were chosen for their trendsetting ability (showhouse designer Tim Clark is bringing back beach chic) and the caliber of their work and clients, like Michael S. Smith, who designed the private quarters of the Obamas, match.

RESIDENCE OF Nina Jacobson

DESIGNED BY Jamie Bush

raised architect Bush has become a go-to interpreter of modernism revival’s many strands. Whether it’s the sun-drenched primary colors of The Hunger Games producer Jacobson’s glass-dominated 1940s warm minimalist house in Brentwood, pictured here, or a meditation on midcentury Italian at the Beverly Hills ranch house he’s crafting for former Disney Studios chairman Rich Ross, Bush finds himself drawn to the creative adventure of clients In and around the entertainment industry. “Whether it’s 60 years ago or today, the people in Hollywood are willing to try new ways of living at home,” says Bush, who also works with Connie Britton and film producer Don Hahn. With some clients, like Jacobson — for whom he has designed multiple homes and offices for a decade — he develops long-term relationships. “She knows how to run great projects. She gives a little direction and lets you do your job,” says Bush. His house collaboration with her involved architect Bruce Bolander and Jacobson’s domestic partner, Jen Blakeley (“She’s much more fluent in design,” says Jacobson), with whom she raises Noah, 13, Josie, 12, William, 6, and family dog Pearl. “I love this glass cube we’re in,” says Jacobson. “It wasn’t until we reddened the house that it became transformed into something that felt like ours.” Favorite Moe set Says Bush, “It’s all of Pluck breathing. The palette is so ethereal and dreamy — the hum of the sky and sea.” — GARY BAILL

PHOTOGRAPHS BY

Daniel Hennessy
Most Influential

In conjunction with the unveiling of the Design Hollywood at the Century showhouse, The Hollywood Reporter announces its first-ever list celebrating the stylemakers behind the entertainment industry’s most glamorous homes by DEGEN PENER. Showhouse photographed by ROGER DAVIES
OCT. 8, THR AND THE RELATED COMPANIES WILL OPEN THE
one-of-a-kind "Design Hollywood at the Century" showhouse at the Century
tower, where 14 of L.A.'s top designers each have created a display of decorating
virtuosity. Begun in June, each room — seen on the pages to follow — is inspired by
a Hollywood icon, from Mervyn Radin's moody bedroom for a David Fincher
type to Kathryn M. Ireland's colorful South of France kitchen for a Parisian actress.
The showhouse unfolds over two luxury condominiums on the 30th floor of the
10-year-old tower, built by acclaimed architect Robert A.M. Stern. "We're known for
our commitment to inspired architecture and design," says Alicia Goldstein, senior vp at Belated (which also built New York City's Time Warner
Center). "L.A. is exploding culturally, and for us this is like an exclusive museum exhibit, a way to showcase the best design in Los Angeles." Famous
residents of the building already include Paula Abdul, Nobu Matsuhisa and
Candy Spelling, who is renovating two floors purchased for $85 million. The
showhouse will open Fridays (1 to 6 p.m.), Saturdays and Sundays (11 a.m.
to 4 p.m.) from Oct. 29 to Nov. 18, with ticket sales ($140) benefiting Beverly Hills' Walls Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts, set to open in 2013.
For tickets, visit THR.com/designhollywood.
corners of the world, Behnke constantly is casting back rare textiles and art. Sadly, Behnke's own residence does not provide a suitable gallery space. "I wish I owned a contemporary home with tall white walls for large pieces of art, but I still live in the Cape Cod-style home with lovely moldings I bought 40 years ago and raised my two sons in," says the San Francisco native, who e-mailed THR from Cambodia. "But I am happily married to a man who makes me laugh!"

On Hollywood style: "I love black-and-white films with flowing gowns by Edith Head. I like sparseness mixed with glamour."

THOMAS CALLAWAY
Client: automobiles, TV president Peter Roth, Chris Silbermann

The way Callaway sees it, interior design is a relationship business. And so is Hollywood. With that in mind, it's easy to see how the one-time actor parlayed his Hollywood connections into a career in design. Callaway, as it turns out, met Emilio Estefan on the set of the film Yung Guns, which led to one of his first commissions. "Word-of-mouth is your greatest source of new work, more than any advertising or article written about you," says Callaway, who started his firm in 1980. While he began strictly as an interior designer, an interest in architecture led him to designing homes "from scratch" in 1994. "After that, a good deal of our projects became from the ground up," says Callaway, who recently built a Santa Monica residence for Silbermann. Other recent work includes a contemporary Malibu residence for former Lakers coach Pat Riley. That project, completed in summer 2011, was the first ground-up contemporary property Callaway designed. Much of his work has focused on traditional residences — what the designer, who has a furniture line and a forthcoming textile line, calls "classic interiors and architecture."

PET POE VS: "Being different for different's sake. Like, how far out there can I go and have someone say "wow.' I find that tedious."

TIM CLARKE
Clients: Ben Stiller, Matthew Perry, producer Mark Gordon

Few interior designers are more associated than Clarke with the beach house, that sun-kissed aesthetic that's a favorite on both coasts. In the hands of Clarke (he named his Tower 20 store in Santa Monica after a nearby lifeguard shack), "the beach house is decorating on a higher level," says the designer, who scatters his interiors with surf and sand signifiers, from collectible surfboards that hang like Warhols to slices of ancient tree trunks that stand as sculpture. In his THR showhouse living room, Clarke — who came out with his first book,
Coastal Modern, this summer — blended sandy neutrals with an ornate mirror that suggested bronze driftwood. The designer acknowledges his clients’ cravings for casual yet well-curated spaces that are “comfortable and easy to take care of — the materials are honest,” he says. Lately, Clarke is deep in construction remodeling the house he shares with garden designer/hair stylist Art Landi, which is 11 blocks from the Santa Monica beach. “Our house burned down,” he says, “and the only things we had left were each other and our dogs. That led me to think all that stuff is just stuff.” Said like a true beach philosopher, not prove.

**KATHLEEN and TOMMY CLEMENTS**

**Clients Declared to name**

Tommy and his mother, Kathleen, of Kathleen Clements Design, are known for their gallery-like spaces filled with judiciously chosen rustic antiques so space in their lines that they function almost as sculpture, whether in a light-filled Hollywood Hills house, a Pennsylvania farmhouse or a Hamptons compound. They declined to discuss clients, but sources at multiple showrooms say they are working with Justin Theroux and Jennifer Aniston. The actress this year bought an A. Quincy Jones midcentury masterpiece in Bel-Air for $81 million. The talented Clementses (Kathleen also has a furniture line) tell THR they are at work on a Bel-Air Mediterranean designed by Paul Williams. Neither is overawed by designing among masters. "There’s a reverence you have to take into consideration," says Tommy, "but at the same time, I am of the belief that things need to be brought up to date." On Hollywood style "I don’t think there is one defined style," says Tommy. "You have people who are ahead of the curve, and those people lead the way."

**COMMUNE DESIGN**

**Clients producer Janie Tarses**

producer-songwriter, **Dr. Luke** **W**

the way a sequin life," The way the way involved.
restaurant and Palm Springs’ Aca Hotel under this four-nomer’s collective belt, you’d be forgiven if you thought of Commune as the industry’s cool kids of design. But for this company — whose combined résumé includes image, design and art direction for Barneys New York (Roman Alonso), Donna Karan (Steven Johanknecht), film and video for directors Laser Hallstrom and Spike Lee (Pamela Shamshiri) and Nike, Lexus and MTV (her brother Ramin Shamshiri) — it’s all about the personal. “We don’t decorate,” says Alonso, “we help you collect.” The way we put things together, it’s a sequence of experiences in your life.” Their clients’ experiences have involved obsessions with “Chinese deco, ’30s French, Viennese secession, Mexican modernism and the Katsura Imperial Villa in Japan.” Commune’s eclecticism is evident in warm, modern rooms that mix classics like a Chesterfield sofa with an off-white lacquered throne in a Hollywood loft. Or they may mash up Spanish Mission architecture with industrial chic pieces and pops of color and quirk in Los Feliz. While there is a handcrafted element and youthful vibe to everything Commune does, it’s not just for hipsters. Says Alonso about the mission of the firm: “It’s about adventure, romance, which doesn’t have an age.”

**On Hollywood style**

“This is the stylistic Wild West. The Chateau Marmont — what is it? It’s the sum of parts that people put together, but there is no name for it. Only in Hollywood,” says Alonso.

**PETER DUNHAM**

**Clients Jessica Biel, Jennifer Garner, Joey Luft’s Pamela Luft**

Dunham credits his pan-cultural background — raised in France, educated at Oxford, U.S. resident at 23 — with informing the eclectic, welcoming aesthetic that’s made him a favorite of Hollywoonders who like a little exuberance with their decor. In his interiors, his line of textiles inspired by historic Persian patterns, and his sophisticated custom furnishings, Dunham commingles several centuries of style but never strains for effect. “French restraint, English comfort and American practicality and pizzazz,” Dunham, who has lived in L.A. since 1991, explains. His constituency has the resources — and ego — to hire the very best. “When Hollywood people become successful, the fantasy is you’re hiring Frank Gehry, for God’s sake — almost every great architect has worked on residential projects. You’re building your own set that makes you look sexy, successful, happy, whatever you want to project.”

Dunham’s own domicile — “my gay divorce bachelor pad,” in a historic West Hollywood building — brims with sensuality and exuberance. He tucks sachets of Santa Maria Novella Popourri into his suitcases and sleeps in a Georgian four-poster drapagedon from legendary designer Tony Duquette’s warehouse. “I don’t like interiors that are too perfect, I want a fancy friend to be as comfortable as my trashy friends.”

**CLIFF FONG**

**Clients Ellen DeGeneres and Portia de Rossi, Ryan Murphy**

See cover story, page 48.

**TRIP HAE NDISCH**

**Clients Courteney Cox, Hank Azaria, WME co-CEO Patrick Whitesell, Aaron Sorokin**

Walking through a space designed by Haensch, and you won’t just entry the owners their home, you’ll cover their lifestyle. The seamless mix of texture, shape and color speaks to an existence that will seem lighter, brighter and cooler than your own — all while feeling perfectly natural and unfurled. “I once traveled with a famous costume designer who took forever to get ready. When he emerged, I looked fantastic, but like he’d done very little,” says Haensch. “Designing a room is like that — nothing should look like hard work. Your things need to look collected, like they organically came together.” A Midwestern import, Haensch is an ardent fan of West Coast weather, and his designs’ signature airy, relaxed feel comes from his ability to bring the outside in. “California outdoor living is fun — fire pits are sexy — and I love to connect the two worlds,” he says. An important accent to this overall natural-ness is the introduction of color in artful ways such as prints, photography and type. “Photography is a great way to bring power to a room. I love to pick art for clients, because bad art is very difficult to work with,” admits Haensch.

**Current obsession** “Covering things with the fabric they use to make teddy bears. At home, I covered a Royale sofa with it and you met into it, you never want to get up.”

**JANE HALLWORTH**

**Clients Michelle Williams, Kirsten Dunst**

“I think that Hallworth chose dandy for me,” AUX Brummel, who invested the modern man’s suit, as the inspiration behind her “thinking man’s den” in ZDA’s showhouse is telling for this designer and gallery owner. (She names James Franco as a Brummel for today.) She creates maximum impact. Her use of saturated hues (“I drench the space in a pigment and then play with textures,” she says) and “a few great pieces that are particular to each person.” Notable among her works is a faux-bois branching effect that started out as a “juxtaposition and sonce that was an homage to Jean Royère” but took over a wall in the Santa Monica house of producer Laura Ziskin (who died last year). She derives added inspiration from her clients: “They’re young, really good eggs, immensely intelligent and have an energy that’s off the charts, and I thrive on that.” Hallworth, who says she “can’t live without my job — and my horses,” is also an avid connoisseur of craftsmanship: “I love the history of old-school Hollywood and the old way of doing things, when the focus was on quality of construction — of the gown or the interior.”

**Most anticipated set** “I’m excited to see [Monsters] reminds me of a misguided Lane. For the gothic sensibility.”

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KATHY S. Dreyfus

I've always had a thing for Mary, Jesus, and Mary. They're all known to be in a way, and I've always been drawn to their home style. You know, you can see that it's a fantastic, something that you want to have. And it's a fantastic, something that you can inspire with. I want a contemporary, something that's really about the South of France. And the clients, they're really about a contemporary, something that's really about their life, and their life is very much about the South of France. And the clients, they're really about a contemporary, something that's really about their life, and their life is very much about the South of France.
KATHRYN M. IRELAND
Clients Steve Martin, Julia Louis-Dreyfus, Robert Zemeckis

It’s tragic Bravo turned it into people screaming at each other,” says Ireland of the first season of Bravo’s Million Dollar Decorators, which brought the designer’s wit and knack for everyday elegance, known to clients from David Mamet to Fran Drescher, to masses yearning for a glimpse of celebrity home style. “In season two, we all know what we’re doing, and it’s fun. I [am working on] a fantastic Wallace Neff house.” The England-born Ireland’s C.V—before starting her design career in 1995 when she was an actress, publicist and producer, among other endeavors—colors her work with real-world practicality. “I hate things that don’t have a purpose,” says Ireland, whose THR show was inspired by Bonaventure Rejo. She explains: “After all that black and white in The Artist, I think she’d want a colorful family room in a South of France summer house.” Her clientele is devoted to Ireland’s low-drama blend of European traditional and California casual. Mamet and wife Rebecca Pidgeon hired her to do their Santa Monica house after staying in Ireland’s summer house in France. Says Ireland, whose fourth book, Timless Interiors, was just published: “Bob Zemeckis, Steve Martin, they want to go into welcoming houses and put their feet up.” Can’t live without “My AGA Total Control oven. It’s brilliant.”

MOLLY ISAKSEN
Clients Ron and Kelly Meyer, Kate Capshaw and Steven Spielberg

A sk Todd Nickey and Amy Kohoe to describe the process behind the “earthy elegance” that informs their mix of classic and California modernist, and you’d swear you were talking to a couple of studio executive creative executives. They speak of “pitching” their clients and conjuring spaces that tell a “story.” Says Nickey: “We really work hard with people to create their narrative. We’re like editors.” No wonder such clients as Shearmer— for whom they interjected Palladian elements into a classic Spanish Colonial— can relate. “A lot of our clients are exposed to the places they travel,” says Kohoe. “There’s a wide set of references from their experiences.” The pair’s own globetrotting is evident in their furnishings sold at their NK shop on Beverly Boulevard, which houses everything from a headboard inspired by 18th-century Dutch building facades to a chair that channels Vienna’s Wiener Werkstatte design movement. On young Hollywood style “There’s a new generation in Hollywood, more Bohemian, with a love for a casual, lived-in look.”

MARTYN LAWRENCE BULLARD
Clients Ellen John, Cher, Christian Aguilera, Ron Dennis

Lawrence Bullard came to Hollywood 30 years ago to be an actor and wound up in the 1980s Wood-wool-peared I Wake Up Early the Day I Die. The campy film proved to be Lawrence Bullard’s entire design. After a producer saw the designer’s own house, he asked Lawrence Bullard to reimagine the offices of his production company. “I had $30,000 to do the whole 5,000-square-foot offices—I’ve spent that on lamps recently,” says Lawrence Bullard, who now stars on Million Dollar Decorators and has furniture and fabric lines, with other product lines in the works. That office job led to other industry work—Cher’s Tiegs was an early, notable client—and a career working with some of the industry’s biggest players. He has, for example, designed the Sierra Towers residences of Cher and Ozzy and Sharon Osbourne. For Cher, that entailed creating an “Indian fantasy—she said she wanted to feel like she was the first wife of a maharaja,” top-inspiration “Divinity [of styles and culture] feeds my creativity.”

Designers to Watch

Three new lights, who are easy contenders for next year’s list, created rooms of their own at the showhouse

OLIVER FURTH
Clients: Sri Lanka Hotels, Michael and Ann King

At Sir Furt entered design with a part-time job as an architecture office, and with a style of hospitality clients, the 30-year-old baby-faced chairman of the Decorative Arts and Design Council at L.A.C.M.A. has been rightfully dubbed the “Google master of modern design.” Furt pulls inspiration from a tapestry of sources to create his signature urban spaces. “I have an approach,” he says, “I want the idea and the Old World technique, studio art, that sense of history.”

NATASHA BARADARAN
Clients: Kate Hudson, Luis Miguel

The drummer-turned-star who got her start designing high-end hotel diners drew inspiration from the dusty plains and nylon of the Persian court as well as her two young daughters. “They encourage me to create spaces that are livable,” currently. Baradaran is tinkering out Hudson and rocker fiancé Matthew Bellamy’s just-purchased Tudor in the Pacific Palisades.

ADAM BRAM STRAUS
Clients: Alistair Whit, Jesse

Bram Strauss’s entry-level position at Kenneth Brown Design saved him from a career as an investment banker. The resident of Hollywood is working on a Beaux-inspired Beverly Hills estate once owned by Dolby Portor. “I’m big on mixing traditions with modern, it looks curated and like an environment that has evolved over time,” he says. “It’s about the individual pieces, loving those pieces and having them work collectively together.”