



THE 25 MOST INFLUENTIAL INTERIOR DESIGNERS IN L.A.

9:34 AM 10/24/2012

by **Degen Pener**

They've done homes for Steven Spielberg, Tom Cruise, Ryan Seacrest and the Kardashians. In conjunction with Friday's unveiling of the Design Hollywood at the Century showhouse, THR announces its first-ever list celebrating the stylemakers behind the entertainment industry's most glamorous homes.

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 signifiers 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 lair 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-bore 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** — also are part of THR's first designer showhouse, "Design Hollywood at the Century," which opens Oct. 26 in two luxury residences at the Related Companies' Century tower in Century City. For the showhouse, open to the public through Nov. 18, 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; barskin 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, shepherd of the *Hunger Games* movies, and *Spider-Man* franchise mogul Avi 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 showcased here were chosen for their trendsetting ability (showhouse designer Tim Clarke is bringing back beach chic) and the caliber of their work and clientele, like Michael S. Smith, who designed the private quarters of the Obamas, natch.

Jeff Andrews

Clients: Ryan Seacrest, Michael C. Hall, Kris and Bruce Jenner, Khloe Kardashian and Lamar Odom.

Jeff Andrews' neo-regency vision is arguably the most seen in the world right now. After all, the court designer of the Kardashian clan — he's responsible for the relaxed yet unabashedly glamorous interiors of **Bruce** and **Kris Jenner**, **Khloe Kardashian** and **Lamar Odom** and **Kourtney Kardashian** — reaches more than 150 countries through the aspirational backdrops of their reality TV offerings. (He also conjured the family's new Dash boutique on Melrose Avenue in West Hollywood.) "We get tweets and e-mails and phone calls asking about every little thing: the artwork, the accessories, the furnishings," he says.

Andrews, who was a choreographer before becoming a designer and was introduced to the Kardashians by their producer, **Ryan Seacrest** (also a client), notes that he didn't design their houses foremost as TV sets. "These are their dream homes," he says. "The thought of it having to look good onscreen never came up. Honestly, if I'd been thinking about that, it would have freaked me out."

Pet peeve: "There's a lot of design that's too sterile and cold just for the sake of design. On the opposite end, there are things that are overdesigned because they are 'eclectic.' I'm somewhere in the middle."

Atelier AM

Clients: Tom Cruise, Michael and Jane Eisner.

The Los Angeles-based married duo of **Alexandra** and **Michael Misczynski** are the decorating world's discreet heroes. Notoriously careful with their image, they are perhaps the most respected designers you've never heard of. "We are shy by nature," says Michael. "Our clients aren't looking for [more attention] either, so I guess it's a nice fit." Fan **Diane Keaton** has described their work as "a powerful combination of the simplest of forms and the most exquisite materials."

With the finest of pedigrees — L.A. native Michael worked for **Richard Meier** and was mentored by **Rose Tarlow**; New Yorker Alexandra worked for the late **Naomi Leff** and later **Michael Smith** in L.A. — they met in Manhattan, where they happened to be working on different apartments for the same client. Encouraged by Tarlow, they teamed to open their firm in 2002 and just came out with a Rizzoli book, *Interiors/Atelier AM*.

Favorite film design: "The work of production designers **Dante Ferretti** [*Hugo*] and **Nathan Crowley** [*The Dark Knight*] because even without the actors, the emotion is there," says Michael.

Joan Behnke

Clients: Tom Brady and Gisele Bundchen, Ivan Reitman.

For all of her cool-headed elegance, **Joan Behnke** is not afraid to make a statement. A veteran with 20 years' experience, she pulls off happy marriages — modern American meets Asian silks and Middle Eastern iron antiquities — that shouldn't be attempted by mere dabblers at home. Her *THR* showhouse master bedroom is modern yet cozy, a chic mix of neutral tones, textures and subtle pops of color.

Famed for her intrepid cherry-picking abilities in remote corners of the world, Behnke constantly is carting 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 28 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."

Jamie Bush

Client: Nina Jacobson.



Trained architect **Jamie 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 **Nina 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 adventurism 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 Bleakley** ("She's much more fluent in design," says Jacobson), with whom she raises **Noah**, 14, **Josie**, 12, **William**, 6, and family dog Pearl. "I love this glass

cube we're in," says Jacobson. "It wasn't until we redid the house that it became transformed into something that felt like ours."

Favorite film set: Says Bush: "*Life of Pi* looks breathtaking. The palette is so ethereal and dreamy — the hues of the sky and sea." -- *Gary Baum*

Thomas Callaway

Clients: Warner Bros. TV president Peter Roth, Chris Silberman.

The way **Thomas Callaway** sees it, interior design is a relationship business. And so is Hollywood. With that in mind, it's easy to see how the onetime actor parlayed his Hollywood connections into a career in design. Callaway, as it turns out, met **Emilio Estevez** on the set of the film *Young 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 1989. 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 Silberman. 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 peeve: "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 **Tim 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 design issue — 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 Luna**, 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.

Pet peeve: “Edison bulbs! Man, that hanging bare bulb is everywhere now.”

Kathleen and Tommy Clements

Clients: Declined to name.

Tommy and his mother, **Kathleen Clements**, of Kathleen Clements Design, are known for their gallery-like spaces filled with judiciously chosen rustic antiques so spare 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 \$21 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 Jamie Tarses, producer-songwriter Dr. Luke.



With such fashion, food and travel destinations as Opening Ceremony, Ammo restaurant and Palm Springs' Ace Hotel under this foursome'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 **Lasse 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, '50s 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 offbeat black-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 adventurousness, 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, Juicy Couture's Pamela Levy.

Peter Dunham credits his pannational 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 Hollywooders who like a little erudition with their decor. In his interiors, his line of textiles inspired by historic Persian patterns, and his voluptuous 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 1998, 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 divorcee bachelor pad," in a historic West Hollywood building — brims with sensuality and exuberance. He tucks sachets of Santa Maria Novella Potpourri into his suitcases and sleeps in a Georgian fourposter dragooned 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."

Favorite TV set: "*The Downton Abbey* sets, particularly the downstairs stuff, are flawless at creating a certain mood and time."

Waldo Fernandez

Clients: Darren Star, Brian Grazer

Academy Awards producer **Brian Grazer** loved the Architectural Digest green room **Waldo Fernandez** designed for this year's Oscars so much that he hired him to update his recently purchased \$12.5 million, 10,000-square-foot Spanish-style house in Santa Monica.

Such dramatic reactions are only fitting for a former film-set designer who went on to become icon **Elizabeth Taylor's** decorator and proprietor of Waldo's Designs. He also designed West Hollywood's Soho House and just redid industry power spot Spago. "I am constantly inspired by movies," says Fernandez, who designed the "unique, elegant and modern living room" in *THR's* showhouse and was "inspired by the modern Century building" in which it's housed. "I look at all my projects as a script and try to explain the design process to my clients that way."

Who most epitomizes Hollywood style: "Elizabeth Taylor — her kindness to people. Yet she was very particular — she loved her clothes and jewelry, as everyone knows — and the fact that she was so determined and definite about what she liked was very Hollywood to me."

Cliff Fong

Clients: Ellen DeGeneres and Portia de Rossi, Ryan Murphy.



Designer **Cliff Fong** worked with *Glee* and *American Horror Story* co-creator **Ryan Murphy** on his Spanish Colonial Revival residence located a few blocks from the Beverly Hills Hotel. Fong and Murphy created eclectic interiors mixing ranch-inspired, period-correct furniture, contemporary art and photography and AHS-worthy objects.

The designer also counts **Ellen DeGeneres** and **Portia de Rossi** among his A-list clients.

Trip Haenisch

Clients: Courteney Cox, Hank Azaria, WME co-CEO Patrick Whitesell, Aaron Sorkin.



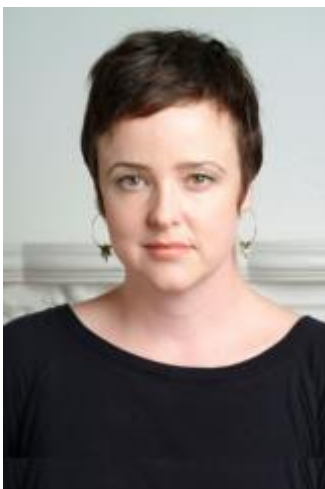
Walk through a space designed by **Trip Haenisch**, and you won't just envy the owners their home, you'll covet their lifestyle. The seamless mix of texture, shape and color speaks to an existence that will seem lighter, brighter and cooler than your own — all while feeling perfectly natural and unforced. "I once traveled with a famous costume designer who took forever to get ready. When he emerged, he looked fantastic but like he'd done very little," says Haenisch. "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, Haenisch is an ardent fan of West Coast weather, and his designs' signature airiness stems 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 naturalness 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 Haenisch.

Current obsession: "Covering things with the fabric they use to make teddy bears. At home, I've covered a Royere sofa with it and you melt into it, you never want to get up."

Jane Hallworth

Clients: Michelle Williams, Kirsten Dunst.



That Hallworth chose dandy **Beau Brummel**, who invented the modern men's suit, as the inspiration behind her "thinking man's den" in *THR*'s showhouse is telling for this designer and gallery owner. (She names **James Franco** as a Brummel for today.) She creates maximum

impact through 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 “giant tieback and sconce that was an homage to **Jean Royere**” 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 [*Munsters* remake] *Mockingbird Lane*. For the gothic sensibility.”

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. “But 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 1993 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* showroom was inspired by **Berenice Bejo**.

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 home in France. Says Ireland, whose fourth book, *Timeless 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.

As much as **Molly Isaksen**’s high-end East Coast preppy vibe has Hollywood’s power elite (from Spielberg and Meyer to **Lisa** and **Dustin Hoffman**) entranced, she is “inspired by my clients.” Other inspirations? “Art Deco for the beautiful finishes, **Jean-Michel Frank** for his timeless design and anything by Herve Van der Straeten.”

Her own home is an example of her elegant, timeless aesthetic: It’s a traditional Colonial Williamsburg vision “built in 1938 and originally owned by **Fred MacMurray** and his family.”

Married to **Jay Sures**, a partner at United Talent Agency, the always understated Isaksen can't live without "friends, family, travel, design books and a great bottle of rosé," and has only one pet peeve: "Anything trendy."

On Hollywood style: "Hollywood makes me think of a glamorous time, dinner parties in formal dining rooms, dressing for lunch and a cocktail with everything."

Nickey Kehoe

Clients: Ginnifer Goodwin, Mark Ruffalo, producer Alli Shearmur.



Ask **Todd Nickey** and **Amy Kehoe** 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 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 Shearmur — 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 Kehoe.

"There's a wide net 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: Elton John, Cher, Christina Aguilera, Eva Mendes.

Martyn Lawrence Bullard came to Hollywood 20 years ago to be an actor and wound up in the 1998 **Ed Wood**-penned *I Woke Up Early the Day I Died*. The campy film proved to be Lawrence Bullard's entree into 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 — **Cheryl 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: "Diversity [of styles and cultures] feeds my creativity."

Molly Luetkemeyer

Clients: Julie Bowen, Jason Blum, Plan B's Dede Gardner.

Molly Luetkemeyer's talent is giving modern and contemporary L.A. houses a bright and playful yet sophisticated personality. "I'm always the wild one with color," says Luetkemeyer of M. Design Interiors, "because the houses I work on often have a lot of glass, so you wind up having this connection to nature, from the purple of the jacarandas to a range of greens." Colors pop at the Studio City postand-beam house she designed for her younger sister, *Modern Family's* Bowen, where persimmon red chairs and mustard mirrors surround the black lacquered table. She deployed those same hues in a restrained manner for client Blum's midcentury Hollywood Hills house.

Originally from Baltimore, Luetkemeyer started out in the film world, working as an assistant to **Mike Nichols**. On a trip to L.A. during the making of *Primary Colors*, she decided to move to L.A. ("early midlife crisis"), later enrolling in UCLA's design program, getting an internship with designer **Kelly Wearstler** and opening her own firm in 2001. One thing her clients get: homework. "My male clients will sometimes balk at sitting down to write down what they want. Once I explain to them that if they can help me understand their wants, it will cost them less. And then believe me, they do that homework."

Pet peeve: "Watered-down Regency. It's so horrible when everything gets garish and ham-handed. My eyes!"

Mary McDonald

Clients: NBC's Jennifer Salke, Renee Zellweger, Ellen Goldsmith-Vein.

Mary McDonald would have been at home in a 1930s screwball comedy. The Brentwood native and former hatmaker wisecracked her way through the first season of *Million Dollar Decorators* spouting lines like, "I try to force everyone to be more glamorous." McDonald describes her style as "whimsical classicism," which manifests itself in more-is-more rooms (Indian and Chinoiserie touches, silk stripes and zebra rugs) with a spot-on sense of formal composition. Her favorite luxury, she admits, is "flying in my clients' jet to shop in Paris for a mere two days."

Current inspiration: Late French designer **Jacques Adnet**, Cecil Beaton watercolors, artist **Konstantin Kakanias**, Merchant Ivory films.

Marmol Radziner

Clients: Tom Ford, Demi Moore, Adam Sandler, Anthony Kiedis.

- Masters of creating clean, modern environments coupled with a timeless aesthetic, **Leo Marmol** and **Ron Radziner** earned the design community's unwavering attention in 2007 for their respectful and enlightened restoration of **Richard Neutra's** Kaufmann House in Palm Springs. Warming up modernism with their extensive use of stone and wood, the design duo's living spaces are customarily linear but never lacking in character.
- They like to showcase craftsmanship with quality casework and built-ins — as they did for their sexily masculine showhouse bedroom, inspired by director **David Fincher** — and frequently use natural outside elements to create a visual dialogue between indoor and outdoor spaces. “I would describe our style as modern but of-the-earth, with a keen sensitivity to the landscape beyond,” says Radziner. Marmol and Radziner, each married with two children, are residents of a craftsman cottage in Rustic Canyon and a self-designed house in Venice, respectively.

Current inspirations: “**Jack White's** Blunderbuss. I could watch **Francis Ford Coppola's** *Rumblefish* over and over — so evocative in its black, white, gray and smoke,” says Radziner.

David Phoenix

Clients: Maria Shriver; Richard Riordan.

With more than 20 years' experience and a meticulous eye for detail, **David Phoenix** is famed for designing classic modern houses with a laid-back West Coast vibe — rooms that are polished but never precious. “It's possible to live casually and have a sense of elegance,” he says. Despite being known for his high-quality traditional aesthetic, Phoenix, who lives in Bel Air and is “single and available,” notes that there's more to a home than craftsman finishes.

“I'm not just a traditionalist. People in L.A. need functional, sexy spaces — places to gather and have great conversation,” he says. When it comes to hunter-gathering, Phoenix, whose next project is The Annenberg Center for Performing Arts, advises: “Buy what you love. Furniture is like a boyfriend — if you want it, you'll find room for it.”

Obsession: “Luxurious E. Braun or Pratesi sheets at the end of a long day.”

Michael S. Smith

Clients: Rupert Murdoch, Cindy Crawford, Kevin Huvane.

If L.A. has a reigning emperor of decor, it's **Michael S. Smith**. The designer — whose first big commission in his twenties was for **Bruce Springsteen** — redid the private quarters and Oval Office for **President and Michelle Obama**, has published three books (with a fourth set for 2013) and was just named the creative director of 112-year-old fabric company Brunschwig & Fils. Smith, who hails from Newport Beach, Calif., is doing a house in London for Net-a-Porter founder **Natalie Massenet**, designed

the Long Island house **Rupert Murdoch** sold last year for \$9 million and includes **Harrison Ford**, **George Clooney** and **Peter** and **Megan Chernin** on his L.A. roster.

Clients treasure his expert composition, refined color sense and skill at creating a (quiet) monied look that still has personality. “For me, it’s about a sense of balance, such as adding a strong Roman antique to a modern interior,” says the designer. Two years ago, he traded in his traditional Bel-Air house (he also owns a Manhattan duplex) for a modern manse in Holmby Hills. He and partner **James Costos**, a vp at HBO, have become two of Obama’s top fund-raisers, hosting an event at their house in June attended by the first lady that raised more than \$1 million.

Current inspirations: “I’m obsessed with sophisticated ’70s houses in L.A. not groovy ’70s — **Sue Mengers’** or **Bob Evans’** house and **Lee Grant’s** Beverly Hills house in Shampoo.”

Madeline Stuart

Clients: Larry David, Gary and Jeanne Newman, Gary Ross.

Madeline Stuart is as masterful with fresh takes on old-world elegance as she is facile with words. “There is nothing trendy or outre about the work I do. It’s rooted in classicism but not stuffy,” says Stuart, who is inspired by “European early modern around 1910 and 1912 and Marrakesh, but the real deal like **Bill Willis** and his work for **Yves St. Laurent**.” It follows that her choices for antiques from **Maison Jansen** to **Jean Prouve** are authentic and elevated and that she’s a snappy vintage dresser (she collects YSL) who yearns for more formal times: “I rue the fact that I live in such a casual town.

There are options aside from jeans and a T-shirt for people who are representing the world of design — I don’t even wear that on a Saturday.” She and her husband, journalist **Steve Oney**, live in a “1930s house in the Hollywood Hills built as a rustic outpost — originally the hunting grounds for **Gen. Harrison Gray Otis**, the founder of the Los Angeles Times.”

Can’t live without: “Books; Beatrice, my Jack Russell; and then my husband — perhaps not in that order.”

Kelly Wearstler

Clients: Gwen Stefani and Gavin Rossdale, Cameron Diaz.



A career in interior design that began in 1994 with the founding of her firm has mushroomed to include clothing and jewelry lines and praise from *The New Yorker*, which called her the “presiding grande dame of West Coast interior design.” A trendsetting proponent of Hollywood Regency style, **Kelly Wearstler** has a slew of high-profile public projects that includes the Viceroy Hotel in Santa Monica, BG restaurant at Bergdorf Goodman in New York and Miami’s The Tides Hotel.

Wearstler has released four books on decor: *Rhapsody*, *Domicilium Decoratus*, *Modern Glamour* and *Hue*. The designer, who also was a judge on Bravo’s *Top Design* in 2008, calls her style “raw, refined and soulful.”

Current inspirations: The Memphis Group’s Ettore Sottsass. She says, “The whole movement is about bold, layered colors and unexpected shapes. I love it.”

Richard Hallberg and Barbara Wiseley

Client: Avi and Joyce Arad.

Flanked by olive groves in the gated community of Beverly Park (and bordered by neighbors Sumner Redstone and Sylvester Stallone) sits a modern chateau of stone and wood as reimagined by interior designers **Richard Hallberg** and **Barbara Wiseley** in their signature sophisticated European style. Built nine years ago over two years by New York transplants **Avi Arad**, producer of the *Spider-Man* franchise, and his painter-sculptor wife, **Joyce**, the 22,000-squarefoot house on 7 acres is a meticulous layering of natural elements, neutral tones and beautiful objects — think contemporary art and Roman antiquities and nestled in a showcase of artisanal handiwork.

“We wanted an 18th century house for a 21st century family,” says Joyce. “No velvet ropes!” Avi agrees: “It’s a big challenge when you build a big house that it doesn’t feel cold. This feels like a home.” (The third-floor man cave features boxed action figures, **Harley Davidson** memorabilia and an air-hockey table.) Hallberg and Wiseley, who met in college and have been design partners ever since, also are co-owners of acclaimed Melrose Avenue showrooms Dennis & Leen and Formations. “We always have a nod to history and an eye on the future,” says Hallberg. Combined with care in the house are “the Richard

Serras, a 13th century Chinese screen, our modern tables, all co-existing. With great architecture and art, you just need to let everything breathe.” — Fiona Murray

<http://www.hollywoodreporter.com/lists/hollywood-reporter-25-influential-interior-designers-la-382027/item/richard-hallberg-barbara-wiseley-25-382100>

