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LA GETS STARCKED!
SOIREE AT THE SLS
DESIGN CRITIC: THE KRESS
INTERVIEW WITH
RUTH WEISBERG
PLUS...THE LA ART
GALLERY, MUSEUM AND
FASHION DIRECTORIES
+ EVENTS CALENDAR



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LA GETS STARCKED!

A TÊTE À TÊTE WITH PHILIPPE STARCK

EASTWEST STUDIO
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INDISPUTABLY THE MOST FAMED DESIGNER OF OUR TIME, FRENCH BORN PHILIPPE STARCK RECENTLY DECLARED, "DESIGN IS DEAD." PERHAPS HIS ERA OF DESIGNING TOOTHBRUSHES, JUICERS AND THOUSAND-DOLLAR LOUIS CHAIRS IS NO LONGER BUT STARCK DESIGN IS DEFINITELY NOT EXTINCT. RATHER, IT IS EXPLODING TO A HIGHER CONSCIOUSNESS. STARCK IS TO LOS ANGELES MUCH AS MICHELANGELO WAS TO FLORENCE, ITALY: A MAN WHO SHAPED A CITY'S ARTISTIC HEARTBEAT.

WIT AND HUMOR IS DE RIGUEUR TO EXPERIENCE THE FULL IMPACT OF HIS LATEST EVOLUTION. HE IS THE GRAND MASTER OF CEREMONIES OF SORTS AT THE SLS HOTEL ON LA CIENEGA WHERE HE ORCHESTRATES AN ETHEREAL EXPERIENCE FOR GUESTS. THE MAIN ENTRANCE IS A FANTASTICAL WORLD OF A MODERN DAY MAGIC CASTLE COMPLETE WITH FORTUNE-TELLERS AND LIQUID NITROGEN COCKTAILS. AND IT'S NO COINCIDENCE THAT SLS' RESTAURANT, THE BAZAAR, FEATURES LEGENDARY CHEF JOSE ANDRES' CIRQUE-DU-SOLEIL-FOR-THE-TASTE-BUDS CUISINE, WHICH SYNERGISTICALLY ENHANCES THE ESSENCE OF PLAY.

FRIVOLITY AND SPARKLES (A FAVORITE ADJECTIVE OF STARCK) IS NOT WHERE THIS POWER PLANT OF CREATIVE ENERGY STOPS. WIELDING HIS INFLUENTIAL DESIGN SWORD FOR THE GOOD OF MANKIND IN A WHITE KNIGHT PERSONA WITH HIS DEMOCRATIC DESIGN AND ECOLOGY LINE IS WHAT REALLY SEEMS TO MOVE HIM FOR THE MOMENT. WHAT'S NOT TO LOVE ABOUT ORGANIC CHAMPAGNE AND ENERGY EFFICIENT DEVICES THAT LOOK AS SLEEK AS A MOCA EXHIBIT? »

Fabrik gets a rare peek into the mind, humor and nuances of Philippe Starck as we query him about Los Angeles, his impact on its landscape and what inspires him.

Fabrik: Through your numerous iconic contributions over the years to this city's nightlife, restaurants and luxury hotels, you continue to play an integral role in how people experience contemporary Los Angeles. What makes Los Angeles such a compelling subject or arena for your work?

PS: I love to work in LA. I've been working for the past few years with Sam Nazarian. He is young, smart, fast, a real visionary; he is rigorous, courageous, honest and full of energy. Sam, thanks to his numerous qualities, is the utmost essence of LA, of its inhabitants, of its amazing energy. That is the reason why, all the projects we are developing, are vitally linked to Sam Nazarian and vitally linked to LA.

Fabrik: The SLS Hotel really seems to capture the spirit of Los Angeles in its eclectic and playful energy. What was your overall inspiration or influence for the design of the SLS Hotel?

PS: The challenge with SLS was to reinvent hospitality rules that we already explored 20 years ago and adding new values related to the elegance of intelligence, to the beauty of humanity, the poetry of quality, and all that in consistency with today's great priorities. I have never been interested by design nor architecture. What inspires me is the result of what I do on my friends, on the cultural tribe who will go or use my products. Therefore, I always had in mind our client friends and I wanted them to experience, to feel, to become more sparkling, to be touched by fertile surprises.

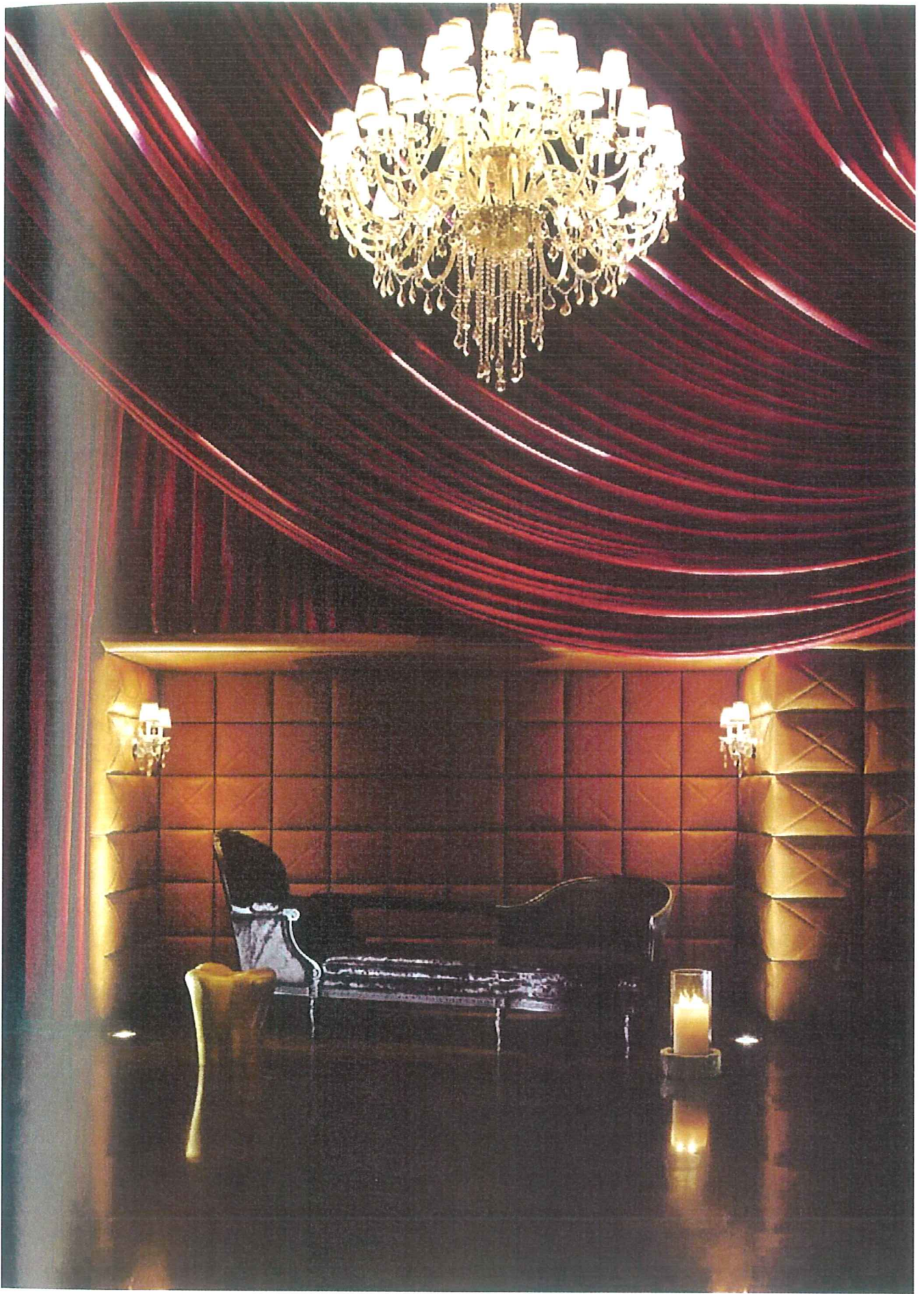
Fabrik: Unless you didn't sleep, how could you possibly orchestrate every design detail in the SLS hotel (i.e, even the knickknacks on the shelves in the Picasso inspired patio)?

PS: I have this disease called creativity. Funny enough, I create a lot lying in my bed. I have concepts that have been sleeping for months, even years, and then, when I am ready I am like a printer. I draw everything myself, I have been working with the same pen and tracing paper (especially made for me so that it resists to change of humidity) for the past 30 years. Then of course, I have a formula team in my agency and also the SBE team was absolutely fantastic.

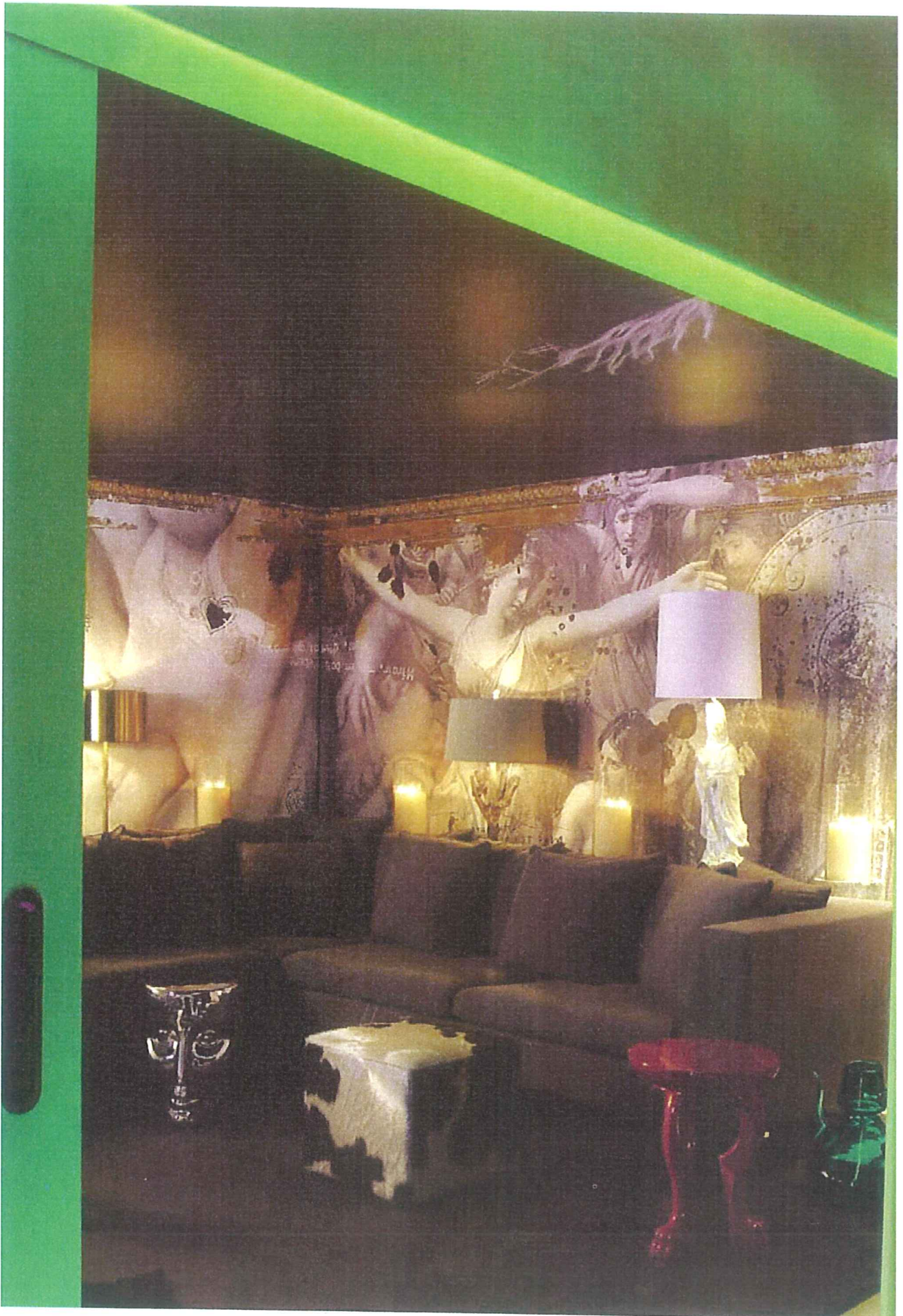
Fabrik: What area or areas of the SLS hotel are you most proud of or connected to?

PS: I love the entire concept but I cannot hide a peculiar tenderness for the Bazaar that is a real bucket of boiling energy. It is a real village center within the city, within the hotel. People will know that whatever the time, there shall always be something going on there. I love the conversations between the health bar and the tapas bar, between the cocktail bar and the pastry area, then the journey in the Moss space ... It is real fantasy. We have succeeded in creating a real experience, a real destination.

Fabrik: Does music influence your sensibility? If yes, what do you enjoy listening to while working?



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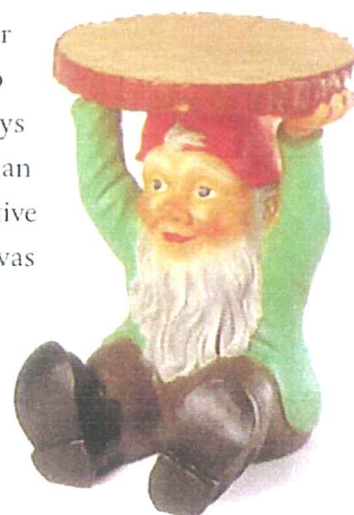
PS: Music and Sound is very important to me, it is vital. I listen to music while I'm planning out my designs and I feel that my inspiration comes from the quality of the artist's music I listen to. There is quality in everything as there is shit in everything. I listen from Brian Eno, Philipp Glass, Laurie Anderson to Gustavo Santaolalla, Jose Gonzales and Placebo for example.

Fabrik: Where do you most enjoy eating in L.A.?

PS: I am king of room service (I stay with my wife at SLS). Of course, I LOVE the Bazaar by Jose Andres, it is real and elegant food. I also often go a great thai restaurant, Cholada Thai Beach Cuisine (18763 Pacific Coast Hwy., Malibu).

Fabrik: When and how did you begin to realize yourself as not just a designer but also an inventor of new materials and design technology? How do you envision evolving post-materialism?

PS: I never saw myself as a designer nor as an architect nor an interior designer. I see myself as a maid who tries to clean my friends' life, to make it a little more sparkling, happier, easier. Also, I have always worked like a movie director, keeping in mind scenario more than sceneries. And last but not least, I must have inherited some creative genes from my father, André Starck, who was an aircraft engineer. I was raised with the idea that one of the only respectable jobs was within creativity, as one exploits no one, everything comes from one's brain. I've always respected the elegance of engineering and that is the reason why we work very well with developers and engineers.



Fabrik: What trait do you most deplore in yourself as a designer?

PS: I am a dreamer, an utopist. It is an advantage but also can be a shortcoming.

Fabrik: Your commitment to create better environments has led to constant innovation. Given the considerable discussion around sustainability and eco-design in these times, can you share more about your vision for the products you are creating for your "Democratic Ecology" line?

PS: I am seldom proud of myself, but if there is one thing I believe I am proud of, it is what I have developed for 30 years now: democratic design. From the early days, I have always fought to give the best to the maximum number of people. I am proud to have been able to take 2 zeros off the price of a "design" chair in 20 years. This completely changes the concept of the object. I also love my Good Goods Catalogue I created 13 years ago, "the catalogue of non products for the non consumers of the next moral market", and also the brand of organic food I created, OAO. It is a real service to give good and healthy rice and champagne to your friends. But now, the battle of democratic design is won, so I entered a new fight: democratic ecology. That is to develop affordable, easy to use, easy to find, easy to install products that produce energy with wind, sun and hydrogen. In Milan, we have presented the personal windmill that shall be available in a few months on the shelves. We are working also on solar and hydrogen boats...

Fabrik: What aspect do you revere most in design?

PS: I revere spirit, brain and flesh. Never objects.

Fabrik: What design faux pas do you despise the most?

PS: The only design faux pas is the total look; it is to live in an interior designer's brain because it is supposed to be chic. The best attitude is freedom. As far as design in general is concerned, design suffers the double problem of being confused by the media with trendy art and with trendy fashion. Design must come back and remain on its assets of using vision, high technology, engineering and politics to help people have the right evolution.

Fabrik: If you were to die and come back as a person or a thing, what would it be?

PS: A mathematical equation.

Fabrik: From watching your speech at the 2008 TED Conference, humor is clearly very central to whom you are... What or who makes you laugh?

PS: Humor is vital to me; it is the symptom of human intelligence. Most of my creations have a double language and one part of it is humor. For example when I designed the Attila Dwarf, that was a big laugh in the middle of the very chic design trend of what people called minimalism. I seldom laugh; but I must confess that someone bumping into a window or falling just like that makes me laugh to tears.

Fabrik: What other upcoming projects do you have scheduled in Los Angeles?

PS: I have just finished work on the new EastWest Studios in LA (formerly the historic Cello Studios). And very shortly, with Sam Nazarian's SBE Group, we will be opening another Los Angeles Katsuya, downtown.

Fabrik: What is your idea of perfect happiness?

PS: Perfect happiness happens when you have no idea of what that can be and so it happens by surprise.

Fabrik: What is your most precious possession - design or otherwise?

PS: To always be somewhere else.

STORY LINKS:

www.philippestarck.com
www.slshotel.com
www.ted.com

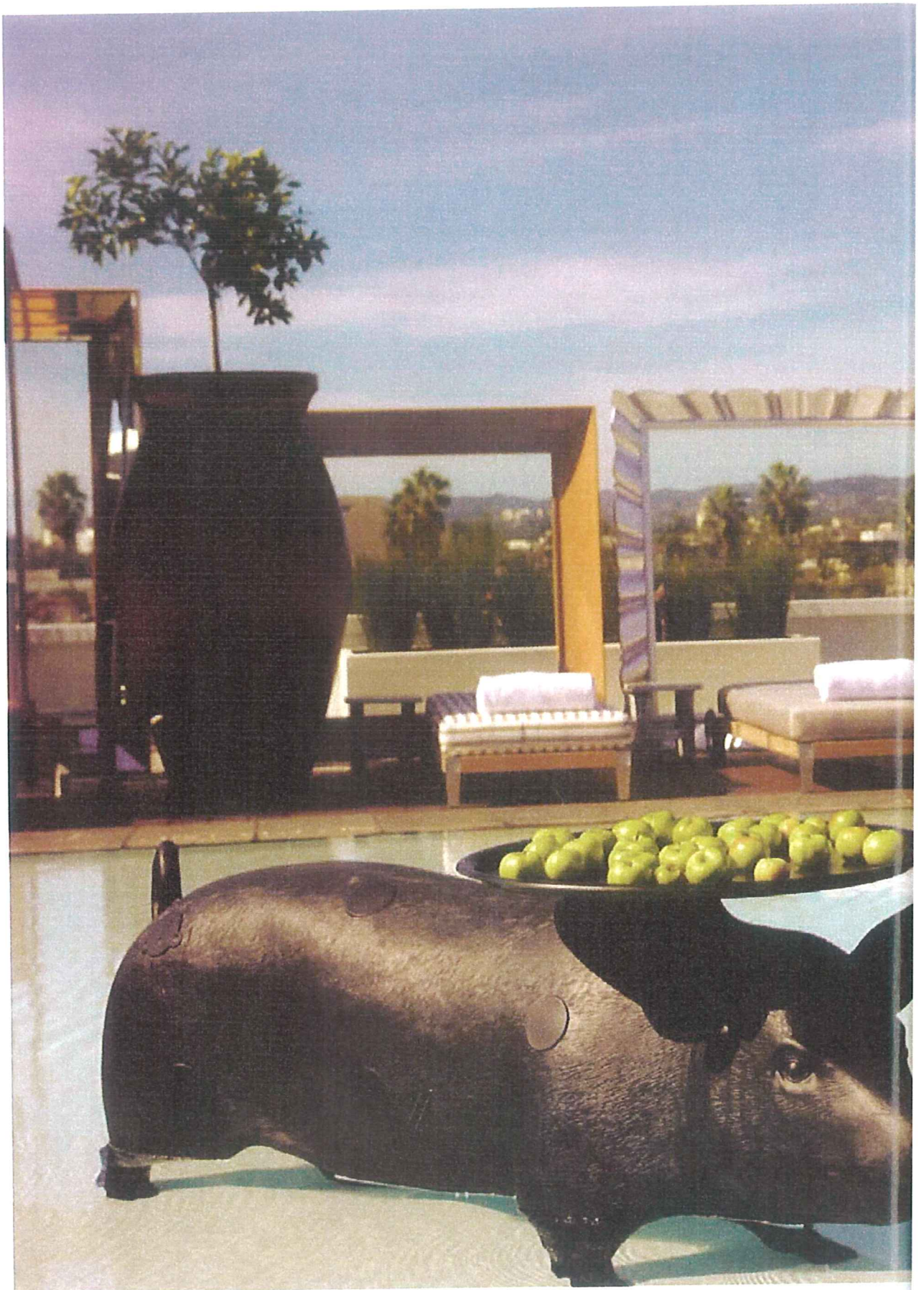
MAP OF LA'S 'STARCK'-DOM:

1983	Mar Vista Pre-Fab House
1991	18 apartment buildings in LA
1997	Mondrian Hotel
1997	Asia De Cuba Restaurant
2004	Taschen Store
2006	Katsuya Brentwood
2007	Katsuya Hollywood
2007	S Bar
2008	Katsuya Glendale
2008	SLS Beverly Hills Hotel
2009	Michael Mina XIV
2009	EastWest Studios (formerly Cello Studios)
2009	The Independent Spirit Awards Installation
2009	Katsuya Downtown

Sam Nazarian's newest Los Angeles venture, the SLS Hotel (which stands for Style Luxury Service), is the first hotel where Philippe Starck's design is omnipresent in every detail. The Bazaar, the public open space lobby, offers shopping in the Moss gift shop, dining at Jose Andres' four-star restaurant, socializing with friends in Bar Centro or enjoying tea and macarons at the Patisserie. Hotel guests get special privileges such as a private entrance, the Tres restaurant, and access to the best views of LA on the stunning rooftop pool deck. Guest rooms feature faux mink blankets, a hidden plasma TV, 'rainfall' showers and Starck leather lounge chairs. Fabrik Magazine gives you a first hand glimpse into the whimsical, eclectic playground of SLS Hotel, which quintessentially captures the entertainment-centric pulse of the city it resides in.

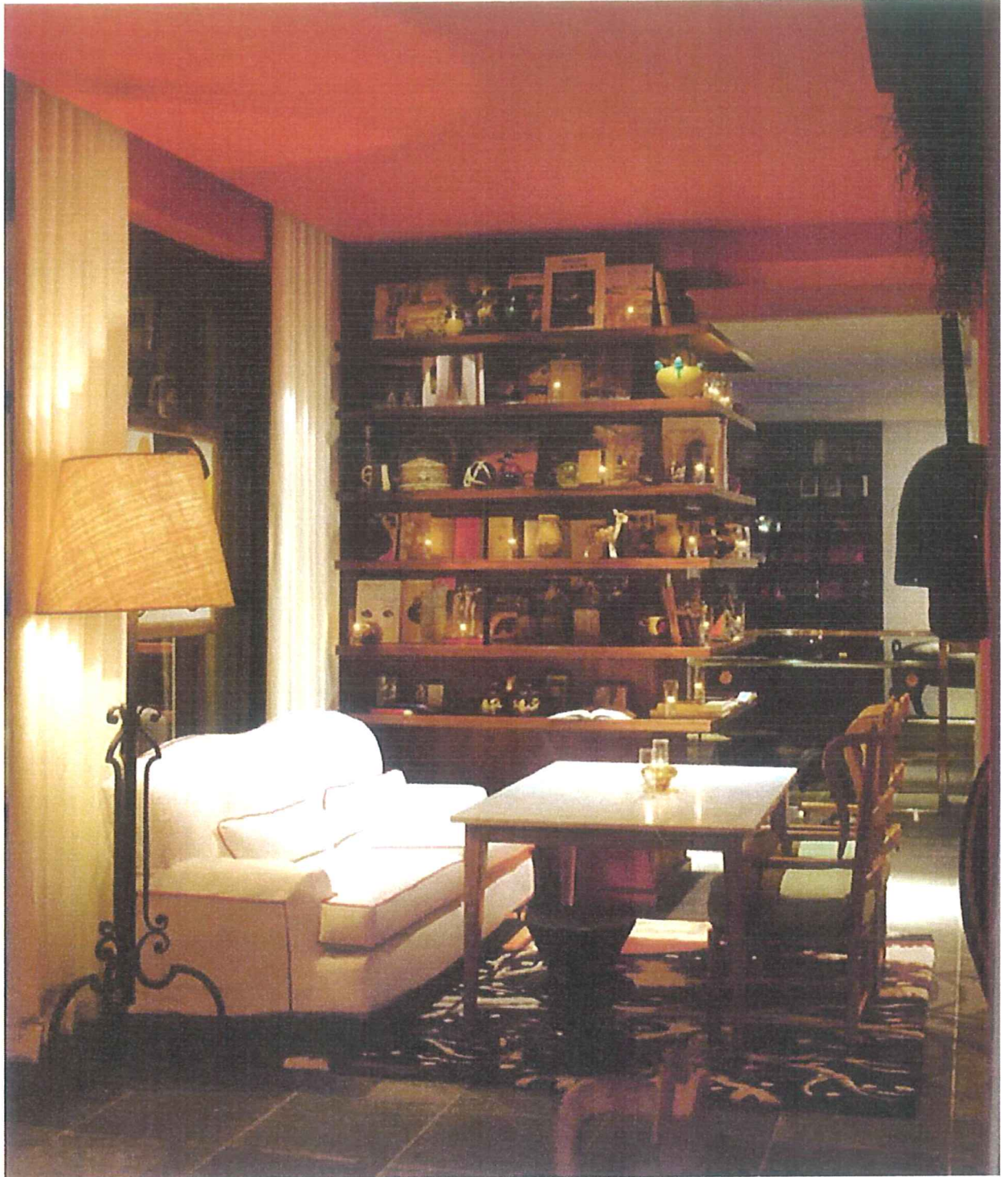


**STARCK'S
LATEST SOIREE:
SLS HOTEL**



SLS POOLDECK





SLS BAZAAR BLANCA TERRACE



SLS BAZAAR PATISSERIE



SLS PRIVATE GUEST LOBBY WHITEROOM



SLS BAZAAR BLANCA



SLS BAZAAR BLANCA CHEFS