

THE FALL HOME ISSUE

Town & Country

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T&C GOES TO L.A.!

THE MOST BEAUTIFUL HOUSES UNDER THE SUN

WHO'S NEXT IN DECORATING

CALIFORNIA BEAUTY SECRETS

WHERE L.A. REALLY EATS

WHO'S THAT GIRL?

(Hint: A Royal Relationship)

Sophie Winkleman at Soho House West Hollywood

OCTOBER 2010

AT HOME IN L.A.

BORN TO DECORATE

They're young, they're fabulous, they're so ready for their close-ups.

By Sarah Medford



L.A.'s new generation of instant, mediagenic decorators... Opposite page, from left: Emily LaMarque, Kristine Kamanstein, Molly Isaksen, Amy Kehoe (seated), Natasha Baradaran, Tracie Butler, Carrie Livingston (seated), Erinn Valencich (on floor). This page, from left: Jane Hallworth, Chiara de Rege (seated), Sarah Shetter, Katie Fine (on floor), Alison Palevsky, Jaime Rummerfield, Kishani Perera (on horse), Natalie Umbert, Alison Blumenfeld.

Photograph by MARC ROYCE
Styled by MARGOT FRANKEL

Aspiring Sister Parishes

used to toil for years in the service of respected big-city firms, refining their sensibilities as they wore holes in their Belgian loafers and logged hours in windowless sample libraries. At least that was the drill a generation ago, when the right apprenticeship was the surest path to a seat among the tastemaking establishment.

Fast-forward to 2010. More and more young women are striking out on their own early in their careers, transforming a tradition-bound industry in the process. And rather than snubbing the tastemaking establishment (or what's left of it) along the way, they're simply circumventing it, skipping the ignominy of the sample library in favor of the biggest design jobs of their professional lives: themselves. As they blog, tweet, and ratchet up their Web sites into Zeitgeisty marketing tools, they're transforming their names and faces into salable brands.

Los Angeles is the locus of this trend, a place where house lust, clients with money, and a grand obsession with appearance—both personal and domestic—have overlapped to produce a groundswell of comely designing women. Kelly Wearstler is the undisputed role model, given that L.A. is her home base and that, after short stints working as a set decorator and a waitress, she shot to fame in less than five years. What's more, her rooms embody an energetic West Coast perspective that ignores most of the rules of what used to be called good taste.

Members of L.A.'s new design guard cite stylistic influences as diverse as Wearstler, Madeleine Castaing, "socialites from the seventies," and "ultraglam metallic piñatas" in their marketing efforts. For all their differences, though, many of them belong to the same social crowd of young Hollywood actors, talent agents, musicians, and entertainment lawyers, and their clients tend to bubble up out of that very pot: Rashida Jones (who has worked with Katie Fine); Mark Ruffalo and his wife, Sunrise (Amy Kehoe); Eva Longoria Parker (Tracie Butler); and Christina Aguilera (Jaime Rummerfield), for instance. Many, with remarkable speed, land dream jobs with clients who could afford to hire anyone, including Wearstler herself. Carrie Livingston is doing up houses in L.A. and London for a Russian art collector and her oligarch companion; another up-and-comer has outfitted the interiors of Steven Spielberg's yacht. Between jobs, several of these bright young things appear on shows on HGTV or tape segments of *Access Hollywood* and *The Fabulous Life Of...* Just another day in L.A.'s decorating trenches.

Whatever their ultimate ambitions, however, it's clear that these women are living for much more than just the quiet pleasures of creating well-appointed rooms for well-spoken clients with well-funded trust accounts. They're pushing the furniture around—not in Belgian loafers, but in heels high enough to scale the cliffs of fame.



No chintz, lots of glamour in Courtney Love's Beverly Hills sitting room, designed by Jaime Rummerfield.



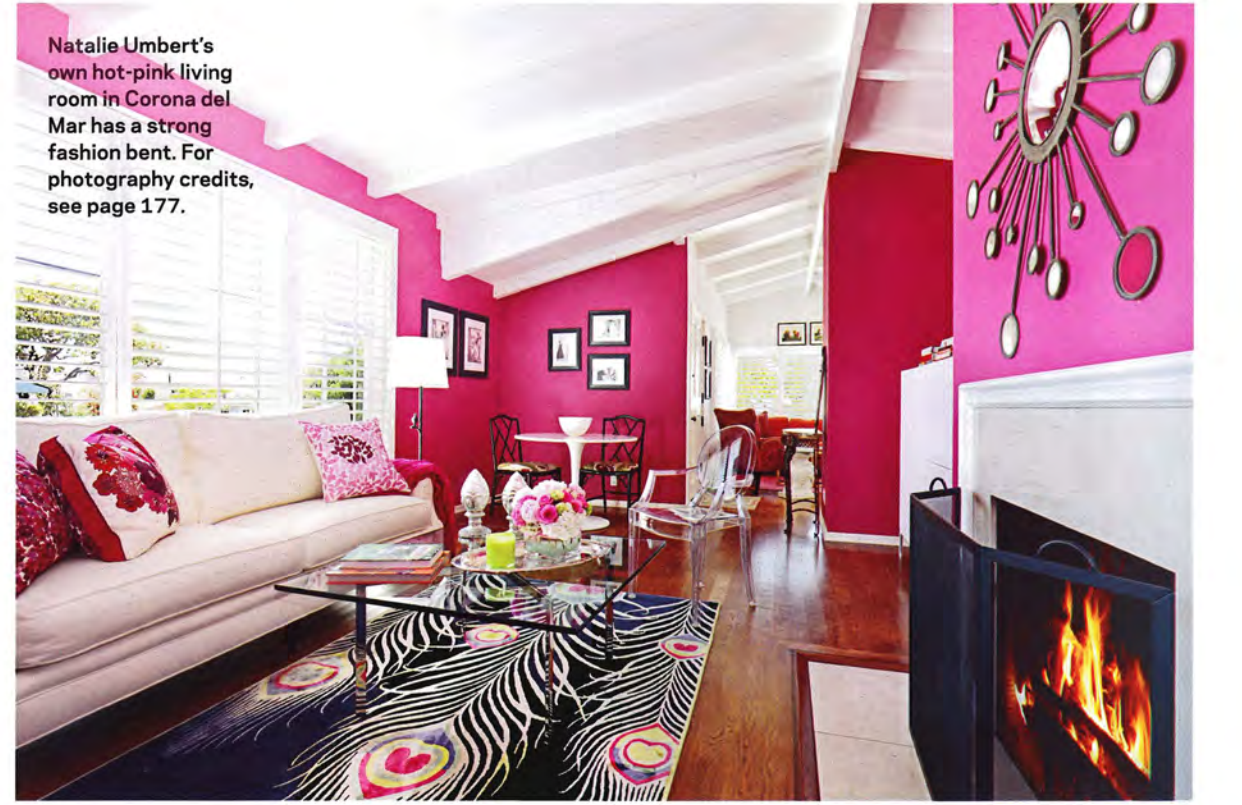
Katie Fine paired a retro Oly Studio bench with Cole & Son wallpaper in the guest room of Rashida Jones's L.A. home.



Pierre Paulin's Little Tulip chairs fill a breakfast room by Kristine Kamenstein.



For a Venice Beach bedroom, Erinn Valencich used Manuel Canovas paper on the walls and fabric on the headboard.



Natalie Umbert's own hot-pink living room in Corona del Mar has a strong fashion bent. For photography credits, see page 177.