



A LIFE WELL LIVED

A look inside Sam Nazarian's home gives insight into who the wildly successful entrepreneur really is.

By Sue Hostetler Photographs by Peter Christiansen Valli

Sam Nazarian's hilltop aerie sports drop-dead views all the way from the Getty Museum to downtown LA. The chic teak outdoor furnishings are by Jane Hamley Wells.



SAM NAZARIAN IS ONE OF A DYING BREED, a true Renaissance man. He's well educated and multilingual, with broad intellectual interests and many talents. He may have made his mark in the cell-phone business as a young man, but Nazarian has matured into a true aesthete whose visionary, multiplatform business is redefining the way the next generation of Angelenos eat, drink, watch movies and even vacation.

As founder and CEO of SBE, the 6-foot-4 Iranian-born Nazarian manages a diversified portfolio of hotels, restaurants, nightclubs and lounges known for their modern design and exceptional service. With his latest two ventures—the opulent Sunset Strip restaurant XIV (featuring James Beard Award-winning chef Michael Mina) and the SLS Hotel at Beverly Hills on La Cienega, Nazarian ups his tastemaker quotient even more, partnering with arguably one of the most creative minds around—designer Philippe Starck. Even the notoriously self-confident Starck has high praise for Nazarian, referring to him as “exactly the partner I dream of having a revolution with” and “the best player.”

So, how does someone who specializes in creating unique, escapist environments choose to live at home? Despite his larger-than-life public persona, Nazarian has always kept his private life, well, private—until now.

“[My home] is my personal retreat, my sanctuary. I’m typically only in town four days a week and entertain nearly every night with my business,” he says. “My feeling is that home is the only place you can keep your soul.” The businessman has owned his stunning midcentury residence not once, but twice. He originally purchased it in 1997, when it was still under construction by a presumably financially distressed developer, and ended up completing it himself. “I turned around and immediately sold it, setting a record for the highest price ever paid in the Hills,” says Nazarian.

At Home



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Floor-to-ceiling windows allow a stream of sunlight to flow through the house's open layout; the sitting area is outfitted with a pair of Milo Baughman fern-colored chairs and a black Baccarat Zenith chandelier by Philippe Starck; the far wall of the entryway is lined with three Saffron paintings by LA-based artist Kirtland Ash; a bronze Star of David sculpture created by Nazarian's mother adorns the living room wall.

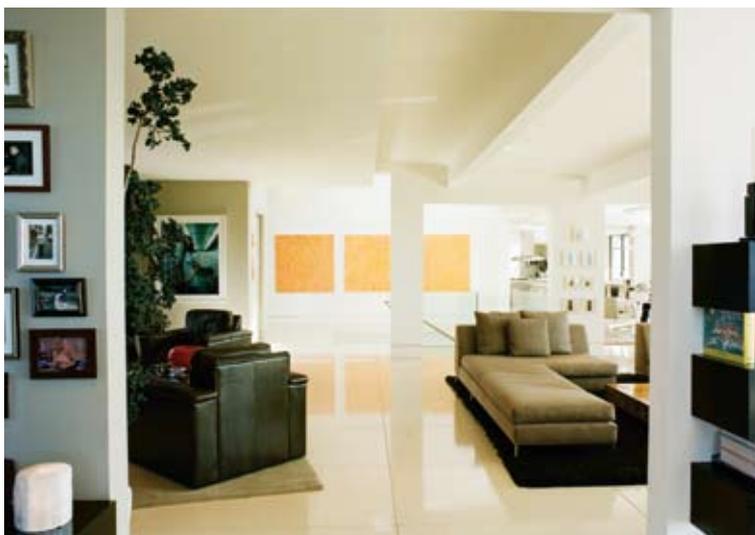
He assumed he was trading up, buying Jennifer Lopez's two-acre Mulholland megaspread, but it ultimately felt "too cold." (The chill didn't seem to bother Gwen Stefani and Gavin Rossdale, who bought the home in 2006 for a reported \$15.5 million.) Nazarian bought back the Oriole Way home and proceeded to completely remodel again, this time with the help of designer Brett Barrett. "My goal was to marry warmth and contemporary design," he says, "and I think that's what I accomplished."

The 6,000-square-foot home is filled with predominantly '50s-era furnishings, many with requisite chrome accents, which are softened by lush, textured upholstered fabrics in shades of caramel, cocoa and avocado green. Macassar

walnut-wood walls and custom cabinets in the living room bespeak the home's overall exquisite quality and are a well-done masculine addition. Sunlight floods through dramatic floor-to-ceiling windows (several of which are angled à la Chemosphere), providing critical counterbalance to the dark, rich wood.

The kitchen can only be called futuristic (one almost expects George and Jane Jetson to appear), awash in cream and stainless steel. But Nazarian thinks it's his master bath that packs the best over-the-top, hedonistic punch. He's right. The bathroom features a digital Kohler shower complete with pure-white Quarella stone from Verona, Italy, nine-foot-high custom doors and an egg-shaped tub within.

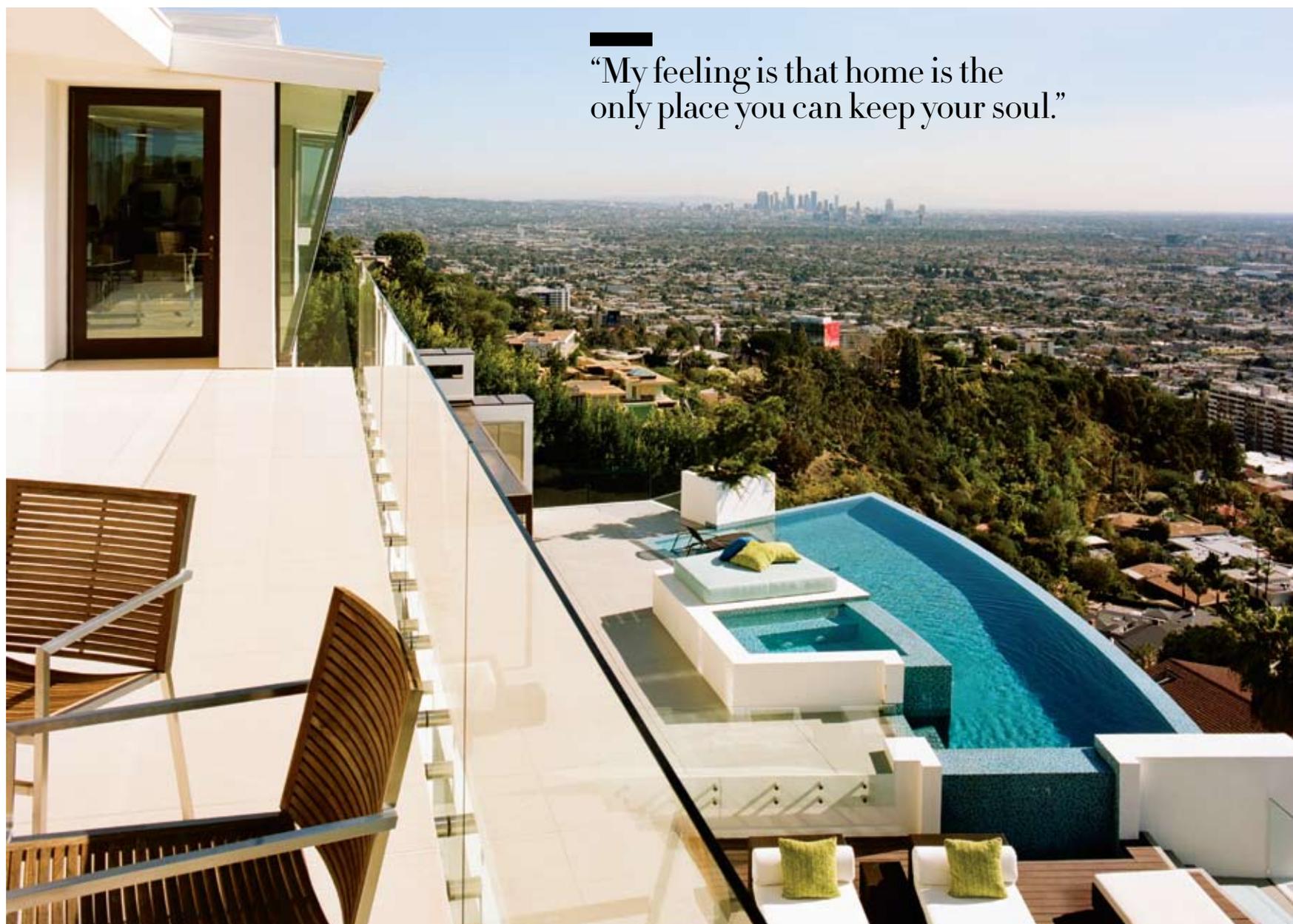
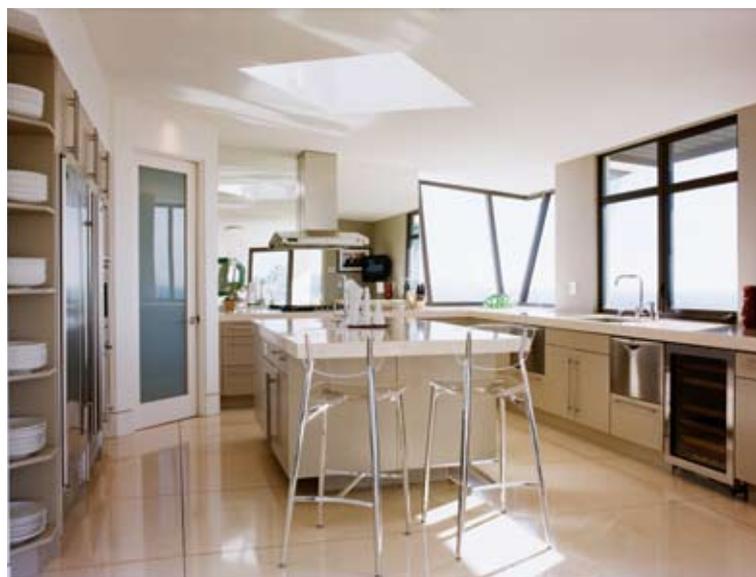
Like Nazarian, the home is a study in duality. What you expect is not necessarily what you get. From the outside, the residence appears more modest than the expansive three-story structure it is, with multiple bedrooms and baths, a gym, theater and offices for an estate manager. And—for those expecting a decadent bachelor pad befitting 007—think again. There are, of course, high-tech toys. (The home has no keys—Nazarian controls locks, audiovisual equipment, security and more from wireless touch panels in his



CLOCKWISE FROM RIGHT: The bright and airy kitchen is awash in cream counters and floors made of Quarella stone imported from Italy; the spectacular infinity pool was designed by Brett Barrett.

car and computer.) Yet the space authentically reflects Nazarian's personality. "The most important elements in my home are the photos of my life and family, various aspects of who I am, the art I collect—they're everywhere," he says. Indeed, works by Thomas Ruff and Slim Aarons mix seamlessly with family photos.

But the real scene stealer of this hilltop retreat is the unobstructed 280-degree jaw-dropping view, stretching from the Getty Museum to downtown LA. "To have this kind of view is magical," says Nazarian. Because of the home's precarious cliffside perch, 82 structural caissons were drilled into the steep incline to create a foundation that could accommodate the 3,500-square-foot deck, seemingly suspended in thin air. "On the deck, you feel like you're in the hands of God," he says, "or like you're sitting on the nose of a 747. Being in the pool with the city right beneath you is breathtaking." You can almost see it—Nazarian floating in his pool, looking down on the city—his city—dreaming up his next incredible idea. ★



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