



CLUB RISING

THE SPLASHY NEW SOCIAL HUB FOR CREATIVES OFFERS A STRIKING NEW PERSPECTIVE ON HOLLYWOOD

The London-based h Club has touched down in Los Angeles, the latest in a wave of social clubs kicked off by the debut of Soho House here in 2010. HKS Architects, led by architect Luciano Mazzo and interior designer Russell Sage, have transformed the former Redbury Hotel on Hollywood and Vine into a five-story destination that includes a rooftop garden and restaurant. Hidden behind a sleek blue facade, the renovation suggests that this new incarnation will write a future every bit as compelling as its rock-and-roll past.

Above left and above: The rooftop lounge at the h Club is perched high above the iconic corner of Hollywood and Vine.

Text by Abigail Stone / Photography by Tim Street-Porter

Certainly that was the intention of the club's founders—the late Paul Allen, global philanthropist and co-founder of Microsoft, and musician Dave Stewart—when they opened the London outpost in 2004 in a converted Victorian hospital in Covent Garden. With its unique resources, including a television studio and an art gallery, it quickly proved a magnet for the city's creative class. The Los Angeles branch seems poised to repeat that success.

The h Club clearly offers all the expected luxuries of a high-end private club—open-air pool deck, beauty salon, gym, plush bedrooms and numerous lounges and bars offering chef Kris Morningstar's richly lay-

red food. But it's the h Club's out-of-the-box thinking that sets it apart. That starts with its arts foundation, which has not only curated work for sale by artists such as Anja Neimi, Gina Osterloh and Freize star Lisa Anne Auerbach but has also invited them to become members. The club's partnership with neighbor Capitol Records manifests in a collection of rare photos from the Capitol archives displayed throughout the property. An app encourages members to share projects, and a state-of-the-art recording studio welcomes singers, musicians and podcasters. An Artists' Lounge can morph to host a band, a comedy show or a screening. This cornucopia of amenities is set against a dynamic backdrop that Luciano Mazzo characterizes as "British, but with a twist."



Left: The club's tea room features a mix of Chinoiserie wallpapers.
Below: A lounge area is defined by colorful Fromental wallpaper.
Bottom: One of the h Club's guest suites.
Below right: The open-air swimming pool.



It's the h Club's out-of-the-box thinking that sets it apart.

“We wanted to create something that would become almost an icon in Hollywood,” says the Italian-born, U.K.-based architect. That began with his reimagining of the formerly blood-red Redbury Hotel as something bright and welcoming. Light-filled open-plan rooms partner with small, cozy spaces, nodding to the varied sensibilities of Los Angeles and London as well as to the different phases of the creative process. “There are moments that, as creatives, we want to communicate, and there are moments that we want to be alone,” Mazzo explains.

Mazzo’s classical framework contrasts with Russell Sage’s whimsical visuals. That translates into a potpourri of joyful, provocative details that delight the eye with rich colors, vibrant wallpapers and exuberant patterns dancing throughout the rooms. An Asian tea room intertwines a half-dozen hand-painted Chinoiserie wallcoverings; upon close inspection, a bedroom’s wallpaper pattern is revealed to be made up of frolicking naked bodies; a gantry over the bar packed with colorful liquor bottles provides a glittering rainbow of color. (“I’m always

Below:
A whimsical rooftop landscape was inspired by British filmmaker Derek Jarman, whose cottage in Dungeness, Kent, was legendary.



looking for a free sparkle, the ability to turn something into a chandelier,” Sage admits.) This exuberant whirlwind is kept in check with a strong foundation of clear blues, deep greens and polished woods.

But it is the h Club’s rooftop that may be its crowning glory, blending fantasy and refinement in equal measure. Jarman’s restaurant, in one corner, is the club’s most elegant dining space, accented by lampshades created from Hermès scarves and palm-frond fans spinning languidly overhead. This high polish is in madcap contrast to the rustic wooden

Above:
Jarman’s restaurant, helmed by chef Kris Morningstar, opens to the roof deck and garden. Hermès fabric accents the pendant lights over the bar.



shed and desert garden (complete with an old ruined speedboat) just outside its door. Nodding to British filmmaker and political activist Derek Jarman's legendary oasis in Dungeness, Kent, inspiration for it struck Sage like a bolt of lightning.

"I suddenly thought, Everyone in L.A. wants a rooftop garden," he explains. "But there's the sheer impossibility of it—water restrictions, the baking sun. This captures that spirit of total inventiveness. It's stupid and crazy and fun, but it just works." The spirit of h Club Los Angeles in a nutshell. ●

h Club Los Angeles
hclub.com

Above:
 Jarman's outdoor patio.

Right:
 The h Club's rooftop bar offers views of the Capitol Records building and the Hollywood Hills. An outdoor movie screen is at right.

