

# THE RADAR WEEK ENDER

BY CHANTAL GORDON

## SUITE SURRENDER!

*L.A. haters: Get a room. The hotel scene has never been so sexy or worth the drive*

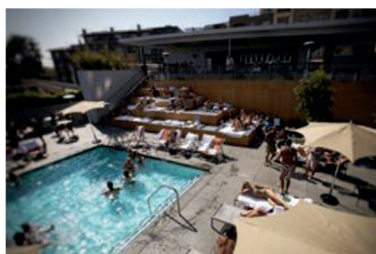
### THE LAYOVER: CUSTOM HOTEL

The latest blade in L.A. hospitality's shock-value arsenal isn't some celebrity stunt. Instead, it's a mechanical horse. Obsidian-black and a throwback to the dime-operated breed, it lives in room 1212 of **Custom Hotel**. The Custom, formerly a Furama property, is located a mile away from LAX and offers the neighborhood's only hip alternative to the typical Sheraton fare. The charcoal building is the work of architect Welton Beckett (CV: Capitol Records building) and the interior is the vision of hotelier Avi Brosh, who pipes in subtle sex cues throughout. Above the check-in counter the circular, neon chandelier reads, "Noctis somnus nobis is nox" ("sleep with us tonight" in Latin). Also in the lobby: a flock of life-sized toy sheep. And then there's the pink duct tape in the mini-bar. At the Sunday pool parties, a Midcentury Modern "stadium sundeck" allows hipsters to recline Caligula-style to a samba soundtrack.

### OUT-CELEBING THE CELEBS: THOMPSON BEVERLY HILLS

Designed by Dodd Mitchell alum Christian Schulz, the new **Thompson Beverly Hills** is a bit like wandering around Tom Ford's brain. Think of it

**SLUMBER PAR-TAY** *Clockwise from left:* The seductive hallway at Thompson Beverly Hills; the bar at London West Hollywood; Custom Hotel's poolside stadium lounging.



as the place where sex, mod and organic intersect: Upstairs, reflective black steel walls suggest bondage-grade patent leather. Floor-to-ceiling Steven Klein photographs bookend the halls, and textural wood and travertine reign throughout. Can ho-hum Beverly Hills handle it? "[Hotelier] Jason Pomeranc and I saw this as an opportunity to inject this sleepy city with a shot of adrenaline,"

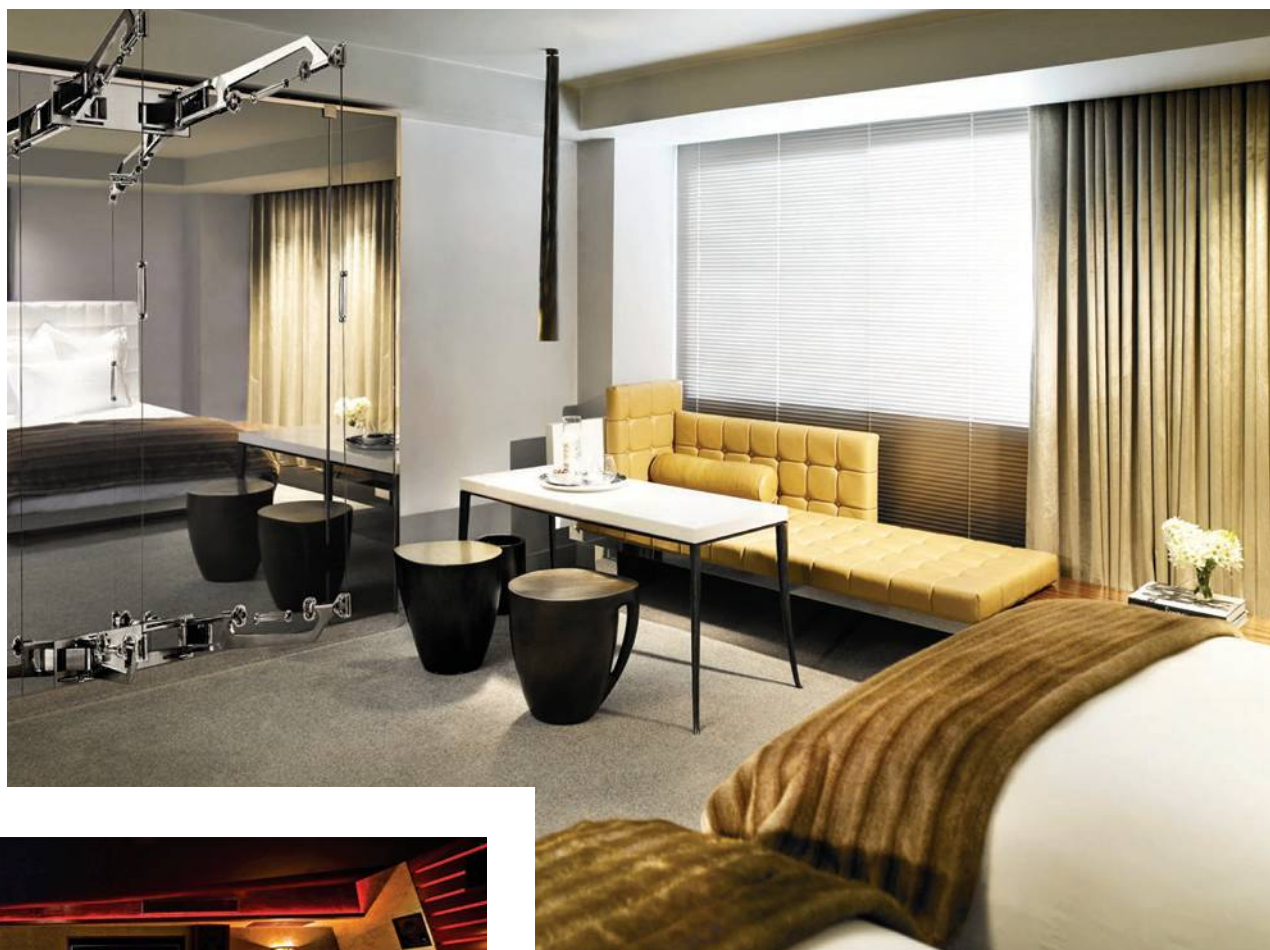
says Schulz. Downstairs, sushi—and hot waiters in Jenni Kayne- and Rachel Zoe-designed uniforms—await at Bond Street.

### JUMPING THE POND: THE LONDON WEST HOLLYWOOD

"This is becoming *the* place for gay weddings," a staffer at the **London West Hollywood** informs us as he strides across the hotel's rooftop, which packs enough greenery for a game of tipsy, late-night croquet, and overlooks a topiary garden a few levels below. (The new pre-pool ritual: lining up to use the upside-down shower, where one jumps on a flat disk sending water shooting up from below.) If the top floor evokes Brit quirk then the rest of the London is pure Old Hollywood glam. Designed by David Collins and just off the Sunset Strip, the hotel lobby displays a series of dizzying first-floor mirrors inspired by vintage Cartier watches, and a gaggle of chic gold leather sofas. Meanwhile at Gordon Ramsay's new restaurant, Moschino-clad socialites put down their iPhones long enough to nibble on quail egg and wagyu, as mixed-metallic light fixtures hover overhead like sexy spaceships. Turndown includes a whimsical informational card about cricket. "The lighting is inspired by George Hurrell, who photographed Joan Crawford and Greta Garbo," says Collins. "I was very conscious of the fact that, in Hollywood, you really are only as good as your lighting—or your last movie."



**ROOMS WITH A VIEWPOINT**  
*From top: A room at the hotly anticipated SLS Beverly Hills; the Sunset Marquis gives a facelift to its famed in-hotel recording studio.*



## GOING UP! MEET THE NEW LOBBYISTS...

Type A's in need of a tone-up before bedding down? Book one of the "fitness suites" at **SLS Hotel at Beverly Hills**, and you can work out without being seen. (But doesn't that defeat the purpose?) Expected to open later this month, SLS is the brainchild of nightlife don Sam Nazarian and designer Philippe Starck. The latter's mundane-objects-as-art sensibility continues: A boutique without walls! *Two* lobbies! *Trompe l'oeil* uniforms by Pascal Humbert! Celeb chef José Andrés is also in the house. Fête accompli?

Meanwhile, currently inciting Prius gridlock in Westwood: the new **Hotel Palomar**. The Cheryl Rowley-designed property combines real-deal green features (in-room recycling bins, hybrid Lexus car service) with exuberant design (animal-print robes, faux-snakeskin). Don't miss the in-room yoga TV! At **The Huntley Hotel** in Santa Monica, it's all about the installation of 300 ceramic piranhas that jut from the lobby wall, silently—and ironically—observing the scenesters vying to get upstairs to hot-spot Penthouse. Unlike the alfresco rooftops of S.D., this closed-in version has Thomas Schoos' signature glam settees and a bar that's sharply curved for gratuitous eye contact.

## THE NEXT TOP REMODEL

Got time to kill before drinks at the Whiskey? Record a demo! In the wake of its unprecedented renovation, West Hollywood's **Sunset Marquis** has added 40 new villa suites—plus a revamp of its legendary recording studio

(a Madge fave), which now mixes up-to-date toys with vintage equipment. Don't miss the new restaurant and spa (with furniture designed by Porsche), plus the two-story Presidential Villa, which boasts three hand-tiled fireplaces and a dining room for 10 with twin Schonbeck Swarovski crystal chandeliers dangling overhead.

Philippe Starck's erstwhile calling card, **Mondrian**, has a new mastermind. Benjamin Noriega Ortiz brings serious mojo to the West Hollywood hotel's \$40 million remodel, and his inspirations range from Gaudi's Park Guell bench in Barcelona to, you know, Coney Island. The surrealist theme translates into a Lucite indoor loveseat swing and a "mushroom-inspired" concierge desk.

And who said image overhauls were just for starlets? This month, Santa Monica's Art Deco icon, **Hotel Shangri-La** (known for its Mario Testino-approved gritty glamour) is set to complete its \$30 million renovation. Built in 1939 in the Streamline Moderne style, it will boast 17 new rooms, an elevated pool, and requisite rooftop lounge.

In Santa Monica, standbys **Casa del Mar** and **Shutters on the Beach** are bringing new design and foodie cred to their eateries. While Shutters remains (trust fund) kid-friendly—the concierge can shut down Disneyland if needed, and, oh, there's a rumored Lohan ban—its re-opened **One Pico** showcases reimagined Italian in an airy, Michael S. Smith-designed space topped with antique boat hulls. Exec chef Michael Reardon also holds court at Casa del Mar's **Catch** restaurant, where the crudo alone is worth the trip.

For those penciling in poolside deal-making, there is a new HQ: **Peninsula Beverly Hills'** \$4-mil Roof Garden, another Rowley job. Panoramic views? Check. "Living wall" packed with jasmine and other hot horticulture? Check. Bells-and-whistles bidet? Check. And the rooftop spa is home to the cult-followed Oxygen Facial, a pre-red carpet must. **R**