

The fountain—a gift from Rene Russo—was once a horse trough. OPPOSITE The geometry of a Florence Knoll table, Mies van der Rohe Brno chairs and a 1981 painting by Mary Vartikian contrast sharply with 12-inch thick, whitewashed stone walls and a cathedral ceiling.



# REFINED RETREAT

ELEGANCE AND MODERNITY CONVERGE IN A DESIGN MAVEN'S SLEEK PASADENA COTTAGE

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The scent of old money wafts through the air around the lushly landscaped area of Pasadena anchored by the Ritz-Carlton, Huntington Hotel. Golden russet leaves fall as if placed by stylists, and the softly lit blue sky inspires plein-air artists today as it did a century ago.

In this elegantly hushed community, a decomposed granite drive is discreetly tucked between more stately gates. Looking slightly like the service road to the neighboring mansion and numbered “8”—while the addresses on either side announce “2” and “3”—is the entrance to David Hundley’s 1928 bungalow. “It was originally the tennis pavilion to the estate next door,” Hundley offers, explaining away the odd numbering system. Dripping in Virginia Creeper and singing with the bubbling coos of a horse-trough-turned-fountain, the facade of the home would seem to shelter mischievous gnomes and fauns. Which could not be further from the truth.

“I always buy homes inappropriate to my furniture. I call this the ‘Laura Ashley cottage.’” Two steps inside the front door reveals a Calder mobile and a Florence Knoll table. David Hundley is clearly a man of stark contradictions.

Hundley’s resume reveals a pupil-dilating array of product design consulting stints with the likes of Tom Ford-era Gucci, Ralph Lauren and Aston Martin, each partnership producing sleekly executed decor objects that turned the editorial world on its ear. One would not expect Plexiglas dog beds, thumbprint tumblers and sterling handcuffs from a man whose home is made of stone and cedar shingles. On the other hand, it’s equally unlikely this graphic artist trained in classic Bauhaus tradition laid track in the world’s largest copper mine and worked in the pre-dawn hours loading up Carnation milk delivery trucks for their daily routes.

Born in Arizona and raised in New Mexico, Hundley was imbued with the West’s stark beauty and sunsets of apricot and periwinkle. The youngest of four, he spent more time with his homemaker mother visiting museums and attending functions at their Mormon church than following in his father’s footsteps as a financial officer for the U.S. Forest Service. However, both sides of his family owned cattle ranches, and learning to castrate and brand a yearling came with the territory.

While Hundley’s ranch skills might be handy to flaunt in a negotiation pinch, his more practical education came at the Manchester College of Art and Design in England, followed by further postgraduate study in Basel, Switzerland. But the saturated tints of the Southwest drew him back to Taos, where he bought and renovated the house of willful and strikingly stylish Standard Oil heiress Millicent Rogers. Deeply rich mud walls and rough-hewn vigas were an unlikely backdrop for the high polish of Hundley’s chrome and black leather Mies van der Rohe chairs and 19th century Chinese elm table.

But therein lies the charm of the designer’s personae. His unorthodox sensibilities caused friends to beg for his magical touch, so he translated his graphics eye to interior design. “I would try to guide clients

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The Hundley-designed mercury glass lamp atop a 19th century French chest casts a warm glow on a canvas by John Young-Hunter, a student of John Singer Sargent. OPPOSITE David Hundley.



The master bedroom's black-stained alderwood bed, designed by Hundley, is perched upon a Hundley-designed woven leather rug. The silver-plated Aston Martin 10 to 20 lb. dumbbells are not just for looks.



CLOCKWISE Hundley for Gucci plexi ice bucket; a white Chinese Peking glass vase commands attention; Reggie protects the Mies van der Rohe ottoman; A lamp created from a copper hand-hammered vessel found in Chicago. OPPOSITE Color provided by literature; sterling accessories provided by Hundley for Gucci.



## ONE WOULD NOT EXPECT PLEXIGLAS DOG BEDS AND STERLING HANDCUFFS FROM A MAN WHOSE HOME IS MADE OF STONE AND CEDAR SHINGLES.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 112 to purchase historically significant architecture. Every major Taos artist had a hacienda at strategic viewpoints—all facing north to south for that mystical light.”

And when Tom Ford offered him a post in Los Angeles, the lure of Pasadena’s rich architecture determined his home base. “Working with Tom was without question my best professional partnership.” Ford collaborated with Hundley to create “Gucci Dog,” and a marketing phenomenon was born. Leather dog beds for \$1,000, black rubber bones stamped “Gucci” for \$50 (which cost maybe \$1 to produce, making him very popular with the suits), sterling dog tags, woven leather mats—all kept the glossy magazine editors abuzz, and Gucci groupies were able to finally appease their label-demanding pets.

Inspiration comes, not surprisingly, from equally diverse sources. “I am inspired by nature—Descanso Gardens, Lotusland.” And the Army Navy Surplus store. “That’s where the Gucci sterling dog tag thing came from.” He contends that indeed nothing is original, “just new combinations.” Hundley’s design credo is rooted in editing, which is evidenced in his house’s deftly composed surfaces. Soft white walls allow the sharply edited collection of decorative and fine art to take center stage. Many of the furnishings are Hundley designs and the hues of ebony, coffee bean, vicuna and linen-white are only punctured by the spines of endless design books. Even his wardrobe is arranged with military precision

by color, black to blue to white. Period.

Amusingly, the master bedroom, the second bedroom, dining room, library and kitchen were all added on during the late 1950s and ’60s. “Added on to what?” one might ask. The original structure was simply a 1,000-square-foot, open-air tennis pavilion. In fact, the tennis court dominates the property, which is just fine by Reggie, Hundley’s wire-haired Jack Russell terrier, who periodically takes a trot around the entire perimeter to survey his domain before plopping on an Eames chair. Tangerine standards are stationed in pots around the court while dense hedges woven with bugle vine provide blissful privacy. (And yes, Hundley plays tennis.)

What’s next for this man of vivid polarities? He just completed an assortment of *objets* for a Japanese car company’s 2007 catalogue and is reveling in his own creations for Dave’s Dog, a continuation of where Gucci Dog left off. “Rene Russo insisted I call it that.” The vegetable-dyed, Italian leather collection with Arte & Cuoio includes beds, carriers, collars and chic little toys, all of which are currently being Reggie-tested.

So maybe there’ll be a David Hundley trunk show in a town near you, but in the meantime, he’s happy to settle in at home to watch cowboy movies from the ’50s. “I just watched two Randolph Scott films in a row!” Apparently, David Hundley’s really just a gentleman cowboy at heart. ●



A Dave’s Dog leather carrier rests on a bentwood chair, while drawings by Mahonri Young gaze down. OPPOSITE A 1930s motel sign has been transformed into a bar housing Hundley’s Pampalon and Gucci crystal decanters.



The facade of the original open-air tennis pavilion is accented with Bertoia wire diamond chairs and a Knoll bench. An antique shot put casts its shadow on the classic north/south hardcourt.

