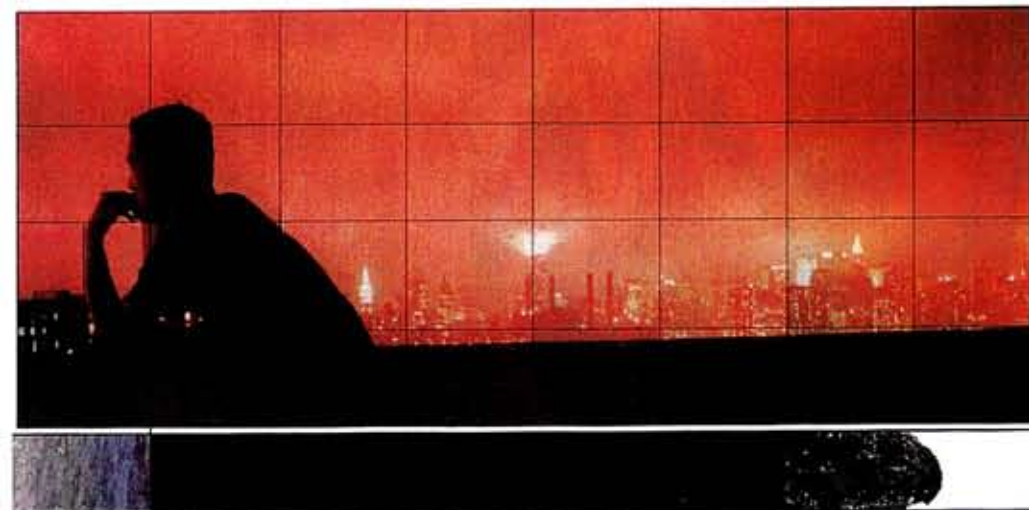
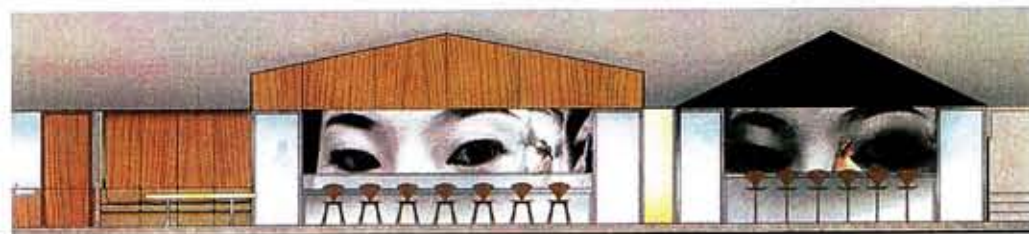


"We're going to be the biggest city in the world with the most Philippe Starck projects. L.A. is just the beginning."

Coming soon: In April 2006, Nazarian's Shelter will be relaunched as Slab (above and bottom), complete with Starck interiors. Above right: Map showing six of the 12 Starck projects Nazarian hopes to bring to L.A. Below: Katsu, an Asian-centric update of El Dorado, is scheduled to open in November 2005. One of Nazarian's priorities for each space is authenticity, and to that end, diners will enjoy the fruits of "robota," a centuries-old cooking technique



LA STORY



commercial work to focus on personal projects. For another, the Starck-Nazarian alliance is one of those rare, lucky business dealings which make for a truly complementary pair. "It's a perfect marriage," says Michele Caniato of design management firm Culture and Commerce, which negotiated the deal. "Philippe Starck's design style is internationally known, and Sam Nazarian is like a 21st century Medici with incredibly diversified interests. They will create world-class destination properties."

Indeed, like in any good marriage, the two partners seem sympathetic to each other's needs. Nazarian is full of praise for the iconic designer — for his business acumen as much as his aesthetic sensibility. "He understands the importance of authentic, revolutionary design," Nazarian says. "A lot of revolutionary designers don't care about cost, but Starck does. He'll compensate his design to make them more functional. Where the room service mini-bar is? ... That's crucial." And for his part, Starck outlines an easy-going creative process with Nazarian: "I don't work with Sam," Starck says. "We play together." And with more openings on the way, there will be more than enough play to go around — Nazarian says that possibly a dozen Starck-designed spaces will open by 2007. "We're going to be the biggest city in the world with the most Philippe Starck projects," he says proudly. And after that? Don't think Nazarian's journey ends at the Los Angeles county line. "L.A.," he says, "is just the beginning."

substance/style

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surface

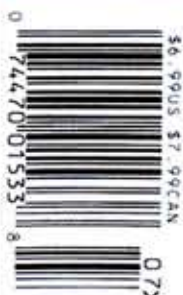
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Our exclusive look at the powerhouse partnership that will transform L.A. nightlife
BY DIANE VADINO

IMAGE RICHARD BARNES

Revamping the Los Angeles social circuit is no small task. Sam Nazarian may, however, be the man for the job, even if he's too modest to admit it. "We're not looking to single-handedly reshape L.A.," Nazarian says. "We are looking to be a catalyst."

A 29-year-old multi-talented multi-hyphenate, the Iran-born producer-hotelier-real estate developer is already thoroughly familiar with the hometown industry — entertainment. He is the CEO of Element Films and an executive producer on over a half-dozen films, four of which are currently in post-production. Then there are his real estate projects, which include residential lofts in downtown Los Angeles and the recent acquisition of the Ritz Plaza hotel in Miami, which will be designed by Philippe Starck.

The Ritz Plaza, however, only hints at the extent of the Starck-Nazarian collaboration, which will soon take over Los Angeles nightlife. Nazarian already owns several restaurants and nightclubs in the area — including celeb favorites Sheller and Prey, where the guest lists read like something out of a Page Six column: Sightings include Paris Hilton, Leonardo DiCaprio, and Jennifer Lopez.

But the Starck projects — with the first, Katsu, scheduled to open November 2005 — promise to be the jewels in Nazarian's nightlife crown. For one thing, this project will be one of Starck's last before bidding adieu to

"It's a perfect marriage. Philippe Starck's design style is internationally known, and Sam Nazarian is like a 21st century Medici."

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