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# ARCHITECTURAL DIGEST

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**At Home with**  
**Hollywood's Power Family**

**John Pawson's**  
**Los Angeles**  
**Masterpiece**

**A Lutyens**  
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# Clear Thinking

British minimalist John Pawson designs a majestic California house where clutter is nowhere to be found. The result? Surprisingly personal

WRITTEN AND PRODUCED BY JAMES REGINATO PHOTOGRAPHY BY TODD EBERLE STYLED BY CARLOS MOTA

Architect John Pawson designed this Los Angeles house for Ellen and Andrew Hauptman; Jonathan Bell handled the landscape design, and Alexandra Bell and Michael Misczynski of Atelier AM assisted Pawson with the decor. The dwelling consists of two slim and stately boxes, one cantilevered over the other; an additional level is partly hidden below ground. For details see Sources.





**Opposite:** The top floor of the house, offering views of the Pacific, is clad in stucco. At left, a terrace off the living room has a trellis-style railing of red cedar; below, on the lowest level, is a windowed play area.

**Right:** The terrace off the kitchen is paved with honed Halila stone, inset with flush deck lighting; Pawson designed the teak table. **Below:** Chaise longues and side tables by Christian Liaigre populate a deck overlooking the infinity-edge pool.



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mong the handful of architects working today who could be called purists, few names are more venerated than that of John Pawson. The minimalist spaces he designs, whether a boutique for Calvin Klein on Madison Avenue or a monastery for Cistercian monks in

the Czech Republic, offer a singular interpretation of austerity that still manages to feel utterly luxurious. So there was much anticipation when the London-based Pawson began making sketches for a house in Los Angeles on a spectacular three-acre hillside site; it would be his second freestanding building in North America (a 2001 residence near Telluride, Colorado, was his first). Considering the architect's rigorous standards, it shouldn't come as a surprise that the design phase took four years, and construction another four.

Now that the house is complete, it is most striking for its understated calm. "It's a family house, which is what the clients wanted," Pawson says. "And yet it's still a piece of architecture." Ellen and Andrew Hauptman, a low-key couple with two children, are entrepreneurs and philanthropists; he is a film producer (*State of Play*, *Millions*) and owner of the Chicago Fire Soccer Club, while together they actively support causes such as City Year, an educational mentoring program for inner-city students. The pair also have highly evolved aesthetic sensibilities. Ellen's grandfather Samuel Bronfman commissioned New York's iconic Seagram Building, which her aunt Phyllis Lambert had a hand in along with Ludwig Mies van der Rohe. "I was interested in hearing their anecdotes about Mies and Phyllis," Pawson says. "But Andrew and Ellen are very much their own people. They are going their own way."

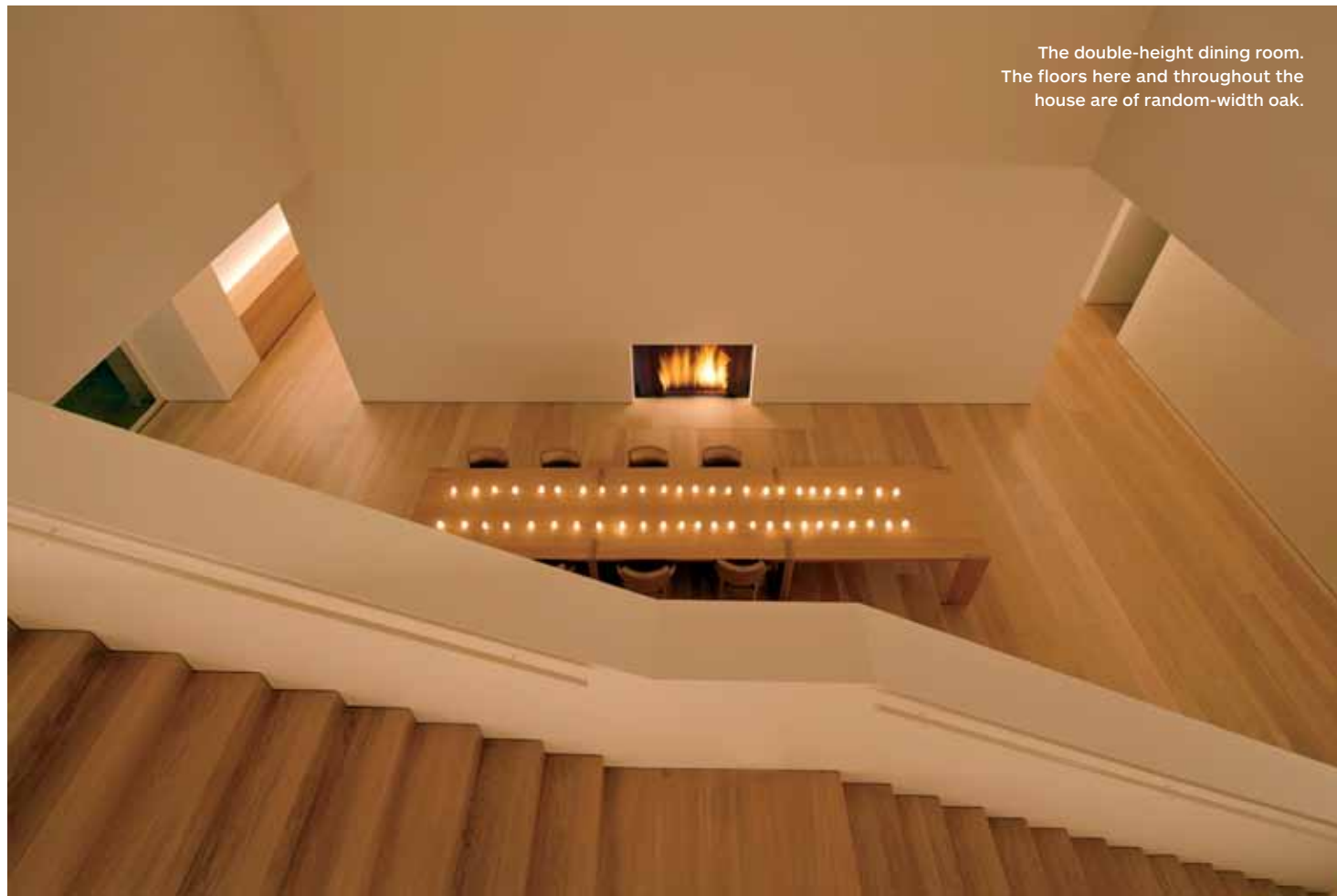
The couple met Pawson when they were living in London in the 1990s and hired him to design the interiors of a townhouse they'd bought; they subsequently developed a friendship with him and his



*Clockwise from top:* Grouped with a Pawson-designed low table in the family room are Børge Mogensen leather chairs and a custom-made sofa covered in a Loro Piana linen-cashmere. A Poul Kjærholm PK24 chaise longue and a Serge Mouille standing lamp in an alcove. An understated study, featuring a sofa by Pawson covered in a Rubelli linen, Liaigre table lamps, and René Gabriel chairs.



*Clockwise from top left:* A nighttime view of the double-height dining room; the table and chairs were custom made. A cove lighting installation by Isometrix highlights the table and an adjacent staircase. Oak cabinetry in the kitchen complements the La Cornue range and Caesarstone sink; the sink fittings are by Dornbracht.



The double-height dining room. The floors here and throughout the house are of random-width oak.



wife, Catherine, and became steeped in the Pawson philosophy. “It has affected the way we live,” Andrew says. “We don’t really collect art or have many things. John talks about how a lack of noise—by which he means clutter and other distractions—leads to more intimacy. That’s something we have really experienced.”

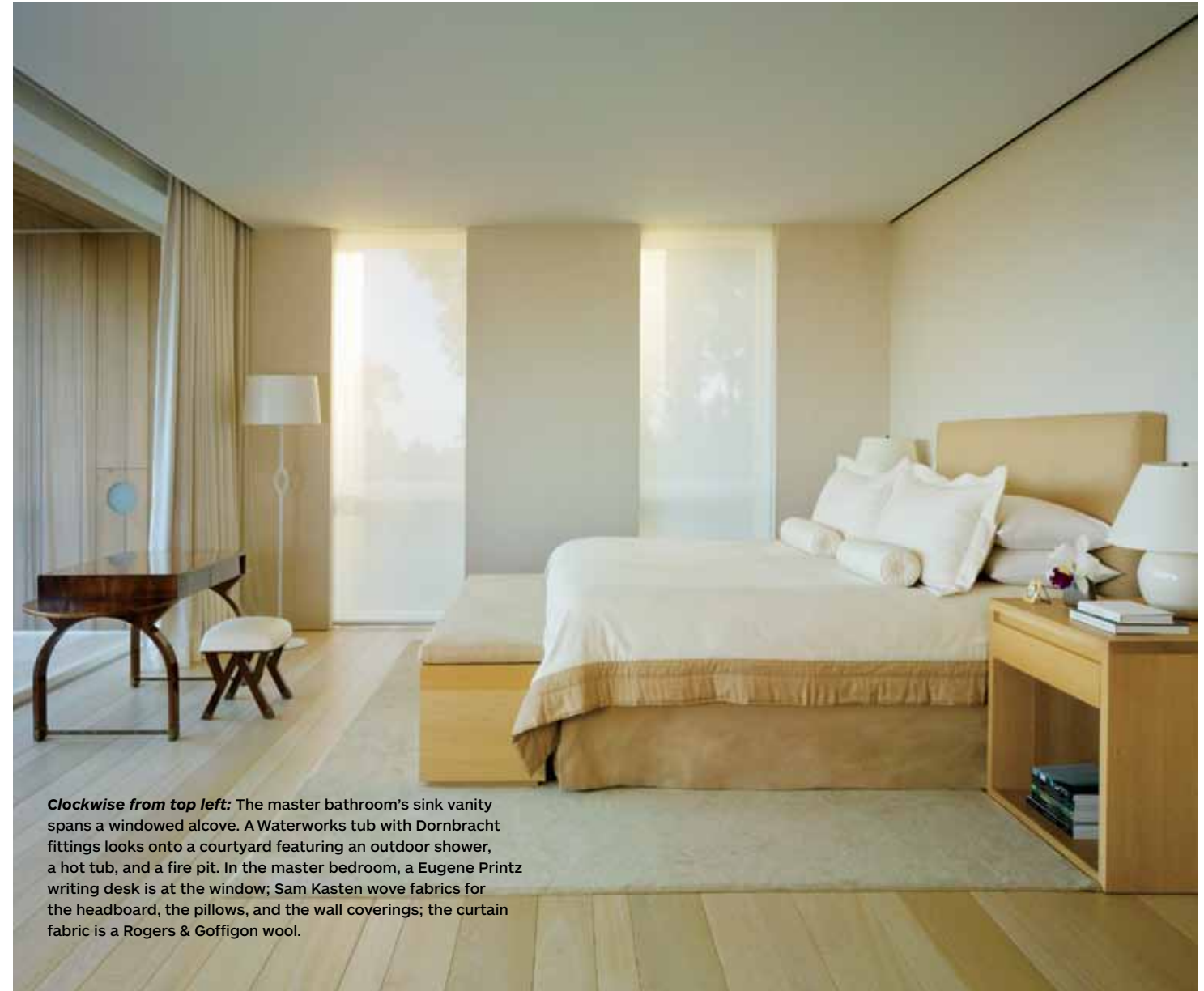
Intimacy was exactly what the family wanted of their new home in L.A., even though it would amount to 20,000 square feet. Pawson achieved this goal through a number of clever moves. To keep the house in proportion to the landscape, he planned a subterranean floor that would accommodate mechanical equipment and storage as well as staff quarters, a children’s playroom, and a screening room. Aboveground, Pawson conceived of the dwelling as two elegant, horizontally oriented boxes: a smaller one for the main level, clad in pale Halila limestone, and cantilevered atop that, a larger one of stucco and red-cedar siding.

Within the house, the ground-floor public rooms—kitchen, living room, dining room, study—are configured around a dramatic central staircase, flowing into one another without doors. There are four bedrooms upstairs, three of which have terraces, the master bathroom’s boasting a hot tub and a fire pit. Throughout the house not a single hinge, light switch, or baseboard is visible. Achieving such seamless simplicity was, needless to say, a challenge. “Everything in John’s work is so precise that we went through a million iterations,” Andrew says. “Contractors were pulling their hair out.”

To supplement the furnishings Pawson designed for the project, the couple tapped the smart L.A. team of Alexandra and Michael Misczynski, or Atelier AM, who helped them source pieces by such 20th-century masters as René Gabriel, Eugene Printz, Børge Mogensen, and Diego Giacometti. The designers also worked with them on textiles, which Pawson tends to use very sparingly. For the bedroom, Atelier AM commissioned a handwoven mohair rug by Sam Kasten, a bespoke weaver based in Massachusetts and Paris. Kasten also created a sublime gold silk fabric for the bedroom walls; it was made in one 15-foot width so there would be no seams.

“I loved working with John,” Michael says. “He was open to everybody’s ideas and incredibly collaborative.” That view might come almost as a disappointment to some design devotees who relish the architect’s standing as the high priest of severity. “I know I have a reputation,” Pawson acknowledges. “Truth be told, sometimes my clients are more extreme than I am.” Yet he cannot deny the perfectionism that drives him to devise houses like this one. “That’s what they come to me for,” he says.

But let the ultimate judges of Pawson and his latest creation be the littlest Hauptmans. Budding minimalists at ages eight and ten, they gamely stow their toys in the finely crafted cabinetry in their rooms. “They know if they leave their stuff lying around, it’s impactful,” Ellen says. And so the children have added a new word to their vocabulary: As they are fond of saying, “This is Pawsonesque.” □



**Clockwise from top left:** The master bathroom’s sink vanity spans a windowed alcove. A Waterworks tub with Dornbracht fittings looks onto a courtyard featuring an outdoor shower, a hot tub, and a fire pit. In the master bedroom, a Eugene Printz writing desk is at the window; Sam Kasten wove fabrics for the headboard, the pillows, and the wall coverings; the curtain fabric is a Rogers & Goffigon wool.