



# a star is born

## CELEBRITY DESIGNER THOM FILICIA PUTS HIS STAMP ON LA

BY LINDSLEY LOWELL PHOTOGRAPHY BY HOWARD WISE

Before there were \$10 million deals, red carpets, personal stylists and fawning galore, there was the bright-eyed movie star in-the-making, full of promise and ready to take on LA. Similarly, bubbling with energy and unspoiled by the jaded veterans of the entertainment industry, interior designer Thom Filicia approaches LA with pure excitement. "I love LA!" exclaims the native New Yorker.

Even though Filicia is far from a design newbie, his "visitor" status to LA and the fact that this is his first foray into the hotel industry give him a fresh viewpoint for the W Los Angeles. Filicia and his New York agency, Tom Filicia Inc., have redone the 258 suites, meeting rooms, and entire backyard and cabana area of the W with an exciting mix that captures the essence of the city. Think Hollywood glam, Santa Monica earthiness, a mid-century point of view mirroring the existing Neutra architecture, combined with a dose of the W's signature whimsy. Filicia and his team custom-designed most of the furniture and fabrics — making sure the W Los Angeles has its own unique vibe.

"Visitors like me going to the W have already chosen to visit LA," says the *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy* alum. "They are looking for an experience that speaks to the place, and the hotel's personality should give that to them."

That personality is seen in the hotel's effortless transition from day to night. The new backyard and cabana area look like 1950s Hawaii-meets-'60s Palm Springs: bright, jazzy and relaxing. Filicia's gorgeous, fun floral and lattice fabrics in lime green, pale ocean blue and chocolate brown go perfect with an LA tan. New menus and outdoor activities, including bonfires for s'mores and a movie series, will ensure its success as a summer hotspot.

The hotel rooms are immediately serene and very easy on the eyes. Soft, muted

earth tones mixed with white and chrome accents. The mother-of-pearl and resin coffee table purrs Rita Hayworth, while the peek-a-boo shower door coos Scarlett Johansson. The room is sexy and chill, but also extremely functional. Filicia lets his work speak for itself. Refreshingly lacking in ego, he sees himself as a host when designing. The host's job? To please his guests. And please he does.

Filicia's biggest gripe as a constant traveler is the technology. "I've wasted hours just trying to figure out different remotes," he explains. The W Los Angeles is hoping to alleviate some of this stress poolside with the new IntelliChaise system, a type of digital concierge, which allows guests to order food and other services easily.

Even with a successful new series (*Dress My Nest* on the Style Network), and an enviable roster of private clients, the designer's relationship with the W is just beginning. He is redesigning the W San Diego and designing the W in Atlanta, which is currently under construction. His future plans may include his own home décor line and possibly projects in Dubai. With an ultimate dream to design a luxury yacht, Filicia's future, as with many of Hollywood's blossoming young stars, looks very bright.

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