



PAUL FORTUNE DESIGN

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the decorators

... Paul Fortune, 52, is more a guru of style than a hands-on decorator, since he can rarely be bothered to accept a job; at the moment, however, he's commuting to Paris because Marc Jacobs couldn't find anybody in Europe or even east of the Mississippi to design his new apartment in the 7th arrondissement.

Paul Fortune arrived in L.A. in the early Seventies after stints in his native London, Paris and New York. His biting English wit is more than intact—so dry, in fact, that one spark could start a brushfire. After working as a set stylist in the Eighties in the booming music video world, Fortune was enlisted to design houses for the people who got rich from those videos or from movies. Stars including Mick Jagger, Madonna and Richard Gere started hanging out at Fortune's airy Laurel Canyon house to soak up his understated organic-chic style, which brings the outdoors inside. Spike Jonze liked the vibe at Fortune's dinners so much that he asked the designer to re-create one—complete with guests—for a scene in *Adaptation*. (Jonze added only Meryl Streep.) When Fortune does design a job, he works from home, without an assistant, though he has help from a talented gentleman who happens to be his live-in companion.

... For picky Paul Fortune, however, the principal reason to say no is a lack of taste on the client's side. "I turn down most jobs," he says, "because it's got to be somebody I like. It's got to be somebody that's got a clue. I don't like to deal with celebrities—they're too much work. I'm too old for that and don't need it, particularly. Let Kevin and Michael do that."

Fortune says that Marc Jacobs was one of the few clients he couldn't turn down—even though the job was "in bloody Paris," to which the decorator has had to endure 10 Concorde trips this year. "But it's worth it because he's got it," he says. "There's a shorthand involved. I can say one word, like *Performance*, and he knows I'm talking about the movie and he knows exactly what scene I'm talking about."

Fortune, who has worked for Condé Nast editorial director James Truman and serves as the West Coast editor of *House & Garden*, was recently convinced to take a Los Angeles job, which he describes as "a sick, huge, concrete thing built in the Seventies as a f--- pad for Wilt Chamberlain." Longtime "Simpsons" writer and producer George Meyer and his girlfriend asked Fortune to take a look at it before they bought it. "They were completely confused," he says. "I told them, 'This is a great place. You just have to get rid of some bad stuff.'"

Fortune Hunted Interior designer Paul Fortune spent the past two years decorating Marc Jacobs's Paris apartment, and though the paint's still drying, he's already been scooped up by New York hotelier Jeff Klein for yet another plum project. Klein recently purchased the legendary Argyle hotel in Los Angeles; a gaggle of top-rung decorators (Michael Smith, Jeffrey Bilhuber, Sills & Huniford, David Netto and Brad Dunning) reportedly vied for the job of remaking the dilapidated Art Deco



legend, but Klein settled on Fortune. "Everyone wanted that job," says a source close to the deal, describing Klein's vision for the hotel as a cross between the Chateau Marmont and L'Ermitage. The Argyle certainly has a glamorous history: Marilyn Monroe, Humphrey Bogart and Bugsy Siegel were all former tenants. "People think the Chateau has history, but it's got nothing on the Argyle," the source continues. "John Wayne used to live in the penthouse with his pet cow." ●