

Through the lens of Isabella Lombardini, using the Leica SL2 system, here is her personal perspective of the Sheats-Goldstein residence by John Lautner.

John Lautner was an American architect with an unparalleled eye for concrete masterpieces such as the Elrod House, the Chemosphere House, and J.W Schaffer House to name but a few. Lautner's projects have been a location source to film directors for decades. They have arguably appeared in more Hollywood films than any other architect's work. Lautner studied under architect Frank Lloyd Wright; eventually opening his own firm which underpinned his career of over 50 years, inheriting from his mentor a love of unprocessed and raw materials which is coherent throughout over 200 blueprints for his visionary, architectural structures.

Enter, the Sheats-Goldstein Residence. Built by Lautner between 1961 and 1963, originally for Paul and Helen Sheats, it is one of the most iconic pieces of real estate in the world. It was later acquired in 1972 by the renowned James F. Goldstein, who subsequently worked with both Lautner and Duncan Nicholson in adding an office, guesthouse, and the 'James nightclub'. With the most recent outdoor entertainment additions consisting of a steel catering kitchen with dining area, an outdoor media space and a second concrete pool, they ensured that the organic architecture and features were continued.

The poured-in-place, 4500 square-foot concrete structural system of the house is complemented with wood and steel throughout and the whole is enveloped in a glass exterior. It was certainly not made for the faint-hearted as there are many steep drops and numerous angular concrete edges. It has five bedrooms and 4 bathrooms, an angular pool viewable one floor underneath through windows in the master bedroom and an infinity-edged tennis court, with exceptional views of the surrounding areas of Los Angeles.

The house has served for film sets for decades; from 1998's *The Big Lebowski* to *Charlies Angels Full Throttle*. I am not the first, nor will I be the last, photographer to use this spectacular location for fashion advertising and commercials. The nightclub has often hosted exclusive events for Hollywood's A-list and high society, evidenced by the framed pictures with James and guests that are throughout the house.

It was never Goldstein's intention to make changes or do any restoration but, in 1979, he brought Lautner back to make sympathetic improvements. Lautner was keen for Goldstein to articulate his aspirations for the house. What ensued was, self-

evidently, a very successful collaboration between the two men. In an interview with Dwell he stated, 'I was working with (John) for roughly 15 years. John never offered to me his vision for the house, he wanted to know my vision - with the intent to take it to its ultimate potential.' Goldstein was the first to request that Lautner design furniture and finer details; such as the burnt orange main lounge seating and skylights which are beautiful to view at night.

These days James fills the house with a calming presence, strolling around wearing full leather ensembles. He isn't fazed by anyone, just quietly cool and through the house's magnetism, interested to make new acquaintances. He doesn't possess an inflated ego, only an acute awareness of the history and fame this house has provided and built for itself. It's clear he's satisfied with what he has accomplished but he doesn't sit on his laurels; continuously considering areas to expand and develop. Goldstein told W Magazine, 'Certainly, the recognition for what I'm doing, has to give me some sort of satisfaction, but it's not behind my motivation.' Over the years, people refer to Goldstein as 'mysterious', but I can't agree. He is collected and reserved, yes, but prefers his actions to speak for themselves. He is secure enough to be his eccentric, yet authentic, self.

After living in the house for over 40 years, he's become accustomed to the overwhelming number of visitors who feel awed by the magnitude and impact of the estate which is why, in 2016, he felt LACMA was the most suitable institution to donate his house to. With no family members to inherit the property, in Goldstein's own words to Dwell, 'I made up my mind years ago, I wanted the house in the hands of some institution, that would leave the house in the same condition and at the same time, open it up to the public that will hopefully feel inspired and make Los Angeles as architecturally-conscious as possible. I feel as though this has been my life's work and it's my gift to the city'.