

Stamos,



With a

Splash!

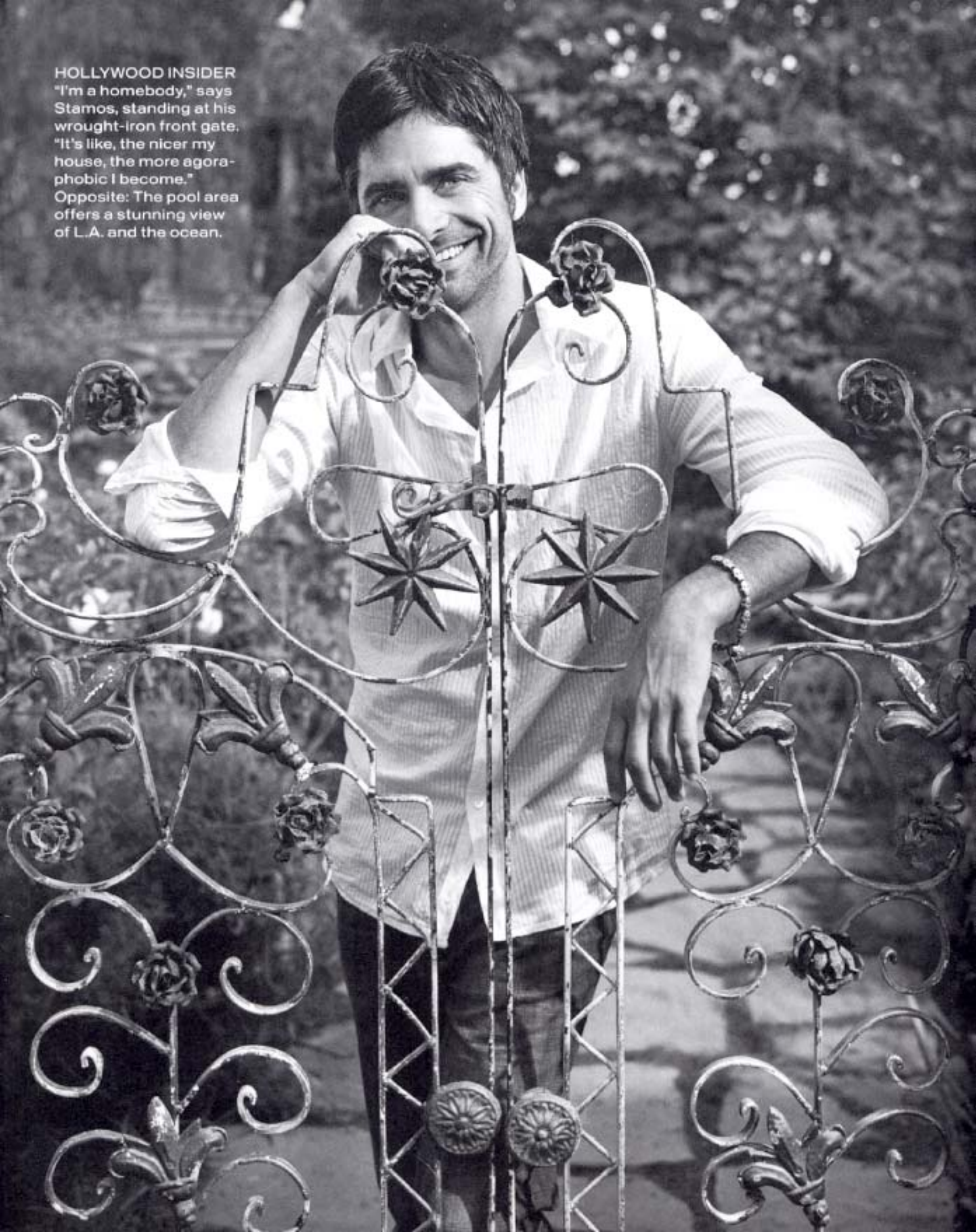
Leaving behind a much publicized marriage and fast-lane lifestyle, **JOHN STAMOS** is enjoying a fresh start—decorating his new Hollywood digs, playing doctor on *ER* (McDreamy, eat your heart out), and diving right back into the dating pool

written by ROBERT MORITZ • photographed by ART STREIBER

HOLLYWOOD INSIDER

"I'm a homebody," says Stamos, standing at his wrought-iron front gate. "It's like, the nicer my house, the more agoraphobic I become."

Opposite: The pool area offers a stunning view of L.A. and the ocean.





JOHNN STAMOS IS FINGERING THE KEYS OF HIS cherished 1914 Steinway, and he's feeling good. It's early on a beautiful Saturday morning, and the 42-year-old actor—once best known as rocker Uncle Jesse on the beloved sitcom *Full House* and now playing the newest hunky doc on *ER*'s County General Hospital staff—is riffling through an Elton John songbook on the piano stand. “Rocket Man,” “Crocodile Rock,” “Bennie and the Jets.” The multitasking performer (he occasionally tours with the Beach Boys) finally settles into “Honky Cat.” “Oooh ... the change is gonna do me good!” he croons. It’s the perfect line, considering where Stamos is in his life today.

“I just went through a period of change and of trying to find my way. But now I feel like I’ve found it, and I want this house to reflect exactly who I am right now: an adult, a solid guy who’s finally landed,” he says, referring to both the well-documented split from his wife of seven years, model and actress Rebecca Romijn, and to the 1940s house high in the Hollywood Hills that Stamos has spent much of the last year renovating. Nestled between the old Frank Sinatra estate and a palazzo built by the Sultan of Brunei, the 3,000-square-foot house is downright quaint by neighborhood standards, but it’s exactly what he was looking for after moving out of the Calabasas, Calif., ranch he shared with Romijn.



“This house had an Old Hollywood feel to it that I loved,” Stamos recalls of the day he first walked into the place. “It was this tucked-away, enchanting place.” What the house offered in privacy, however, it lacked in character. Working with designer Chris Barrett of KAA Design Group in L.A., Stamos set out to create a relaxed, masculine getaway with a large, rustic living room (complete with stacked-stone fireplace, wide-plank floors stained in dark walnut, leather club chairs, and a Craftsman-style iron-and-glass lantern manufactured by Paul Ferrante); a sleek white-tiled kitchen; and a music room made for jamming.

I want this place to be comfortable, so friends can come over and, you know, flop.”



HIS BIG, FAT GREEK KITCHEN

Opposite: An enthusiastic cook, Stamos honed his culinary abilities working at his dad’s Greek diner during high school. Center: The focal point of the living room, a stacked-stone fireplace, gives the space a rustic feel. Above: A long, wood dining room table makes for easy entertaining. “I’m into communal,” says Stamos. “I like to put food out.”

“John is very casual, so our goal was to acknowledge the Old Hollywood, Mediterranean architecture, without turning it into a period house,” says Barrett, who describes the results as “21st-century comfortable.”

Among the collectibles scattered about are an antique hat rack piled with vintage derbies that get pulled out for party photos (“I’m a bit of a hat nut,” he declares), a small collection of Rat Pack items (he’s a bit of a Sinatra nut too), and mementos from his career (including Uncle Jesse’s black biker jacket). In keeping with the new “adult Stamos” vision of this house, though, he has

I'm really not the Clooney type. I'd much rather be in a relationship."

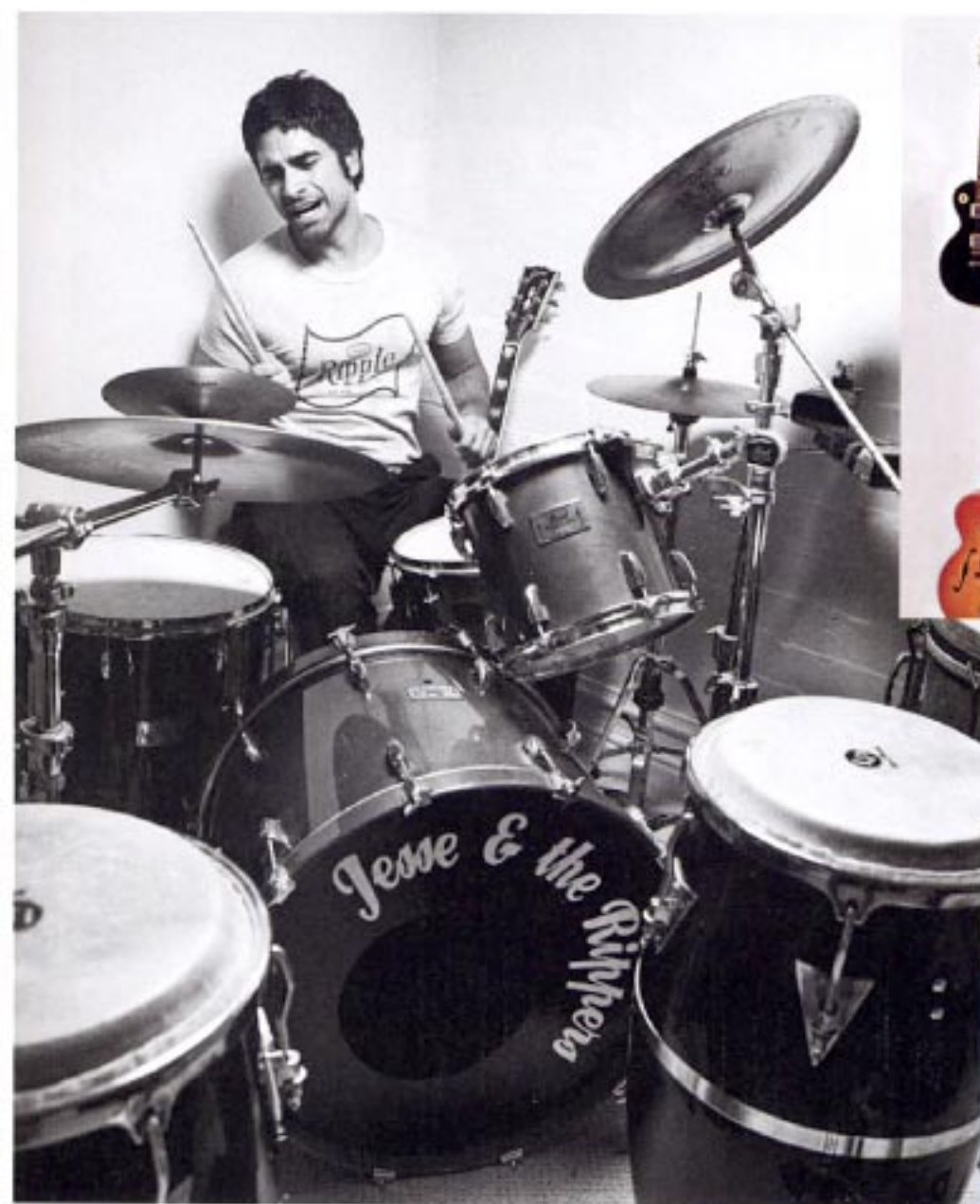
REST ASSURED

Right: The master bedroom features a dramatic reproduction of a 17th-century Portuguese four-poster, finished in glossy black paint. Below: A signed series of Beatles headshots are prized pieces from Stamos's music memorabilia.



limited himself to only a few favorite pieces of Disneyland memorabilia—the results of a love affair that began during his Orange County youth. Among the attractions: one of the elephant cars from the original Dumbo the Flying Elephant ride (prominently perched in his front-yard garden), a piece of the monorail from Space Mountain, and the old “Disneyland” sign that once greeted visitors at the entrance to the theme park (a \$35,000 Ebay purchase). Asked if the sign was part of his divorce settlement, Stamos doesn't miss a beat, answering, “Yeah—Rebecca got *Disney*. I got *Land*.” (Actually, Stamos got 'em both.)

But with the flagstone-decked pool, the long dining table from an 18th-century monastery, the large, open kitchen and, of course, the baby grand piano, this is, above all, a house for entertaining—an activity Stamos relishes more than ever. Members of the Beach Boys and the seventies group the Knack (remember “My Sharona”?) come over to jam, and co-workers stop by to kick back. Today, for example, Stamos is prepping for a dinner party with castmates from *Jake in Progress* (the short-lived ABC sitcom he starred in last season) and from his new gig on *ER*, where



THE MUSIC MAN Left: A talented, multi-instrumental musician since childhood, Stamos occasionally tours with the Beach Boys, playing drums. Above: The downstairs music room houses a collection of rare Gibson guitars. Below: "The backyard has a great view," says Stamos, taking in the heights with Linka, a German shepherd the actor imported from Germany. "It's the perfect spot for a Jacuzzi."

he plays Tony Gates, a flirtatious EMS worker turned intern. In the kitchen he's a self-confessed control freak who leaves nothing to chance. Choice-cut steaks and salmon are marinating "Greek style" in olive oil and garlic; tomatoes, cucumbers, eggplant and herbs from his garden are chopped; and seemingly every kitchen gadget ever featured on the Home Shopping Network is being employed, including his pièce de résistance: the chocolate fondue fountain. "The ladies dig it," he says with a wink.

For now, Stamos is enjoying the single life—though well-meaning family and friends always seem to think they've got just the woman for him. "When Jennifer Aniston and Brad Pitt broke up, everybody said I should call her. We're both Greek, you know?" he says. "But I would never do that. I wouldn't even know how." Any other details about his personal life remain tightly under wraps—a lesson he thinks today's party-loving starlets could learn. "I don't understand why they feel the need to go to clubs and be seen. I've done just as many stupid things as half of these people get caught for," he says, before adding with a sly smile, "I just do them in my house." ■

