

The Sound Tracker

Turn it up! DJ Michael Smith's music curating service has the ears of Monique Lhuillier, André Balazs and Michael Mina | By Gary Baum | Photography by Julia Galdo |

In 2005, Michael Smith was holding down the coveted Sunday night DJ residency at Hyde when promoter Brent Bolthouse approached him about creating a soundtrack for Katsuya Brentwood. Soon Smith was discussing Bach's "Adagio in G minor" with designer Philippe Starck and envisioning a lucrative business scheme in which he'd select cutting-edge songs for clients who live in perpetual fear of sounding oh-so-five-minutes-ago. "It's about building sonic identities for brands," says the 31-year-old Laurel Canyon resident, who, fittingly, majored in economics and communications at Northwestern. "Music can have a massive impact on consumer behavior." He's since assembled a five-person staff and created custom software to beam his Muzak-for-hipsters picks everywhere from Monique Lhuillier's La Cienega storefront

and Michael Mina's WeHo resto XIV to the two local branches of André Balazs' Standard hotel. (Among the Downtown location's current artsy-far-outsy on-hold music selections: Wave Machines' "Keep the Lights On"; the Sunset Strip's more rocking analog: Miike Snow's remix of Crookers' "Animal.") As far as live performances, Smith now sticks mostly to splashy one-off gigs like Jeffrey Katzenberg's most recent pre-Oscar party—for which he charges up to \$10,000. Up next: soundtracking East, the new resto from David Judaken (MyHouse, Opera). While even the most high-end of companies are scrimping these days, Smith believes that bespoke beats can't be beat. "They don't allow cookie-cutter clothes or design or food into their places, so how could they accept cookie-cutter music?" **A**

SMITH'S HOTS

Bonobos pants; VeeV and soda with a twist of lime; ABC's cop show The Unusuals; renting; Franz West sculptures; raiding your closet for old things that are new again

SMITH'S NOTS

Being fashionably late; wines that cost more than \$50; Dubai real estate; model/actress DJs; overdressing your dog; gifting suites; celebrity Twittering

HOOKED ON SONICS Michael Smith at home in Laurel Canyon.

