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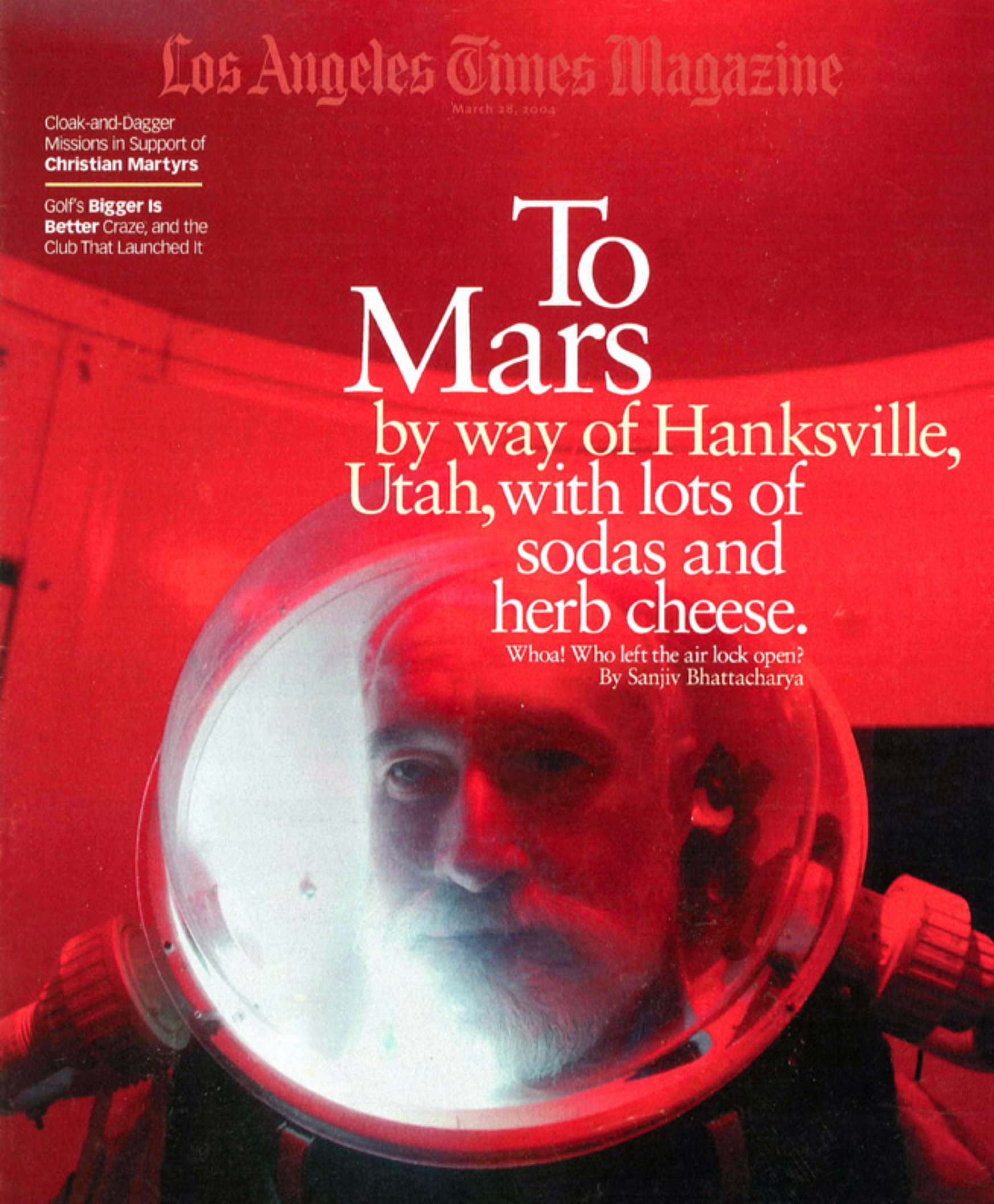
Cloak-and-Dagger
Missions in Support of
Christian Martyrs

Golf's **Bigger Is
Better** Craze, and the
Club That Launched It

To Mars

by way of Hanksville,
Utah, with lots of
sodas and
herb cheese.

Whoa! Who left the air lock open?
By Sanjiv Bhattacharya



Lush Life

A Bathtub in the Bedroom and a Bed in the Garden Reflect a Photographer's Unusual Vision for Her Hollywood Hills Home

Clockwise from left: Beneath an arch of purple solanum, pillars mark the steps to a brick path through ferns. A gravel walk winds among hydrangeas, ferns and campanula to a fountain. The breakfast room is furnished with an 18th century Irish chair, a 19th century French table and English painting desk, while a Persian prayer rug and 18th century English velvet curtains lead the way outside. Randee St. Nicholas with Lily and Buzz by the outdoor fireplace.



BY SUSAN HEEGER + PHOTOGRAPHED BY LISA ROMEREIN

If Randee St. Nicholas had her way, you'd have to hack a path from her garden gate to her front door with a machete. Vines, hedges and weeping trees lend a forgotten feeling to the garden of her Hollywood Hills home. Inside, exotic rugs, lamps, mirrors, antique tables and chairs create an otherworldly range of colors and textures.

St. Nicholas, a photographer and director of music videos, commercials and films, chose the Mediterranean-style house for its 1920s pedigree and its three-quarter-acre garden, overgrown even when she bought it a decade ago. Once settled, she began filling the home's interior and exterior with furnishings, statues and beds collected on worldwide photography trips. "At one point, there was a bed in every room and more outside," she says. "My friends would never leave."

Still, it wasn't the crowd that persuaded her to weed out some of those pallets. "I love the feeling of renewal and new beginnings," she says. "If I couldn't regularly throw out, give away, mix up and rearrange things, I'd have to move every six months."

One friend who supports St. Nicholas' impulse to pare down is garden designer Jay Griffith. He has known her since her days as the teen bride of Nick St. Nicholas, bass gui-

This page, clockwise from below: California peppers and carrot wood trees shade the outdoor dining terrace. 'Oklahoma' roses float in a birdbath. Swags of honeysuckle and pink jasmine surround the entry gate. In the bedroom, the antique porcelain tub is flanked by a French wash basin and a marble-topped dresser, both from the early 1800s. Opposite: 'Limelight' helichrysum, lavender, fortnight lily and sweet alyssum spill along the pool's edge. The vine-covered cross in the background is a remnant from a film project.



tarist for the band Steppenwolf. She and Griffith were neighbors then. "He appreciated my weird clothes," she says. The two stayed close over the years, as taking photos of her rock-star friends became a career and Griffith switched from painting on canvas to landscape design.

When St. Nicholas bought her current house, it was natural for Griffith to drop by and give advice and to recast the landscape with his design partner, Russ Cletta. "I begged for roses and Jay yells at me, 'Your taste is so garish!'" she says. But St. Nicholas is drawn to drama. "When I first moved here, I was in a Gothic phase. The living room was a lipstick-red womb."

Now blue, the living room recalls a French *fin de siècle* drawing room, with its deep chairs, velvet hangings and sofas broad and long enough for her present husband, Ric Markmann, a composer, bass guitarist and owner of a music production company. In another design move, she hauled a 19th century porcelain tub

into their bedroom and installed glass doors nearby to give it a view. She and Markmann have enjoyed it so much that she has found a second antique tub and put it—where else?—in the garden, beside the outdoor fireplace. "The house just flows into the garden, and we live equally in both, taking big blankets out in winter and sometimes sleeping beside the swimming pool."

The pool, built in the 1930s, was a pivotal element in Griffith and Cletta's redesign of the garden. Griffith's initial fixes had been confined to pruning gnarled vines, replacing ailing trees and helping St. Nicholas cut the clutter. But when the aged pool cracked four years ago and had to be drained and replastered, he persuaded her to allow them to lay down garden walks, carve new beds, throw out at least 100 pots and reshape the landscape to combine its disparate parts.

One wild card in the overhaul was the presence of St. Nicholas' two ram-

bunctious dogs, Lily and Buzz, who had enjoyed the run of the garden. "We put up temporary fencing to teach them to go around planting borders," Cletta says. "They did learn, but when they get excited, they forget."

Another challenge was the property's odd microclimate. An underground stream creates pockets of damp ground, and isolated winter frosts kill plants that even next-door neighbors grow easily. "Through trial and error, we've discovered what thrives here, but it's not always what Randeer likes," Cletta says.

Nevertheless, St. Nicholas has made her peace with ferns, which love the damp, and has come to appreciate hearty helichrysum, which were originally too neat and tidy for her taste. In return, Griffith and Cletta have draped skeins of ivy through her carrot woods and allowed 'Eden' roses to clamber up her pepper trees. "Isn't that beautiful?" she asks. "All that growth intertwining, the sun coming through. It's like a big, green, comfortable cave." <