

DESIGN DISPATCHES

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Movie star architecture

If anything represents the architecture of good intentions, it's the Case Study House programme, which was started by the editor of *Arts & Architecture magazine in California* in 1945. The idea was to construct a series of forward-looking homes, using standard industrial materials, which dealt with Los Angeles' climate and terrain and could serve as a blueprint for better future housing. Of the 25 that were built – which are featured in Taschen's *Case Study Houses* by Elizabeth AT Smith (£4.99) – several have found the sort of fame to which so many Los Angelenos aspire. The one designed by Charles and Ray Eames, completed in 1949, which looks like a 3D Mondrian painting, for example, or the Stahl house by Pierre Koenig (pictured), built in 1958, which has starred in five films, including *Nurse Betty* (it's the swanky home of heart-throb soap opera doctor Greg Kinnear). With its simple steel frames, acres of glass and airy interiors, you won't find architecture more optimistic than this.