



# HOME FRONT HOOD

BY ALEX COLE  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY JOHN DOLE  
AND EDWARD DUARTE



**INTERIOR MOTIVE:** Esteban Interiors hightailed it out of Little Italy's design district for push new digs on La Jolla's Girard Avenue. From top: Esteban's designing men James Niebling and Esteban Lopez.

## SOHO BY THE SEA

*With chic new stores opening and an auction house set to launch this month, La Jolla is quickly claiming the title of design epicenter! Going once...*

It's 4PM on a Saturday and interior designer James Ramirez needs a pair of mercury glass lamps, stat. Instead of braving a three-hour drive to L.A., he heads straight to downtown La Jolla.

Along with surf, spas and swanky homes, this coastal enclave is fast becoming known for its collection of design showrooms. Centered around Girard Avenue and anchored by venerable standbys Roche-Bobois and Kreiss, La Jolla's design district had its genesis more than two decades ago. But lately, it is in full bloom.

The signs are everywhere, from a new auction house set to open this month to the sleek new digs of boudoir specialist Everett Stunz, complete with a backroom lingerie closet packed with decadent delicacies. And a local real-deal collector, Tom Cerruti, is scouring top L.A. estate sales and bringing in major finds, like the pair of Slim Aarons prints that flew out the moment they arrived, landing happily at 939 Ocean, the La Jolla high-rise down the way. Heck, even Esteban Interiors fled Little Italy—gasp!—for L.J.

The district's reputation has grown to the point where L.A. designer Denise Foley, whose interiors have been featured on HGTV, makes La Jolla's My Own Space one of her haunts. "Each city has its unique things

unto that city," says Foley, an ASID CID who adores the Artelano line, which isn't available in Los Angeles. "La Jolla is super-modern and has some lines that are cutting-edge, even to L.A."

The district celebrates its status as a design epicenter with 'What's Up Girard 2007,' a daylong series of more than 100 design and décor workshops followed by invitation-only parties. In other words, design-conscious types schmooze and chortle over ahi stacks and Champagne. (See this issue's party pages for complete coverage.)

Seaside Home's Sheryll Jackman, who had her own little soirée during last month's event, has perfected the coastal-chic look with pale linen-covered sofas, hurricane lamps and shells aplenty. People want design that's clean and livable, she says. And Jackman should know—this month, she's bringing that "beach is a state of mind" ethos and lines such as Baker to Rancho Santa Fe, along with the second branch of her daughter's Seaside Paperie, which has its chic flagship in Coronado.

"I tell them anything within an hour of the coast is coastal," said Jackman, ASID CID. "People want shorts and they want furniture to be comfortable, usable, kid-friendly and pet-friendly."

Later this month, the auctioneer's hammer falls for **CONTINUED...**



TOP SHOPS: Clockwise from left: Inside Seaside Home. The new Everett Stunz, aka Thread-Count King. Tom Cerruti Antiques.



...CONTINUED the first time on a cache of decorative arts and rare finds from fine estates at La Jolla Auction Company, on Fay Avenue. Owner Alan Pagenhart, who co-owns D.D. Allen Antiques in the same space, said the first auction will feature 300 lots from the 19th and 20th centuries.

Also on Fay Avenue, Cerruti & Co. is a treasure trove of fine design, and with good reason. Cerruti has combed Paris, Provence and Bordeaux for real-deal antiques and modern pieces from iconic American designers—his selection of 20th-century art is even more stunning. Sleek pieces by Milo Baughman, mid-century designs by Paul McCobb and burl wood and Plexiglass coffee tables by modernist Vladimir Kagan are on offer, as well as lamps from Hollywood actor-designer Billy Haines and Slim Aarons, who captured archetypal images of the glamorous life.

"The clientele runs the gamut from the highest-end collector of fine, museum-quality 18th-century furniture to the more hip and prosperous young collector," says Cerruti, an attorney and avocado rancher turned passionate collector.

Phil and Nicki Collier just invested \$500,000 in a new, highly visible Everett Stunz showroom showcasing Duxiana beds; there's even one that vibrates (coin slot not included). The store offers bamboo-fiber towels, mega thread-count Sferra Egyptian cotton sheets (like buttah!) and custom duvets to match.

Esteban Interiors—known for their lively mix of antiques and modern—has a sparkling new home filled with glass aplenty. And according to Esteban, Girard is hungry for it. "I think that La Jollans and Rancho Santa Fe-ans have been warming up to Uptown cool." The La Jolla client vs. the Downtown client? "Downtown seems to be much younger, newer, with a little bit more of a DIY client base." La Jolla: So not DIY. ■

