

PELICAN HILL®

ON THE COAST *of* NEWPORT BEACH

CRYSTAL COVE ADVENTURES

A CONVERSATION *with* JERED WEAVER

PRIDE AND PASTA

The orange Mongolian apothecary chest was purchased in France and dates back to the mid 1800s. The patina is original to the piece and makes a striking statement.



FOLLOWING HER BLISS

Designer Ohara Davies-Gaetano draws inspiration from her soul

By Ellen Girardeau Kempler

What ignites inspiration? For one Bliss Design client from Georgia, the idea for an entire home started with an orange apothecary cabinet.

Vacationing with her husband at The Resort at Pelican Hill®, the wife spotted the striking piece in Bliss Home & Design's window. She and her husband were just starting work on a new home.

"The cabinet sparked her imagination," said Ohara Davies-Gaetano, Bliss' Head of Design. "She walked in, we talked about her ideas and everything just clicked. Before long, I was meeting them in Georgia."

The cabinet now graces the study in the client's Georgia home. The finished rooms echo its clean lines and rich color, incorporating such lux materials as velvet and polished wood. Glossy ceramic and metal accessories accent the earth-toned palette, set off by creamy walls. The couple, thrilled with the quality and style, hired Bliss Design for two subsequent homes.

The unique furniture, antiques and accessories at Bliss Home & Design, the Corona del Mar - based store that houses Bliss Design Firm, often attract new clients, said Davies-Gaetano, who leads the 10-person, full-service interior design firm.

"Our firm's focus is 100 percent residential. We've become a 'destination boutique' for Corona del Mar, and many of our clients discover us while on vacation in Orange Country. We design homes all over the country and even abroad, but many of our clients either live full time or have second homes here in Southern California."

She explained that Bliss Design is a full-service design firm that can either work on a project from the ground up or just the completion of a room. She cites this flexibility, along with a personal approach and a large resource library, as reasons for the firm's continued success, even through the economic downturn.

Davies-Gaetano's philosophy emphasizes service. Shunning standard questionnaires, she prefers to

interview clients in detail, to learn "what they love, where they like to go and what they like to do." "My style is not limited to a particular genre," she said. "I approach design with the understanding that there are no boundaries, allowing the vision to be embraced by elements from different periods and places. A well-designed home should reflect the client's lifestyle and who they are."

She also feels that Bliss Design's ability to produce hand-rendered sketches, rather than computer-aided designs, helps clients feel more connected to the process. "There are not many firms that hand render anymore," she explained. "I am currently designing an oceanfront property at the Strand. Our clients love the renderings so much that they plan on framing them for their home."





The owners of this Emerald Bay residence wanted to embrace their coastal environment with a palette of neutral tones and rich textures. The shelves are accessorized with varying shades of white, incorporating elements of the sea and historical plaster fragments. Natural linens from Italy and Belgium grace many of the upholstered pieces and the area rug is Tibetan.

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Davies-Gaetano's inspiration for this design was the saturated colors often seen in Central and South American textiles. She found stunning European fabrics utilizing this palette, which created beautiful "pops" of color against the plaster walls of the exquisite Spanish residence. The owners' extensive art collection added additional visual interest and color.



Soul and dimension have shaped Davies-Gaetano's life and work. Raised in New York City by her visual-artist father and textile-designer mother, she drew early inspiration from city gallery life and their upstate, antique-filled country home. At 17, she studied in Guatemala and learned to weave from native artisans, and continued traveling and working abroad during college as well.

She landed her first residential interior design project at age 21 in Atlanta, Georgia. "It was such an incredible opportunity, affording me the confidence at a young age to follow my passion. There are not many designers who are so fortunate to start off so young."

Happily based in Corona del Mar, she travels for business about one week each month, and for pleasure whenever she can. Aside from designing homes, she also designs a line of furniture and accessories, Bliss Studio, that is sold to boutiques across the country.

"I am so fortunate to be able to do creative work, meet wonderful people and be inspired by travel and beautiful things," she said. Surrounded by fabric swatches, photographs and sketches, Ohara Davies-Gaetano is still following her bliss. ✨

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