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Santa Barbara

MAY 19-26, 2022
VOL. 36 ♦ NO. 853

Independent

Dip Into Our

HOME & GARDEN *Issue*

NEW BOOK ABOUT
MADAME GANNA WALSKA'S
LOTUSLAND AND MUCH MORE

♦ BY LESLIE DINABERG ♦

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ON THE COVER: Madame Ganna Walska, taken c. 1958. Photo by J.R. Eyerman/Lotusland Archives. Design by Ava Talehakimi.

OUR HOME & GARDEN GO-TO

Name: Leslie Dinaberg

Title: Culture Editor

Once again, we turned to longtime contributor Leslie Dinaberg to take on our annual Home & Garden issue, when we highlight many of the indoor and outdoor design tales and trends from around Santa Barbara. As she worked on this edition, we also hired Leslie as our new Culture Editor to lead our arts and entertainment coverage and manage many of the special sections, just like this week's. She tells us more below.



PAUL WELLMAN FILE PHOTO

What did you learn about Lotusland and Madame Ganna Walska while reporting this week's cover story? Like Madame herself, Lotusland is much, much more than just a pretty face. One of the best "work perks" of being a journalist in Santa Barbara is that I've been fortunate to spend a lot of time at Lotusland over the years. But I really had no idea about all the behind-the-scenes efforts that have gone on FOR DECADES to make this gorgeous garden a more environmentally sustainable place, in addition to being such an inspiring beautiful and peaceful spot.

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ICONIC GARDENS & 21ST-CENTURY HOMES

LOVING LOTUSLAND, ELECTRIFYING HOUSING,
NEW DESIGN COLLECTIVE, AND MORE

◆ BY LESLIE DINABERG ◆

WELCOME to our annual Home & Garden special issue, the edition run each spring where we explore ideas and designs for indoors and out.

In this year's collection, we feature a new book all about that most iconic of Montecito gardens, Lotusland, and explain how you can create your own sustainable garden in the backyard. Then we turn to a new Home & Design Collective in the downtown Arts District, head to the library to find free decor resources, and take a look at what it takes, and why, to electrify your house.

Happy designing!

◆ BOOKS ◆

THE LOWDOWN ON LOTUSLAND

SHOW business ran deep through the veins of Madame Ganna Walska, so when the time finally came to showcase her legendary garden in book form, the pressure was on.

And like the creation of Montecito's extraordinary 37-acre public garden extravaganza, it took a whole cast of characters to bring the new, 288-page coffee-table book *Lotusland: Eccentric Garden Paradise* (Rizzoli, 2022) — stunningly photographed by Lisa Romerein — to life.

It's always been a desire to share Lotusland with as many people as possible, a challenge because the county permit limits the number of visitors to the garden to just 15,000 people a year. Architect Marc Appleton, a longtime supporter and former trustee of Ganna Walska Lotusland, had unsuccessfully tried to drum up support for a book project for years. But the stars never quite aligned until 2019,



Underneath the canopy of towering dragon trees (*Dracaena draco*) is a large, candelabrum-shaped *Isolatocereus dumortieri* as well as eye-catching clusters of golden barrels (*Echinocactus grusonii*), which were some of Madame Ganna Walska's favorite cacti.

Morse joining Appleton.

"We raised independent funds from subscribers to establish a publication budget, and we were off and running," said Appleton.

Curator Paul Mills, historian Rose Thomas, Jeff Chemnick, Mike Furner, Corey Welles, founding trustee Arthur Gaudi, Eric Nagelmann (who designed the cactus garden), and Madame Wal-

ska's niece Hania Tallmadge (who recently passed away) were but a few of the many people involved in this team effort.

"Everyone said yes, which is kind of remarkable and a testament to their relationships," said executive director Rebecca Anderson. "It really was volunteer-driven, and that's important to appreciate and highlight, particularly in this town where so many volunteers do so much."

The book has a lot of ground to cover — and it does. "While it's meant to focus on the garden today and our future, it's meant to be a garden book," said Anderson. "It's not meant to be a retrospective of how the garden began. But I really appreciate that we were able to get in there the people who created this place, because without a little bit of that, it's not a complete story."

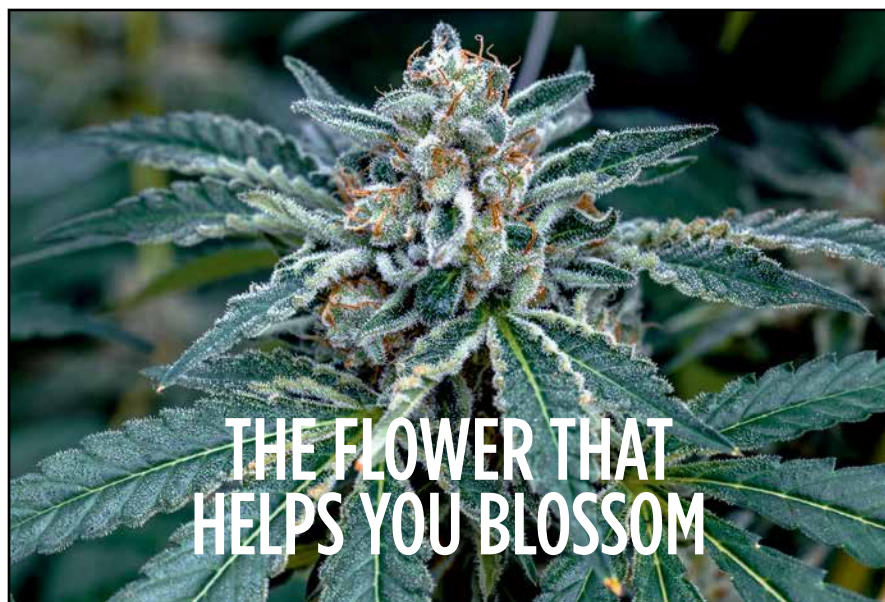
Indeed, the dramatic flair and inimitable spirit of Madame Walska is woven throughout the book while exploring her world-renowned horticultural showplace, home to more than 3,400 types of plants, including at least 35,000 individual specimens.

Another important factor Anderson emphasized is "making sure that people not only have takeaways about inspiration and ideas for design or knowledge of particular plants in that index in the back, but also that they understand that this is all done with organic materials and sustainable practices."

With such a large scope of the gardens to be documented, Mills worked with Romerein

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when the "Book Committee" was formed, with current trustee Dorothy Gardner and former trustees Suzanne Mathews and Alex



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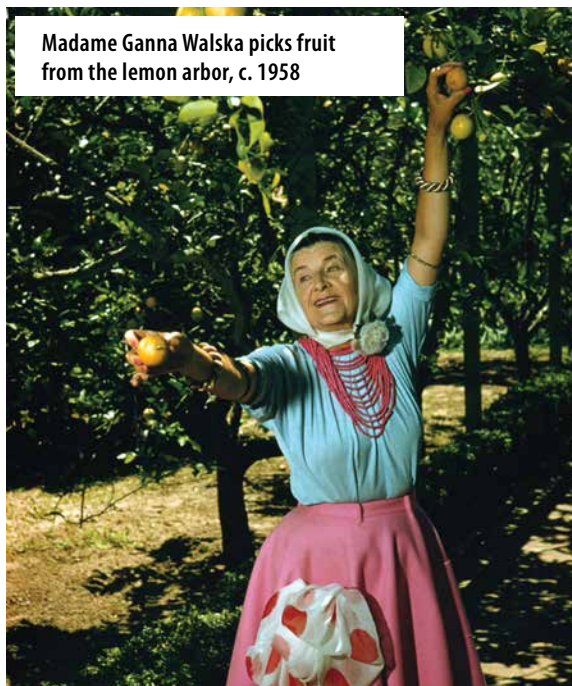


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LOTUSLAND CONT'D FROM P. 21

Madame Ganna Walska picks fruit from the lemon arbor, c. 1958



J. R. EYERMAN, GANNA WALSKA LOTUSLAND ARCHIVES



leaf unfurling, or the perfect lighting for an overall shot.”

With 19 distinct gardens to spotlight, choosing a favorite is like choosing a favorite child. But when asked which

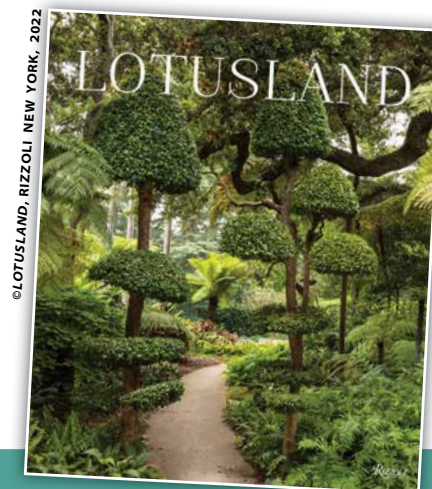
and her photography assistant, Dean Courtois, to shoot over the span of a year, “to try to catch as many moods and happenings in the garden as possible,” said Mills. “Lotusland really is not a ‘flowery’ garden; it’s more about bold and dramatic presentation of plants. But each season does present different opportunities to capture, and I would help guide them to these.”

He continued, “Every plant on the property has a story, but I would try to lead them to the ones that are more intriguing for one reason or another: a cycad that is now extinct in the wild and only exists in gardens like Lotusland; a dragon tree that dates back to the 1880s, when Kinton Stevens had his nursery on the property; a cactus that is endemic to the Galapagos Islands and rarely seen in botanical collections.”

Since the first shoot was in the summer, they had to capture the namesake plant, the sacred lotus, “in all its glory,” explained Mills. “Winter had to focus on the aloe garden, because that is when those plants light up with their torch-like inflorescences, and also on the Japanese garden, which really shows that season with the golden carpet of ginkgo leaves and shapely, dormant maples. I would scout the garden before their arrival, but so many times, we would just happen across things: a flowering bromeliad, a fern

section of the book he’s most proud of, Mills confided, “I would have to say the chapter on the Dunlap cactus garden. It’s my favorite garden on the property, not only because I was so involved in moving the collection to Lotusland and helping to oversee its installation, but because of the story behind it. Lisa was also very drawn to this garden, so it got a lot of attention and amazing photos in the book.”

He continued, “We’d often be on the cart heading to a different garden, passing by the Dunlap garden, and Lisa would shout ‘Stop!’ because she saw something looking just right.” That garden was installed after Madame Walska passed away, but it



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Lotusland: Eccentric Garden Paradise is available at local retailers as well as through the onsite gift shop and online at lotuslandshop.org. Limited spots are available for a Luncheon on the Lawn to celebrate the book on Saturday, May 21, at 11:30 a.m. In addition, Lotusland’s 2022 season is now open to reservations through August. Admission is \$50 for adults and \$25 for children ages 3-17. For more information and reservations, visit lotusland.org.

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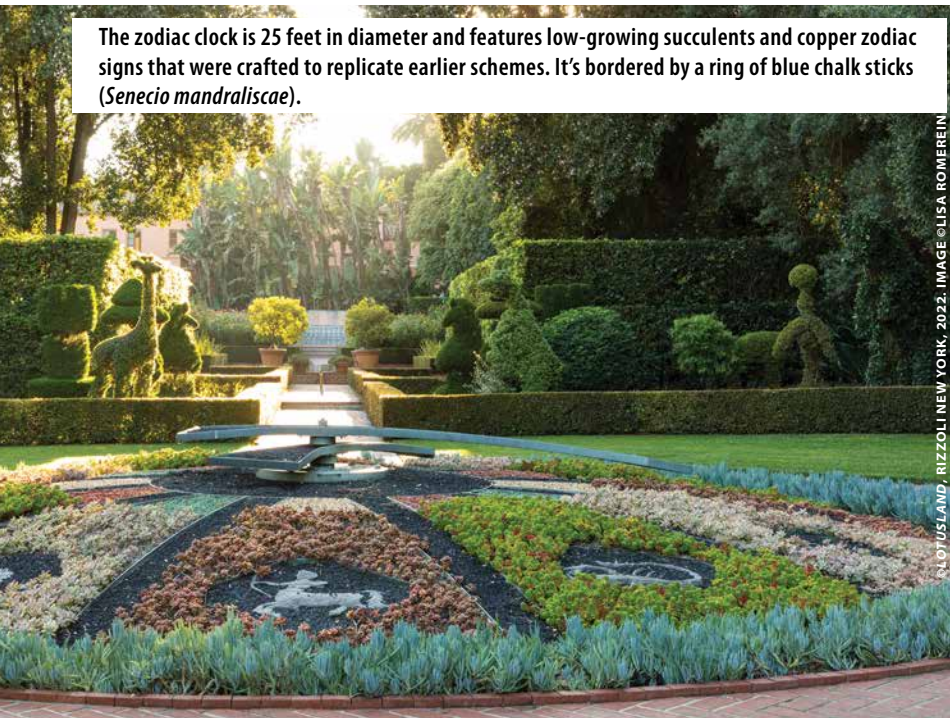
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The zodiac clock is 25 feet in diameter and features low-growing succulents and copper zodiac signs that were crafted to replicate earlier schemes. It's bordered by a ring of blue chalk sticks (*Senecio mandraliscae*).



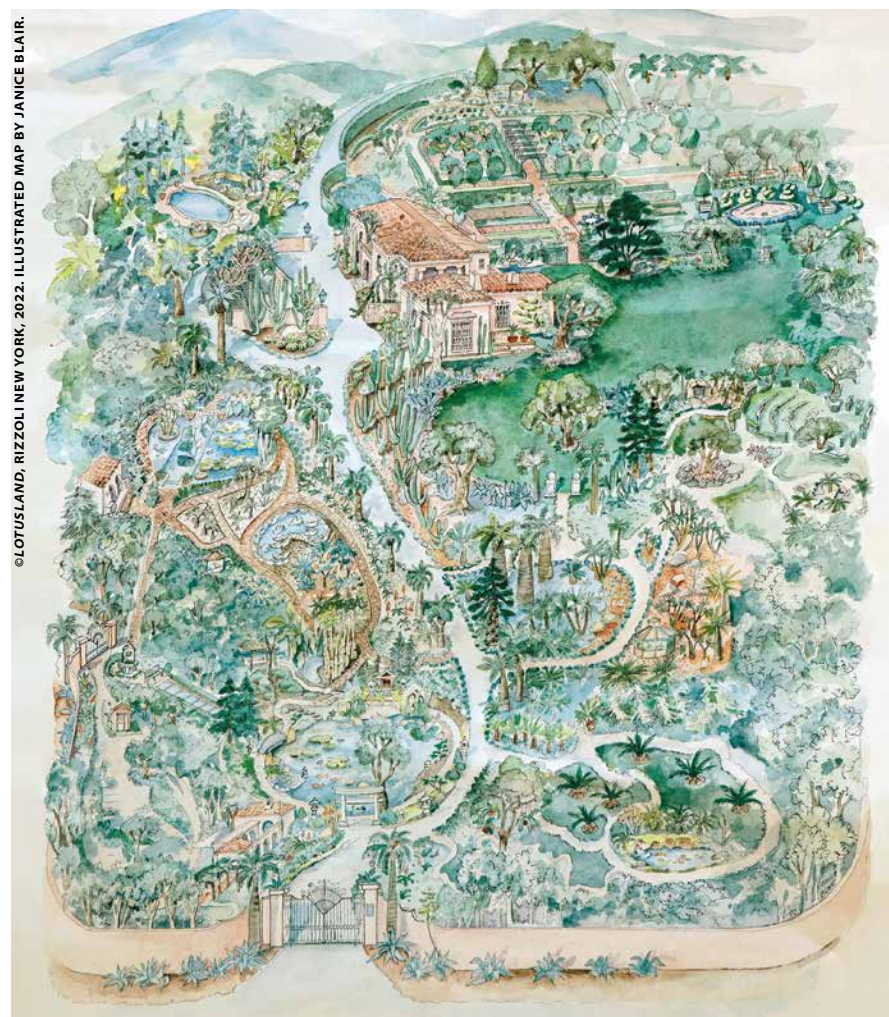
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began in 1966, when Merritt “Sigs” Dunlap bequeathed his cactus collection to Lotusland. “She saw this as something great and accepted,” said Mills. The collection was donated in 2001, and the garden built in 2003, just in time for Dunlap to celebrate his 97th birthday.

“We know Madame Ganna Walska would approve of this garden,” said Mills. “She loved cacti and dramatic landscapes, and its completion signified the fulfillment of her and Dunlap’s wish.”

Appleton, who worked on a somewhat similar project with Rizzoli for Casa del Herrero in 2009, wrote the introduction to Lotusland. “Making the book happen in the right way was challenging, and there were ultimately a lot of interests to entertain along the way,” he said. “But I think the book will have a long life as a fairly comprehensive presentation of Lotusland and why it is such a special garden. Lisa’s photos are amazing and capture its magic.”

© LOTUSLAND, RIZZOLI NEW YORK, 2022. ILLUSTRATED MAP BY JANICE BLAIR.



Lotusland is sited on a gently sloping hill and spans 37 acres. With the area’s coastal Mediterranean climate — and almost 300 days of sunshine per year — the property has been a testing ground for experimenting with new types of tropical and subtropical plants since 1882.

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GARDENING FOR THE GREATER GOOD

THE benefits of sustainable gardening and regenerative agriculture took the spotlight at a recent sustainability salon featuring Community Environmental Council (CEC) climate resilience program director Sharyn Main and Lotusland sustainability manager Corey Welles. Here are some of the nuggets they shared at the gathering in Belle Hahn's beautiful garden on the Upper Eastside.



1) CHANGE CAN HAPPEN: After 32 years at Lotusland, Welles certainly has the dirt on the esteemed garden's best practices in plant healthcare. "Lotusland wasn't always a perfectly organic operation," he admitted. "In the very beginning, it was completely conventional, and they used pesticides. If you were an organic farmer walking in, you would have been horrified." But the will to become more environmentally sound was there, and they worked to find the way.

"We literally cracked the code; we stopped listening to the conventional minds and started listening to biologists," he said. "Fertilizers caused 80 percent of the diseases at Lotusland. Once we got the pesticides and chemical fertilizers out of there, we never went back. It was a moment of taking responsibility — if something's wrong, you take responsibility for it." And it worked. The first year, they had a 70 percent reduction in pests, and it increased from there.

2) MORE THAN NO PESTICIDES: A sustainable garden involves more than just getting rid of chemical pesticides. Other key principles include using natural materials such as alfalfa meal, sea kelps, and organic nitrogen sources to feed plants and the soil.

Building up insect ecology is also important. While it may seem counterintuitive, Welles shared that increasing the number and variety of insects in the landscape and providing a habitat for beneficial insects helps control invasions of plant pests. Native plants are especially good for this.

The other key sustainable practice at Lotusland is recycling all of the plant material removed from the garden back in the form of compost teas and mulches that are reused in the garden.

3) DEMONSTRATE THE WAY: Lotusland wasn't yet open to the public when Main was a teenager in the 1970s, but she confided that it didn't stop her from sneaking in to explore. As one of the first wave of environmentalists working for CEC, Main and her colleagues had an organic demonstration garden at the organization's first offices on the Mesa in one of the earliest green buildings in the country. They had composting toilets ("the cutting edge for energy efficiency") and a green rooftop with plantings to help cool the building, and they taught people about organic agriculture and gardening while discouraging the use of pesticides. She even co-wrote a book called *BUGS* ("Beneficial Urban Garden Strategies"), which was published in both English and Spanish.

"That garden was super important to our program," said Main. "We talked a lot about the value of using native plants to protect biodiversity and improve soil health as part of an organic food garden."



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GARDENING

CONT'D FROM P. 25



4) REGENERATIVE AG: One of the ways CEC is working to reverse the climate threat today is by encouraging regenerative, climate-smart agriculture. “These practices — like applying compost on working lands and planting native plants along edges of fields — can actually help sequester carbon from the atmosphere. By restoring a natural balance in this way, plants respond by pulling more carbon from the air (through photosynthesis) into the ground, where it’s beneficial to the soil and plants,” said Main.

Carbon farming, a land-based, natural solution to climate change, is a way to transfer excess carbon out of the atmosphere — where it is causing a lot of harm — and store it in the soil, where it does a lot of good.

CEC is actively working with ranchers and large landowners, said Main. “If we can apply compost to just 10 percent of our agricultural lands, we could offset the emissions of the entire agriculture sector in Santa Barbara County. So this is doable. This is actually a reasonable thing we can achieve.”

5) EVERYONE CAN COMPOST: One of the simplest ways for people to help at home is by making and using compost, said Main. Mow or trim weeds instead of pulling them out at their roots, and compost instead of landfilling yard waste and food scraps.

6) WATCH YOUR WATER: Last but not least on the path to sustainable gardening is the importance of carefully managing water use, a key factor that was mentioned by both Welles and Main. Water conservation is made much easier when pests are under control through the promotion of pollinators and beneficial insects, natural materials are used to feed plants and soil, plant materials removed from the garden are recycled into compost or mulch, and native species are primarily what is planted.

Following sustainable practices includes avoiding polluting chemicals, preserving natural resources, and reducing waste whenever possible. Sustainable gardening is not just about growing plants and maintaining a garden; it’s also about growing a greener future. As Welles said, “You don’t have to sacrifice beautiful, breathtaking gardens to be responsible.”

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◆ RESOURCES ◆

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LOOKING for some inspiration for your next home improvement project? For when Pinterest isn't quite cutting it, our librarians Lisa Neubert (Santa Barbara) and Kimberly Crail (Montecito) have curated this list of books to check out. See an even longer list online at independent.com/hg22.



SMALL SPACES

Small Space Style: Because You Don't Have to Live Large to Live Beautifully by Whitney Leigh Morris: Interior design maven Morris shares her ideas and practices for making any tiny space efficient and stylish—whether it's a rustic A-frame in the woods or a chic micro apartment in the city.

150 Best Tiny Interior Ideas by Francesc Zamora Mola: A smaller living space doesn't have to mean sacrificing sophistication or comfort. Here are loads of ideas for maximizing space while creating warm and inviting homes.

INTERIOR DESIGN

Design the Home You Love: Practical Styling Advice to Make the Most of Your Space by Lee Mayer: A fresh and accessible guidebook to the complicated world of interior design.

Made for Living: Collected Interiors for All Sorts of Styles by Amber Lewis: Tricks of the trade from a trendsetting designer known for creating effortlessly layered looks and modern eclectic styles.

Home Stories: Design Ideas for Making a House a Home by Kim Leggett: Everyone has a story worth telling, and every room

can become part of that story. Learn how to create rooms filled with warmth, meaning, and your own unique story of home.

Feels Like Home: Relaxed Interiors for a Meaningful Life by Lauren Liess: Explore the emotional connection between home decoration and one's daily life through the lens of a popular social media and TV star.

House to Home: Designing Your Space for the Way You Live by Devi Dutta-Choudhury: A modern guide to home improvement that will help you create a dynamic, comfortable space that supports your life and the way you want to live.

Hygge & West Home: Design for a Cozy Life by Christiana Coop and Aimee Lagos: These notable tastemakers have curated a look into 20 covetable homes designed to promote feelings of coziness, companionship, and comfort.



COLOR AND CREATIVITY

My Creative Space: How to Design Your Home to Stimulate Ideas and Spark Innovation by Donald M. Rattner: Written by a noted architect, *My Creative Space* turns the rich trove of psychological research on workplace productivity and innovation into practical techniques for shaping a home.

Jungalow: Decorate Wild by Justina Blakeney: A guide to designing creative and personal interiors with bold choices in color and patterns, cues from nature, and inspiration from personal heritage and travels.

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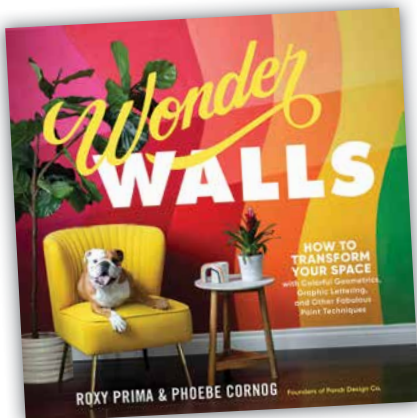


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BOOKS CONT'D FROM P. 29

Wonder Walls: How to Transform Your Space with Colorful Geometrics, Graphic Lettering, and Other Fabulous Paint Techniques by Phoebe Cornog and Roxy Prima: Learn DIY wall-painting techniques to help discover the possibilities of paint and see walls as a canvas. This book covers wall preparation and paint selection, as well as step-by-step instructions.

Living in Color: Color in Contemporary Interior Design by Stella Paul and India Mahdavi: An inspirational visual journey along the color spectrum, brought to life via the best contemporary residential interior design.



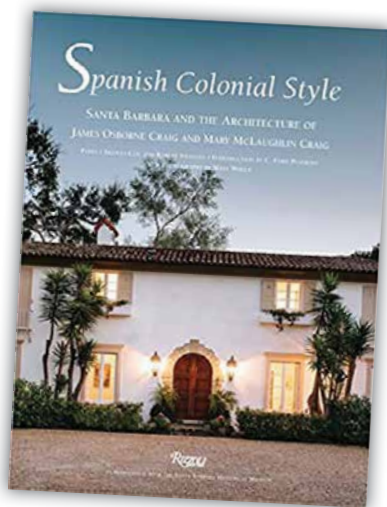
A SENSE OF PLACE

At Home in Joshua Tree: A Field Guide to Desert Living by Sara Combs and Rich Combs: This beautifully illustrated lifestyle guide from the creators of The Joshua Tree House shows you how to infuse your life with desert vibes, from home designs and entertaining plans to wellness rituals.

Home Sweet Maison: The French Art of Making a Home by Danielle Postel-Vinay: A lively, sophisticated, and practical illustrated lifestyle guide that shows how to live like the French every day, transforming your house into a home defined by beauty, family, and accessible elegance.

The California Casa by Douglas Woods: A sumptuous and comprehensive look at Spanish Colonial Revival design, presenting a lavish portrait of the style through more than 300 color photographs.

Living in Mexico by Barbara & René Stoeltie: A breathtaking look at some of Mexico's most remarkable abodes. The authors have traveled far and wide, from Costa Careyes to the Yucatán Peninsula, seeking out homes to surprise, delight, and inspire.



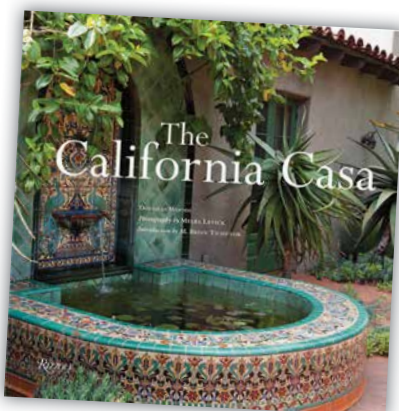
HISTORICAL INFLUENCES

Making Midcentury Modern by Christopher Kennedy: This book features 100 tips for bringing the principles of midcentury modern style to any home, from the acclaimed interior designer.

American Bungalow Style by Robert Winter: Showcasing two dozen American houses that capture the bungalow spirit that enticed thousands of buyers during the form's heyday from 1880 to 1930.

Spanish Colonial Style: Santa Barbara and the Architecture of James Osborne Craig and Mary McLaughlin Craig by Pamela Skewes-Cox and Robert Sweetney: An ode to these influential architects, whose designs included the historic Casa de la Guerra and the Plaza Rubio complex across from the Mission Rose Garden.

In addition to a wide selection of books, the Santa Barbara Public Library's Databases & Resources page has information on how people can get signed up for free with LinkedIn Learning, which offers a number of courses on interior design and related skills. It also has information about accessing Skillshare (provided courtesy of the California State Library's Career Pathways initiative), which has a great offering of interior design courses as well.



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The Home Page

Sarah Sinclair gives you the inside scoop on real estate in The Home Page, going behind the scenes each Sunday to visit our region's casitas, cottages, and castles.

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SHOPPING

NEW HOME & DESIGN COLLECTIVE DOWNTOWN

DOWNTOWN Santa Barbara has cemented its place as a design destination, and several businesses have banded together to form the new Santa Barbara Arts District Home & Design Collective. The cooperative marketing efforts by six businesses within walking distance of each other — all located on the 1200 and 1300 blocks of State Street — is quickly making an impact.

"You can park once and shop easily," said Michelle Beamer, owner of Lonetree. "The community is very supportive. We're always talking each other up. Stephanie Payne-Campbell at Domicil sends people over here all the time. We're really reaching out to designers too, and they're sending people over. Even people from out of town. We've given maps to people from hotels and things like that, too."

This appealingly illustrated map (by graphic designer Irene Ramirez; orange.ladybird.com) guides shoppers to visit:

Domicil: This shop showcases items for the home that highlight both traditional and contemporary craft, including fiber arts, ceramics, woodwork, fine art, and original bespoke, small-batch clothing. (Victoria Court #7, 1221 State St.; domicil.com)

Lonetree: This showroom for interior designer Michelle Beamer of MB Interiors features furniture, art, and new and vintage home decor items. (Victoria Court #24, 1221 State St.; lonetreesb.com)

Sofa U Love: Choose from more than 1,000 fabrics and dozens of sofa styles to customize or reupholster couches, chairs, ottomans, and other furniture. (1227 State St.; sofaulove.com)

Celadon House: This full-service interior design studio and furniture/decor showroom serves residential, hospitality, and commercial design needs. (1224 State St.; celadonhouse.com)



Indian Pink: This home and lifestyle boutique features reimaged vintage furniture, tabletop accessories, lighting, art, handmade pajamas, robes and bathrobes, and a gorgeous assortment of pillows. (1307 State St.; indianpinkpillows.com)

Maune Contemporary: This new gallery specializes in limited-edition fine art prints and unique works by renowned international artists whose work has been exhibited and is in the collections of museums worldwide. (1309 State St.; maune.com)

LONETREE'S DIVINE DESIGN

BEING in the right place at the right time is often the key to success.

As the principal designer at MB Interiors and a faculty member of the interior design department at Santa Barbara City College, Michelle Beamer had long toyed with the idea of opening a retail showroom. Lonetree (lonetreesb.com), her stunning new space stocked with upscale yet comfortable home furnishings, lighting, art, and accessories, comes on the scene just as the downtown Arts District is seeing a renaissance in home design shops and services.

Cleverly merchandised as a series of vignettes and "rooms" combined with a spacious, courtyard-facing design studio,

Lonetree is actually based on Beamer's master's thesis at the Corcoran School of the Arts and Design in Washington, D.C. The plan included having ever-changing curated vignettes where clients could sit on furniture and touch fabrics and envision what it would be like to live with them. Check. She also envisioned storytelling design opportunities such as the Santa Barbara Museum of Art-inspired Van Gogh desk display now on view. Check. And she wanted to be able to provide a space for community engagement such as 1st Thursday parties — featuring a recent raffle to benefit CALM (Child Abuse Listening Mediation) — and collaborations with community groups like Jane Chapman's Communal Table



VINTAGE VOGUE AT INDIAN PINK

BOHO chic meets vintage flair at Tamara and JP Cajuste's colorful new Indian Pink store (indianpinkpillows.com), a home furnishing haven stocked to the rafters with an inventive assortment of goods.

Pillows made from exotic textiles from around the world are the mother-ship that launched the couple's wholesale enterprise in 2007, and there is certainly a vibrant collection of these one-of-a-kind creations. But with the new store (their first) comes a plethora of new merchandise, including tablecloths, napkins, upcycled lampshades, throw rugs, and a variety of vintage furniture covered in the same gorgeous fabrics that first inspired Tamara when she traveled the world as an American Airlines flight attendant.

"We take 19th-century old-fashioned chairs and couches from France and England, so they're really well-made, and

then have them reupholstered in a pretty fabric," says Tamara. With supply chains still a mess from the pandemic, "the fact that you can get something that is repurposed and beautiful and available is a big asset," she explains.

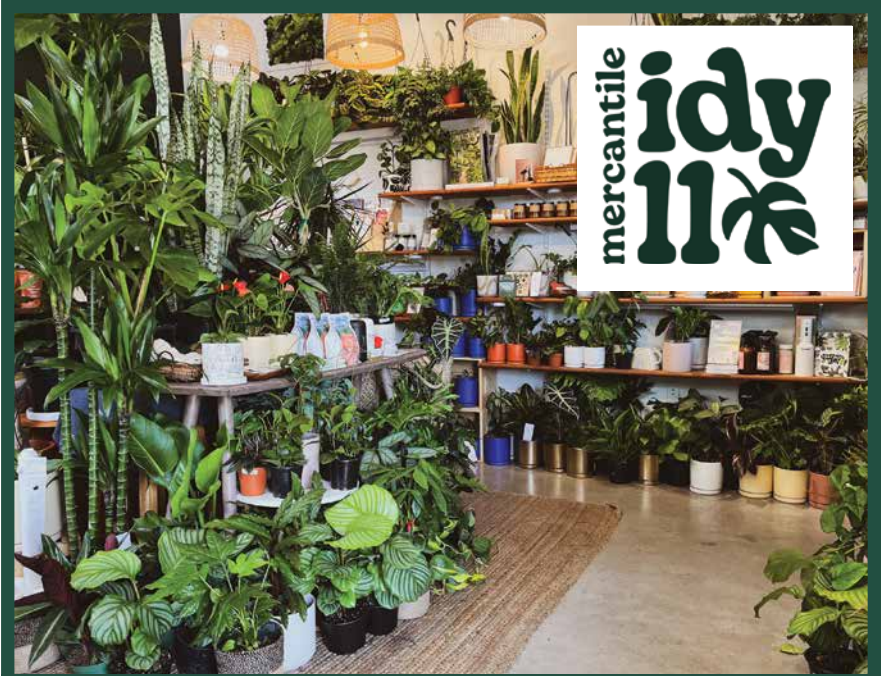
During lockdown, she even created a new line of super-comfortable yet still fashion-forward dresses (with pockets!), pajamas, and reversible robes — all of which are on colorful display at the store. "I wanted to have something cute to match my house to put on," she laughs. "I had no idea they would be so popular."

These days, Tamara sources her fabrics from four different vendors in Rajasthan and Shahpur, India. She relies primarily on instinct to make her selections. "I just fall in love with certain things when I see them," she laughed. "I could never be an interior designer, because I can't do modern things. I can only do what I do and what I like."

gatherings (communaltablesb.com). Check.

Not to mention, a beautiful space for her to create, work with her team, and meet clients. Checkmate.

A Nebraska native, Beamer says the name Lonetree is a nod to her hometown. "When I was doing research, I found out about traders in the 1800s traveling by boat along the Missouri River to bring their goods to market," she said. "The trader was told that once he glimpsed the lone tree on the hill — there weren't a lot of trees in Nebraska — he knew they were close to the right place to sell their goods."



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◆ ENERGY ◆

ELECTRIFYING
YOUR HOME

THE road to zero carbon is being paved by elected officials, builders, and activists. And an increasingly important part of the journey is getting rid of gas furnaces, water heaters, ranges, and other appliances and replacing them with electric alternatives that make buildings safer, more efficient, and more environmentally friendly — especially as more renewable power is added to the grid.

Last summer, the Santa Barbara City Council voted unanimously to enact a new building ordinance (known as a “reach code”) prohibiting natural gas infrastructure in newly constructed buildings (with the exception of restaurants and applications where there isn’t yet a viable electric alternative to gas). There are also many rebates and incentives available for existing homes to make the switch to electric.

Heat pumps, which control household climates by extracting and moving the heat in the air, are extremely energy-efficient. According to the Department of Energy, installing an air-source heat pump can cut your electric bill in half, and heat pumps are generally considered more comfortable than traditional heating and cooling. “The other big advantage that heat pumps offer in our warming climate is that they can provide both heating and cooling in your home, so they can essentially be used to replace both a furnace and an air conditioner,” said Michael Chiacos, energy and climate program director at CEC.

If you’re considering a new furnace or installing air conditioning in your home, TECH Clean California is currently offering up to \$3,000 per unit rebate on central heat pumps or mini-split heat pumps. That same group also has a \$1,000-\$3,100-per-unit rebate on heat-pump water heaters. Other vendors offer incentives for air sealing, insulation and ductwork, whole house fans, smart thermostats, and electric backup power units (see switchison.org/incentives for more information).

Heat induction cooktops are another innovation that has come a long way in recent years. Unlike traditional electric stoves that heat with coils, induction cooktops use magnets to transfer heat directly to the pan through the process of induction. These ranges heat up faster (they can bring water to a boil in half the time of gas), allow you to cook at very specific tempera-



tures, and are safer. Induction burners only heat the pan and not the cooktop surface, which means the rest of the stove remains cool when it’s on. Without an open flame, people are less likely to burn themselves or accidentally start kitchen fires.

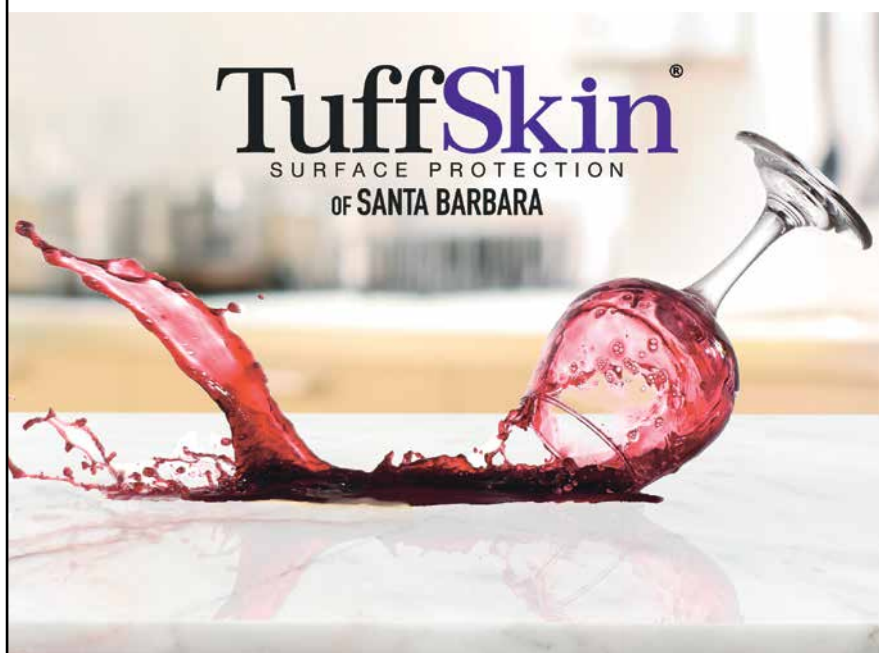
“I am a total covert,” said Dennis Allen, founder of Allen Construction. He’s been cooking on a five-element magnetic induction cooktop for more than a decade. “It is fabulous,” he said. “It’s so responsive, and it is so good for the environment because it’s about double the efficiency of natural gas, because natural gas is heating all of the air around the pot and this power only heats the pot.” He also likes that it’s safer to cook with his granddaughter because she won’t get burned by the cooktop.

If you’re interested in trying before buying, many vendors offer portable models to take home and test. The Santa Barbara Public Library’s Library of Things also has an induction cooktop you can check out.

As more and more information comes out that electric homes are safer and healthier to live in, they are also becoming more practical and affordable, especially with the various incentives. There are some federal incentives for solar installation that are expiring soon, so the time to act is now, said Chiacos.

“Having an all-electric home with solar is definitely the way to go, because then you are using your locally generated sunshine to run your house, and hopefully power your car, too,” he said. ■

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