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CALIFORNIA
DESIGN

This award-winning residence in Venice Beach is signature Gary Hutton. p. 70.



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HARTLE MEDIA

2010 CH+D AWARD FOR
READERS' CHOICE
DESIGNER
OF THE YEAR



Sandra Espinet's experience designing homes in San Jose del Cabo translates into casual elegance inside and out. At this waterfront residence, outdoor weatherproof furniture from Dedon looks fresh in all seasons.

JOEY CRAWFORD



Sandra Espinet

SANDRA ESPINET INTERIORS BY SANDRA ESPINET, SAN DIEGO

The worldly, expressive style that made her our readers' choice for "Designer of the Year" comes naturally to Sandra Espinet. Born in Trinidad, she spent her youth country-hopping between Canada, Colombia, Venezuela, Peru and Ecuador before settling in the States with her family at age 16. "When you're little, you don't realize how cool it is," says Espinet, who now thinks nothing of jetting across the globe at a moment's notice. "I just pick up and go."

For Espinet, that international lifestyle has translated into broad success as an interior designer. She has designed homes throughout California and Mexico, as well as Colorado, Montana, Florida, Massachusetts, Illinois and Texas.

Espinet is constantly inspired by styles and pieces she encounters while traveling. She loves to use a specific country or region as inspiration for a room, but is careful not to overdo it. "If you deck a whole house out in the style of one place, it tends to feel like Disney World," she says. "I like to bring in pieces from all over—Moroccan accessories, French art, Mexican woodwork—and mix it up to create that worldly feel." Her projects are infused with the luxury and whimsy of an endless vacation.

Her creativity has attracted a diverse client list, from movie and television stars (she recently completed Holly Robinson Peete's L.A. home) to entrepreneurs to innovative hoteliers.

She also heads up a furniture showroom and art gallery in San Jose del Cabo, Mexico, offering pieces that she picks up during her travels. At first she was simply storing leftovers from projects in a warehouse, but decided to open it up to the public five years ago. Future plans for Espinet include expanding her business with branded furnishings and accessories. "No matter what I get into next, I am never going to stop doing interior design," says Espinet. "It's my passion." —Erin Feher

Sandra Espinet infuses her projects with a truly international air, using pieces she finds traveling. FROM TOP: The iron chandelier is from San Francisco; table lamps were made from Moroccan jars; the trunk at the end of the bed is a Guatemalan antique; African vessels decorate the top of kitchen cabinets.



FROM TOP: DREW NEEDLES, ALL OTHERS BY GREY CRAWFORD