

southbay

# HOMIE

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*Old Bones,*  
**FRESH  
APPROACH**

ONE OF THE OLDEST HOMES ON THE PENINSULA GETS A  
LOVING RESTORATION FROM A LOCAL DESIGN EXPERT.

WRITTEN BY DIANE E. BARBER | PHOTOGRAPHED BY SIRI BERTING



Upon arriving at the Spanish-style Palos Verdes home of Gina Quatrine, guests are greeted by a specially commissioned bronze mermaid fountain. Just as a European-style entry door (a “door-inside-a-door”) promises that what lies behind it is extraordinary, this petite sea siren beckons visitors to take a peek.

History alone speaks to the home’s unique character. Built in 1924, it was the third residence constructed in Palos Verdes Estates. There is an added touch of Hollywood’s golden era with archived building permits that bear the name of preservationist, conservationist and actor Leo Carrillo (best remembered for his television role as Pancho, the sidekick to *The Cisco Kid*).

As fate would have it, today the house is once again in the hands of another creative preservationist. As a successful businesswoman and single mother of three, Gina purchased it in 2005. While looking for the perfect abode where she could raise her children close to family, she was also on a passionate quest to find a home that spoke to her affinity for Spain.

“I moved to Spain in the ‘80s and opened a seaside restaurant. Two years later, I opened an antiques store in a beautiful, small, seaside Mediterranean town in the region of Alicante. When I grew homesick and returned to the South Bay, I always wanted to recreate the relaxed, elegant lifestyle that I had become accustomed to there. This house was perfect for that.”

Taking the artistic, visionary lead, Gina worked alongside general contractor Rudy Rocco and his talented team. They added 1,000 square feet of living space for another bedroom and to enlarge the kitchen, while meticulously maintaining the look of the original house with plaster walls, wooden floors, generous 10-inch baseboards, solid wood doors and antique hardware.



## DESIGNER

GINA QUATRINE, QUATRINE CUSTOM FURNITURE

Three grand fireplaces were installed—two dating back to the 1800s from France and one from Mexico. In-suite sinks common in Europe were installed in the kids’ bedrooms with just a shower and toilet in their bathrooms. Plumbing fixtures, stone, tiles, lighting and cabinetry in all of the bathrooms complement the old-world style of the home.

Reminiscent of a European kitchen, Carrera marble etched with memories of shared meals and wine gives character to the expansive countertops. To maintain a spacious feeling, alder wood cabinets with an antique painted finish and metal grill detailing were installed at counter level only.

All upper cabinets were placed in the adjacent pantry/mudroom, with lower cabinets set atop beautifully hand-painted Brazilian tiles. The stones on the wall behind the Lacanche French range (which friends regularly come to cook on) extend out to the adjoining outdoor dining room. They were repurposed from the Palos Verdes Golf Course remodel project—three truckloads to be exact.

As you meander throughout the rest of the home (and meander you must, for there is much to marvel at), it emulates a museum-like essence—particularly in the living room, where an antique saint of the sea statue from a Catholic church stands guard. A table from Valencia, Spain (circa 1770) serves as an altar for some of Gina’s most prized collectibles: auction house and European flea market finds that include a Mongolian antique tunic, military ribbons from the Napoleon era and a wooden Indian textile press, to name just a few.





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Hallway walls boast what Gina fondly refers to as her pride and joy: a framed British land contract from 1772 she found in Italy and crystal sconces from the Ford mansion in Michigan acquired through an auction house. "Things that are precious should be used and enjoyed," says Gina.

Art, Italian mirrors and other collectibles are on touchable display in every room. An exquisite chandelier made of shells illuminating the foyer and a living room Venetian hand-painted silk chandelier draw artful attention to the ceilings. Sconces that once cast light from an old, French, horse-drawn carriage were electrified and now accent Gina's master bedroom walls adjacent to her French-style replica bed.

An inviting blend of old and new furnishings feature comfortable, slipcovered, upholstered pieces made locally by Gina's furniture company, aptly named Quatrine. "In homes in Spain, you feel like you can go in, put your feet up, and eat anywhere you want to while enjoying good quality and good company," she says. "That was important for me to create not only in my home but also for others."

With a merchandising background gleaned from experience working for Hermes in London, I. Magnin and Bonwit Teller, Gina borrowed from her mother to open a 900-square-foot storefront on Manhattan Beach Boulevard, which is still there today. She now has six stores, 72 employees and a 60,000-square-foot factory nearby. Not surprising, the original pieces of her furniture collection are named after Spanish cities: Malaga, Sevilla, Capri, Madrid and Cadiz.

At Gina's beautiful home, time seems to stop as her relaxed charm, ocean breezes and rooms that whisper of her Old World heritage and world travels take visitors along with her to faraway places. "I love looking at beautiful things," she says with a smile. ●