

b a s k™

LUXURY IN
BALANCE™

LONDON's
East End

Urban Chic

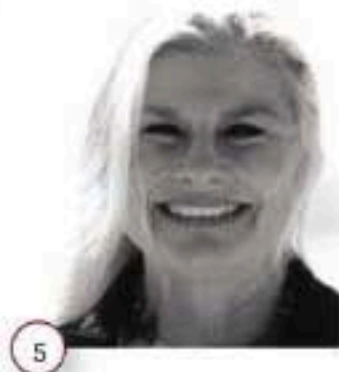
The Cleanse
Trend

ECO Interiors

All the Best Parties

**Men's
Piece of Bask**





CONTRIBUTORS

1 Golie Alemi – As the youngest voice on the *bask* editorial team, Golie brings a strong writing background and a passion for uncovering beauty and fashion trends and discovering new travel destinations to the magazine. In her spare time the Orange County native enjoys practicing yoga and designing jewelry.

2 Claire Bock – Claire splits her residency between Southern California and London – and when she isn't on an airplane, she's busy styling homes with a unique blend of modern luxury and vintage elegance. Claire is always on the hunt for beautiful and unusual places – at home and abroad – as sources of inspiration for her work.

3 Tony Florez – Corona del Mar-based photographer Tony Florez' style comes from his fashion background and his artistic lifestyle. Respected worldwide for his photographic talents, Florez has shot numerous celebrity weddings and events, and his client list includes Nicolas Cage, Lisa Marie Presley, Heather Locklear, Sam Donaldson and many others.

4 Heidi Graf – L.A. resident, native Chicagoan and world-class gypsy and cultural vagabond, Heidi Graf has worked in luxury real estate development, sales and marketing for the past 25 years. Her continuing quest for innovative design, luxury travel and incomparable life experiences makes her a passionate contributor to *bask*.

5 Donna Hilbert – When Donna isn't staring out the window waiting for the weather to change, she writes poetry and teaches private workshops from her home in Long Beach, California. Her new book of poetry, *Traveler in Paradise: New and Selected Poems*, is available from PEARL Editions.

6 Austin Knight Johnston – Having founded and directed two international turnkey event production firms since 2004, Austin Johnston brings his technical and business experience as well as a distinctive eye for style to *bask's* events and experiential marketing platforms.

7 Steve Jones – Having spent more than 25 years in the surf industry, Steve now has taken on the real estate community with his company *bettershelter*. A native of Southern California, Jones can be found every second Sunday at the Pasadena Rose Bowl flea market.

8 Debbie Lavdas – Debbie is a freelance writer based in Orange County. She writes for various local and national magazines, sites and blogs. Lavdas was a TV reporter for many years, but ultimately chose less makeup and more stability. When not 'zine writing, she scribes for a variety of SoCal brands.

Latin Flavor

SHE MIXES A MEAN MARGARITA—MADE ONE SPECIAL FOR *bask*, SERVES UP MEXICAN MADE EASY ON THE FOOD NETWORK CHANNEL, IS WRITING HER SECOND BOOK AND HAS A RELENTLESS PASSION FOR FOOD, LIFE AND HER LOUIS VUITTON HEELS. **CHEF MARCELA VALLADOLID**, A CORONADO GIRL, INDULGES US IN A LITTLE CHEF-CHAT.



Visit baskmagazine.com for Chef Marcela's *bask* Margarita, a sassy rosemary-lime libation.

You're on fire, no?

Life is crazy, but beautiful. We're starting Season 4 of my show, I just did "The Best Thing I Ever Ate" for Food Network, my new book hits this fall, I'm working with Sauza ...

What got you cooking?

My aunt opened one of the first cooking schools in Baja; I was her assistant. I was actually a student of architecture, but realized cooking was my passion. So I quit school.

Good move.

Oh yeah! With architecture, I just didn't wake up and say, "Oh I have to go draw a house now!" But with food, I'll wake up at three in the morning and say, "Oh my G-d, there is this horchata ice cream I need to make tomorrow!"

How did Food Network happen for you?

I had been stalking them for a decade. I sent them a tape when I was 19. I tested three times; the first two times they said no. Then they finally said yes!

Tell me about your show, "Mexican Made Easy."

I like things fast, not fussy and fun. In the past, shows were afraid to focus solely on Mexican food.

But there is a huge interest in Mexican cuisine. I always hear people say, "Mexican food is my favorite food!"

And about this food truck trend?

Oh, I love it! The trucks have been around forever, but with social media, Facebook and Twitter, it's become something cool.

What's the attraction?

Well, you see chefs like Ludovic Lefebvre, who did L'Orangerie in LA with a truck! I remember working at *Bon Appétit* magazine, going to his restaurant and ordering Duck L'Orange. Now, 12 years later, he's got a food truck! It shows the progression of cuisine and the direction we're going.

Your favorites?

I love Tortas Ahogadas off L Street in San Diego. The Miho Gastrotruck. Las Cuatro Milpas.

Finally, cocktailing.

Your favorite ingredient?

Tequila. Absolutely. Positively.

What should we toast to with our *bask* Margarita?

To fun, no fuss, and the best tequila!



MATERIAL GUY

If you can dream it, he can build it. And he has. John Finton has built some of the most unique homes in the world for an impressive client roster spanning billionaire business execs to Hollywood stars from J-Lo to Ben Stiller.

But Finton doesn't drop names. And he doesn't much dig titles, like his being dubbed "Indiana Jones" for his 'round-the-world treasure hunts for custom home finishes and materials. "I'm a little over it," he says nonchalantly. "It started accidentally about ten years ago when a client asked me to travel to Jerusalem for stone that Christ was said to walk on." Finton got the stone, and got hooked. "It's an art form, really," he adds.

Last year alone, Finton traveled 300,000 miles to locate the dream home elements on his clients' wish lists. "It's the 'Pathological Accommodator' in me." *Finton Construction*, with 45 project managers and 1,500 people on the job on any given day, accommodates clients by building their luxe abodes in Russia, Asia and around the globe, but his regular clientele are those in bask's backyard - Beverly Hills, West Los Angeles and Orange County's Newport Coast.

So, on to what's trending in the world of custom homes. Is it Mediterranean? French Chateau? Italian Modern? "It's interesting. It depends on which side of the ocean you're sitting on," notes Finton. If you live in Europe, people love things American, theaters and all. If you live here, everyone wants the old charm of Europe. One day, some people feel less is more. And the next minute, luxury and opulence is in. Some want a beach house, some need parking for 40 cars, some are doing political fundraisers, some need catering kitchens."

He added, "For many years, we didn't do much contemporary work, and now the last five years we're doing more. I'm doing spas in almost every house I build; massage room, steam, sauna, relaxation area. We didn't used to do that."

One constant he did drive home, though - should you have a villa, summer house, hacienda or palatial palace on the horizon - was the importance of quality. "Clearly it's always better to build good quality. We have record sales for the price per foot of the homes we've built in Malibu, Pasadena, Beverly Park. Good quality always sells." He should know. Finton Construction homes have graced the coveted cover of *Robb Report* twice with 'House of the Year' awards. His most recent win was last year for a Beverly Park home that he built.



What does a guy who's seen it all and built it all have to say about the latest in ultimate home building? That answer was about as hard to get as a certain French limestone. From job sites to private planes to lunches at the Beverly Hills Polo Lounge, Finton is a moving target. We caught up at one of his current dream homes in the making - a 65,000 square foot Bel-Air estate, which, incidentally, will be clad in a rare limestone that he personally sourced in France, then traveled to China to have fabricated.

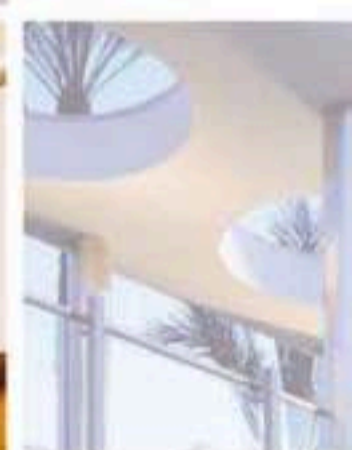


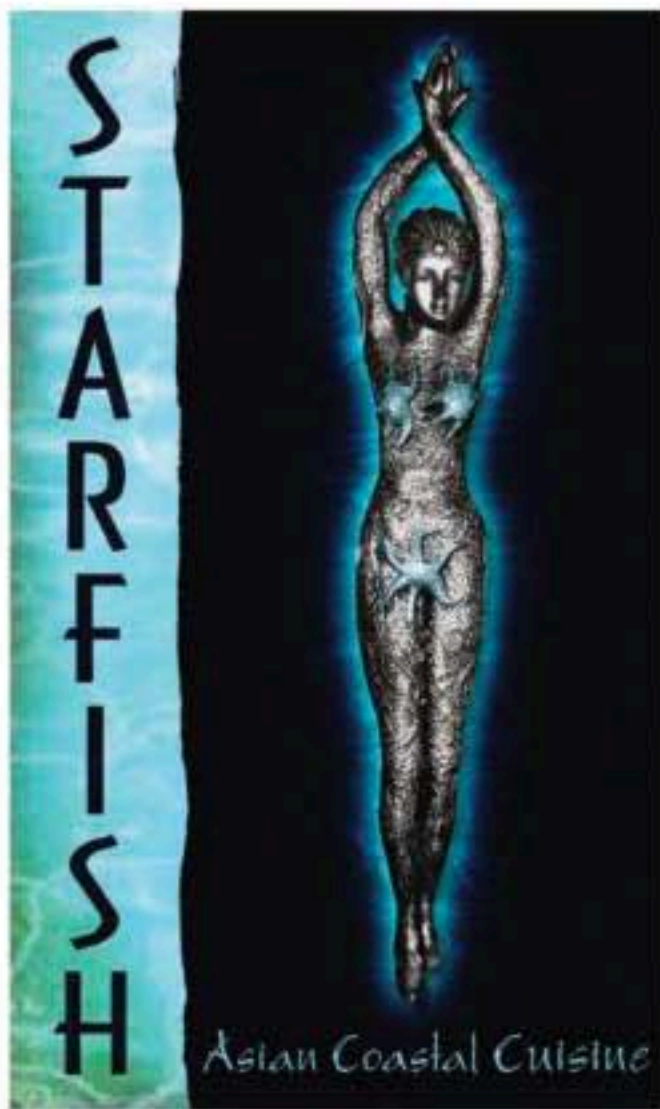
How about the LA market versus that of Orange County? "There's no question that the LA market is more sophisticated in terms of their taste levels, and in terms of what they're demanding out of their projects. There's a higher level of detail and the projects move much faster in LA. We'll have clients who want to have their Malibu beach house finished for a party, and in order to get it done, we'll need to work 24 hours a day. And that's not crazy here (in LA). In Orange County, we never have projects like that."

And, on the topic of more eco-conscious homebuilding, "Everybody wants to be responsible, but, at a certain point, you're spending so much money to get some of these things that it doesn't make sense. Take geothermal heat and air conditioning as examples. By the time you look at what it costs and what the payback is, people say 'I want to be green, but I don't want to be green that much.' Like anything, there is a balance of what makes sense."

About that balance... what kind of home does Finton call "home?" "My house is a modest, charming 1920s home in an old part of Pasadena. It's cool; it's only about 3,000 square feet. Coming home to a 10,000 square foot house just didn't make a lot of sense to me anymore. And I like Minimalist style," he adds. When Finton is not at home in Pasadena or on a job site, you can find him dropping anchor on his boat, traveling the West Coast, Mexico and Costa Rica.

JOHN FINTON, FOUNDER AND PRESIDENT OF FINTON CONSTRUCTION, IS RENOWNED FOR BUILDING THE ULTIMATE IN LUXURY TO NEWPORT COAST. VIEW HIS PROJECTS AND MORE AT FINTONCONSTRUCTION.COM. ALL PHOTOS PROVIDED BY FINTON CONSTRUCTION.





left: Starfish
right: One Hope Wine
bottom: The Cove

Laguna's New Shining Star

We hope to score one of the first tables at **Starfish**, the newest culinary concept by Nancy Wilhelm – the owner of Tabu Grill – that is scheduled to open in late spring. The restaurant will be located directly across Pacific Coast Highway from the Montage Resort and will be open for lunch and dinner seven days a week, featuring “Amer-Asian” cuisine highlighted with ingredients from the mysterious and magical countries of Thailand, Vietnam, China, Korea and India. In addition to promising a delectable dining experience amid the sumptuous surroundings for which Wilhelm is known, we’re predicting that Starfish’s late-night bar scene on Fridays and Saturdays – highlighting muddled libations flavored with hibiscus, gogi blossoms, lemongrass and passion fruit – will be a big hit. StarfishLaguna.com.

Blend of Styles

The Cove a new collection of nine retail stores, is serving up fresh, eclectic fashion with a retro vibe on Pacific Coast Highway in Newport Beach. “We’re all very different; it works,” Blend owner Beth Zehnder tells *bask*. Blend is the clothing ingredient of this new funky retail cocktail. Zehnder, who grew up on Rodeo Drive, brings her trendsetting ways and classic LA style here to OC with many exclusive laid-back lines, such as Matta, Pulp by 88 Orange and more.

The Cove’s full boutique collection ranges from lifestyle and home decor to fashion for women and children. Should The Cove be out of your zip code, you could always hit some LA haunts adored by Blend’s Zehnder, which include Market in Brentwood and Lost & Found in Hollywood. 410 West Coast Highway, Newport Beach. 949.230.8252.

One Hope Wine

Is giving back as easy as drinking some Pinot? The dream team of 20-somethings at **One Hope Wine** in Irvine think so. They plan to donate \$1 million to their partner charities this year — and \$1 billion in their lifetimes. They got started on a whim when a friend was battling Hodgkin’s lymphoma. “We were just sitting in Mama D’s in Newport Beach talking about the idea. The owner overheard us and said he’d love to carry a wine like that,” founders Brandon Hall and Jake Kloberdanz told *bask*. One Hope donates 50 percent of its profits to partner charities. These days, the wine is at the Grammys and the Sundance Film Festival, at Hyatt Regency La Jolla to Terranea Resort, on Mastro’s menus and in local markets — and it’s in 20 states. “One night Katie Couric just dropped our name on the news, things like that happen all the time.” Give back to the community like Couric by simply choosing from One Hope’s six varietals and each with a unique connected cause: AIDS, breast cancer, the troops, autism, children’s hospitals or the planet. OneHopeWine.com.