

WEST HOLLYWOOD

magazine

AFTER DARK

Food (and Fashion)
After the Sun
Goes Down

THE LOT STUDIOS

Hollywood Still
Hums Behind
A Long Beige Wall

TODRICK HALL

The YouTube
Star Who is
The Voice of
West Hollywood

LA CIENEGA DESIGN QUARTER

The Vision of a Few
Evolved Into a Reality
of Art and Design

SUMMER 2016





ALEX MENEGAZ, ELIZABETH KAPLAN, GRACE SAROYAN (SITTING), TOMMY RAYNOR, JULIE URBANEK, PAUL FERRANTE ANTIQUES

By the time the 1980s rolled around, a new group of players in the design industry were beginning to get noticed. Richard Shapiro, Gina Berschneider and Dimitri Agrapiotis were among those eventually opening new shops on La Cienega. And later in the 1990s, movers and shakers like Patrick Dragonette, Robert Wilson and David Serrano would open their doors there.

Shapiro has become the “new kid on the block”—having just opened his corner showroom at 800 North La Cienega this past January. But he is by no means a newcomer. It was in 1981 that Richard Shapiro began collecting iconic post-war contemporary art, which eventually led to a stint on the Museum of Contemporary Art board of trustees. All the while, he was expanding his reach into the worlds of antique Italian and twentieth century Moderne furniture. Like John Nelson before him, Shapiro had a shop filled with fine furnishings for many years on the western edge of Melrose Avenue. He closed the doors in 2013, but not long afterward a space on La Cienega became available. “Location!” proclaims the always-enthusiastic Shapiro as the impetus for his move. “I wanted to be in the heart of the district, and this corner storefront provided exactly that. I wanted my next move within the greater L.A. design community to make a positive addition to the neighborhood.” And that cannot be denied, given the bold and colorful layout of the showroom set in the virtual center of the Melrose-to-Santa Monica Boulevard stretch.

As for Gina Berschneider, the journey to La Cienega began in 1968

when this Swiss-born designer started to become known for providing impeccably upholstered goods for some of the biggest names in the industry. Eventually, it became apparent that she needed a newer space to showcase this growth. “We opened our La Cienega space in 2012,” Berschneider said, “because we always wanted to be in a destination-oriented shopping district. And this location fit the bill.” Just one door south of Berschneider is Compas, a shop specializing in antique marbles and limestone—most of it reclaimed from ancient European and Middle Eastern sources. Owner Dimitri Agrapiotis has spent the majority of his business life roaming his native France and all parts of the Mediterranean in search of the perfect stone goods to bring back to L.A. It was in 1982 that he opened his first business, La France Imports, on the city’s Westside. Of his current location, Agrapiotis said, “La Cienega has always been the heartbeat of Los Angeles.”

Robert Wilson and David Serrano created a buzz on La Cienega in 1996, but they thought at the time that they were on the wrong side of the street with their shop Downtown. “The big antique dealers and design firms were on the east side of the street, and we were concerned that being on the west side wasn’t the preferred location,” Wilson recalled. But that all changed quickly when people noticed that Downtown was actually open to the public—not just “to the trade,” as had been the custom. Visitors didn’t have to be buzzed in through locked doors. But it was Wilson’s and Serrano’s adroit mix of antique and contemporary furnishings that really upped the design ante on the boulevard.



RICHARD SHAPIRO

“La Cienega has always been the heartbeat of Los Angeles.”

Dimitri Agraphotis, Compas





ROBERT WILSON, DOWNTOWN

A year later in 1997—and literally next door to Downtown—Patrick Dragonette set up Dragonette Ltd in the hope that one day he would be as successful as his antique dealer friends with shops already on La Cienega.

But the other reason was more personal: “I loved knowing that so many design icons of mine had walked this street and frequented the showrooms,”

he said. In fact, Dragonette has become one of the country’s leading sources for mid-twentieth century design—including vintage pieces by the late William Haines, the actor-turned-designer who created furnishings for such luminaries as actress Joan Crawford and Ronald and Nancy Reagan. By all measures, Dragonette has exceeded his initial hopes with his now-international success.



KATIE LABARGE, MARGE CARSON SHOWROOM

“What the formation of LCDQ has done is to create a design destination that has put this area on the map once again with its world-class shops and events.”

Philip Stites

Antiques dealer Lee Stanton was already a solid fixture in the L.A. design scene long before he opened his eponymous shop on La Cienega in 2005. But it was his contributions above and beyond offering fine antiques that has brought this area global attention. In 2008, Stanton, along with Philip Stites of Therien & Co. (now Dessin Fournir) and other showroom leaders not only established the La Cienega Design District as a non-profit business organization, but also launched the first-ever, multi-day event Legends of La Cienega, offering panel discussions, book signings, parties and the biggest kick-off celebration of all: The Legends Gala. “Both the names La Cienega Design Quarter and Legends Gala were inspired by our legendary heritage here,” Stanton said, “and we created both during tough economic times to pull our community together.” Stites added, “What the formation of LCDQ has done is to create a design

destination that has put this area on the map once again with its world-class shops and events.”

Katie LaBarge of the Marge Carson showroom, itself a sixty-year-strong resource to the design community, opened her La Cienega space in 2008 after years of contemplation on where to move the company and update its connection to the design community. “What drew me here was the camaraderie,” she said. “I found that there was less competition among the merchants and more of a neighborhood feeling here, which was exactly what I wanted. We often send clients to each other’s showrooms.”

In fact, the Marge Carson showroom hosts a much-anticipated annual luncheon at the Legends of La Cienega event; such is LaBarge’s dedication to the LCDQ community.

LA CIENEGA DESIGN QUARTER



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Peter Dunham, who was raised in France, spent his summers in Spain and was educated in England, opened his Hollywood at Home shop on the east side of La Cienega in 2007, but quickly found that he needed more space, which prompted his move across the street to even larger quarters to showcase his acclaimed hand-printed textiles and vintage furniture collections.

"I've lived in L.A. since 1998, and I've always loved the vintage architecture of this area," Dunham said. With a wide range of celebrity clients including Johnny Depp, Sharon Stone and Drew Barrymore calling on his shop regularly, Dunham is among those merchants bringing back the excitement and energy that John Nelson experienced in the area in the early 1960s.

With so many resources to be found here—Baker Furniture, Barclay Butera, Farrow & Ball, Harbinger, Suzanne Rheinstein's Hollyhock, Nathan Turner, Rose Tarlow Melrose House, Sherle Wagner and Tufenkian Carpets and many more—the district has been transformed above and beyond its Gallery Row beginnings into its own creation. That vision put forth by a handful of merchants back in the day has been surpassed in size and scope.

LCDQ co-founder Stanton said, "I believe this is all due to the heart and soul of businesses past and present in our district who have always shared the same goals—to enrich, inspire and celebrate great design."



ABOVE & RIGHT: HOLLYWOOD AT HOME

WINDOWS OF LEGEND

LCDQ'S SHOP WINDOWS,
FROM THE ANNUAL LEGENDS OF DESIGN EVENTS

