

# LOCALE

ESCAPE EDITION

#87

## SHAUN WHITE

KING OF THE HILL

### BARRIO BOUND

SPEND 24  
HOURS WITH  
US IN BARRIO  
LOGAN

### HOME SWEET HOME

7 REASONS WHY  
LITTLE ITALY'S  
LUMA IS MAJOR  
APARTMENT GOALS

### POUR DECISIONS

THESE COCKTAILS  
ARE SURE TO  
SHAKE UP YOUR  
HOLIDAY SEASON

### TROPIC LIKE IT'S HOT

PACK YOUR  
BAGS AND  
ENJOY THE BLISS  
OF OMNIA BALI



# HOMEGROWN PROS

THESE LOCAL EXPERTS SHARE WHY THEY'RE AT THE TOP OF THEIR GAME

WRITTEN BY: **NADINE BLANCO**

PHOTOGRAPHED BY: **BHADRI KUBENDRAN**

Creativity can be found anywhere, especially in the perpetually sunny paradise that is San Diego. Our Escape Experts work in very different fields, but they can attest to having fostered innovative artistry out of some of the most unlikely corners of their lives when they needed it the most. With their imaginative prowess, these San Diegans have gone on to forge some of the most revolutionary projects that America's Finest City has ever seen. It's no surprise that their work inspires many more creatives and entrepreneurs to do the same. Here, they share their tips for where to find inspiration and express creativity.



←  
Hallie Letter  
↗  
Blaine Tiongson  
↘  
Theresa Renfro



↖  
Ashley Goldman  
←  
Darrell Pilant  
↘  
Sara Bendrick





**THE GOLD HIVE**  
[www.thegoldhive.com](http://www.thegoldhive.com)  
 @thegoldhive  
 Photoshoot Location:  
**SAN DIEGO, CA**

The **DIY GIRL**

# ASHLEY GOLDMAN

Credentials: Founder, The Gold Hive

**MURAL MUSINGS**

• Goldman's home office has a mural she hand-painted herself based on a landscape etching dating to the 1600s. "It took me hundreds of hours of (wo)man power, but now I have something that nobody else in the entire world has!"

**STAY CLASSY**

• Goldman prefers to stick with the classics instead of adhering to trends. "I try to avoid quick trends and instead aim for classic styles that will fit the old home and withstand the test of time."



Inspired by the uniquely-designed homes of the 1970s, Ashley Goldman yearned for something similar when she and her husband purchased a 1915 craftsman bungalow in 2015. Ever since then, Goldman has constantly been renovating her vintage home. "We like the history of an old home and want to maintain that craftsmanship to last another century," says Goldman. Goldman finds inspiration everywhere—from social media to open houses in her own neighborhood. "Creativity comes when I apply the inspiration to a project in my home for a unique end result that's a blend of the things that I absorbed," she says.

**ROOM REDO**

• "Simply swapping out a light fixture, hanging an appropriately-sized piece of art and reducing clutter can completely transform a room," Goldman says. "Never underestimate the power of paint!"

The HOME AND GARDEN MERCHANT

# THERESA RENFRO

Credentials: Owner, en concordia

**THIRSTY SKIN**

• Renfro began hosting monthly "Cocktail + Clean Beauty" events to introduce her clients to new products, while also getting to know what they like.

**MY PREROGATIVE**

• "en concordia is like a big collage with one huge piece of 'because I wanted to,'" says Renfro.

**DEFINE THIS**

• "en concordia" means "in harmony."



Located in Point Loma, Theresa Renfro's en concordia is a home and garden boutique for consciously-curated products from brands who stay true to their vision and business ethos.

"For me, creativity is honoring myself as [an] individual while attempting to connect with someone else," says Renfro. In opening her shop, she was able to achieve a work-life balance without fear of failure or mom guilt. She says, "I'm proud to have taken the leap straight off the entrepreneurial cliff to pursue my interests and life's goals and have that decision actually benefit my daughters, rather than it being a trade-off."



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**THE LAFAYETTE HOTEL,  
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The **WOMAN WITH A PLAN**

## HALLIE LEITTER

Credentials: Director of Sales, The Lafayette Hotel, Swim Club & Bungalows

### A PIECE OF HISTORY

• Originally built in 1946, The Lafayette Hotel has been a favorite among classic celebrities. After decades of shuffling ownerships, the hotel was resurrected and returned to its former glory in 2011.

### OLD BUT NEW

• “The ‘Yesterday Today’ brand really represents what we’re trying to incorporate here,” Leitter said. “We restored the hotel to its original state, ‘Yesterday,’ but bring the essential comforts of ‘Today.’”



Hallie Leitter believes that one of the keys to well-executed ideas is to light up a room and be able to talk to every single person in that room. “My creativity comes from watching people and their reactions,” says Leitter, who adds that great things flourish out of people who are genuinely engaged in the moment. This is why Leitter and her team at The Lafayette Hotel completely submerge themselves into any new event or concept that comes their way. With a clear vision and all hands on deck, the results are often better than they could have imagined. Of course, loving what you do is another key component. “When you love what you do, the outcome sells itself,” Leitter says.

### PARTY OF THE YEAR

• The Lafayette Hotel is where you want to be to ring in 2019! Head to Lafayette where you’ll take a time machine straight into the ‘60s. “We’re all so proud and thrilled to entertain our guests in such a mod way,” Leitter notes.

The **RESORT PRO**

## DARRELL PILANT

Credentials: Senior Vice President and General Manager, Harrah’s Resort Southern California

### BASIC HUMAN NEEDS

• “We’re all human beings and we want interesting things to do,” says Pilant, who said that this was one of the main ideas behind Harrah’s Resort SoCal’s transformation.

### BEST VIEW IN THE HOUSE

• Pilant likes to visit the connection bridge between the resort towers. “It overlooks the entirety of the reservation and has a great view of Palomar Mountain.”

### SIP AND SWIM

• Harrah’s Resort SoCal’s swimming-pool complex is home to the only swim-up bar in Southern California.



Early in his career, Darrell Pilant loved being told things couldn’t be done. That admonition made him into the visionary he is today, but he may not have gotten there without embracing creativity early on. “Finding imaginative solutions to challenging problems is probably where my love for creativity started,” says Pilant. Since 2014, the resort has not only added more rooms, but has been outfitted with unmatched amenities such as a 400-foot-long lazy river, a craft cocktail bar and even its very own craft brewery—and they’re still pushing for more. “We decided that an elevated level of fun needed a place,” Pilant says. It’s no mistake that Harrah’s is located in Funnerr, California.



**HARRAH’S RESORT  
SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA**  
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**SARA BENDRICK**  
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 @sarabendrick  
 Photoshoot Location:  
**SAN DIEGO, CA**

*The* **LANDSCAPE DESIGNER**

# SARA BENDRICK

Credentials: Landscape Designer and Host, "I Hate My Yard"

**THE LUCKY ONE**

• Bendrick, who has a degree in Landscape Architecture, was chosen out of thousands of applicants to be the host of DIY Network's "I Hate My Yard."

**ALWAYS SUNNY**

• Bendrick loves sunflowers! "They completely brighten up a space in a matter of months with their warm, yellow flowers."



When Sara Bendrick asked the producers of DIY Network's "I Hate My Yard" why they chose her to host the show, they told her she had two things: credentials and passion. Bendrick's passion for art and nature is rooted in her early desire to learn by doing instead of watching. When she's not busy transforming clients' backyards into personalized oases on television, Bendrick conserves some of that zealotry for herself. "I have to give myself enough unscheduled work time to find my creative streak," says Bendrick, whose passion came full circle when she renovated her parents' overgrown yard into a cozy entertaining space.

**PRO TIPS**

• "Landscaping on a budget can create a lot of creative opportunities. You can use basic materials but arrange them or color them to make them unique to your yard," notes Bendrick.

*The* **POTTERY ARTIST**

# BLAINE TIONGSON

Credentials: President and Creative Director, Momma Pots

**ONE OF A KIND**

• All of Momma Pots' designs are custom made. Tionson and her team hand-pour and hand-paint each pot made to order, so no two are the same.

**POT IT LIKE IT'S HOT**

• Of all the plants that find new homes in her custom pottery, Tionson says that the ghost cactus might be her favorite.

**ROOTING FOR WOMEN**

• Tionson is particularly proud of Momma Pots' HGTV feature. "What inspires me more is successful women and to be able to go after your goals and accomplish them."



"I'm not one to be defeated. I had to do something," Blaine Tionson says after recounting a dark period in her life. That "something" was transforming her backyard into a lush park, leaving behind the rat race to explore her newfound passion for horticulture. Wanting to share the therapeutic benefits of gardening with others, Tionson started Momma Pots in 2017. She finds creativity in anything, particularly lines and colors of the world, which translates into her pottery designs. Hoping that her art will help people be more conscious of Mother Nature, Tionson adds, "Maybe they'll be inspired to look around and actually see all the natural beauty that's in their environment." ■



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