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A LOCAL DESIGN STUDIO IS BEAUTIFYING SAN DIEGO, ONE CHIC INTERIOR AT A TIME

BY MICHAEL BENNINGER

As San Diego's growing hip factor flourishes, one design studio is at the forefront of our city's urban enhancements, adding bells and whistles to some of the region's sharpest interiors.

Specializing in space planning and custom furniture, Bells & Whistles' team of three is comprised of designer/builder Jason St. John, his ex-wife and the firm's designer/craftswoman, Barbara Rourke, and their longtime cohort Jason Lane.

"We don't redesign stuff or remodel anything," says Rourke. "All of our projects are start-to-finish. We completely gut a place and then design everything that goes in it. We're the interior designer and we also build everything that we design."

Having worked together for nearly eight years, the Bells & Whistles team didn't always design complete environments. "We were building individual pieces of furniture for dozens of clients," says St. John. "A counter here, some couches there, tables, a bed, things like that. We realized early on, however, that it made more sense to offer our clients an entire package, an entire look, so that our ideas would come across a lot stronger."

To showcase their design prowess and help realize their clients' dreams, Bells & Whistles has since unleashed their dramatic concepts on Aubergine, The Loft (a student lounge at UCSD), Milo Shoes & Gallery, Starlite Lounge, Neighbourhood Boutique and Disconnected Salon.

The firm's next big project is a rooftop club downtown. The details are hush-hush for now, but the space's interior realm is certain to ring true.

INFO: allthebellsandwhistles.com



AUBERGINE, an upscale restaurant, sushi bar, nightclub and lounge in the Gaslamp, features a sculptural, cubist back bar; sleek, Gucci-esque acrylic lamps; custom-made cantilevered crocodile-skin barstools; Nelson lamps and mirrored walls.



A sole searcher's paradise on North Park's Ray Street, **MILO SHOES & GALLERY** sells hand-painted footwear from internationally-renowned artists. The store's semispherical cashier counter blends harmoniously with the curves of the sneaker display.



STARLITE LOUNGE'S hexagonal wooden entryway and immense stainless steel chandelier make the interior of this trendy India Street eatery and lounge look more like a movie set than a typical restaurant.



Get your hair cut (or waxed) or your teeth whitened at North Park's **DISCONNECTED SALON**, featuring custom-made hydraulic salon chairs and a uniquely inviting reception bar.



For Bells & Whistles, North Park's **NEIGHBOURHOOD BOUTIQUE** was a study in texture and material. A bold yellow wall is offset by a sleek mirrored walnut counter, custom gold chandelier and white chevron wall sculpture.