

# Santa Barbara

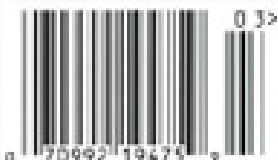
MAGAZINE

**HOMES &  
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RESOURCE GUIDE

Talina Hermann  
at home

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Ryan Brown and daughter Chloe lean on railings that he custom designed and built for his Santa Barbara home.

## Ryan Brown **FREE FROM "FLIPPING OUT"**

IT'S A DRIZZLY GRAY DAY as smoke wafts from the chimney of an unpretentious home on a winding Montecito lane. Inside, designer Ryan Brown plops onto a fluffy sofa near the fireplace, plucking snacks from a tray of sliced apples, cheeses, and crusty bread while a chocolate Labrador snoozes at his feet.

It's quiet. It's cozy. And it's a far cry from the frenetic pace and frequent freak-outs on Bravo's reality TV show *Flipping Out*, where Brown spent three seasons buying and renovating properties on camera while contending with budget snafus,

fussy clientele, and a notoriously snippy business partner.

Last year, Brown, 37, left the show to pursue his dream of living in Santa Barbara. Now, he and his partner, interior designer Dale Monchamp, and their 4-year-old daughter, Chloe, are enjoying what they call "a slower way of life"—a life where neighbors wave and stop to chat, where friends come up to go wine tasting, and where Brown can take Chloe for after-school romps on the beach. A life both sleek and simple, by design.

The decor in their rental home reflects the eclectic but

## SB PEOPLE



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Fountain from Acquisitions and iron-work and landscape by Brown Design; bed and nightstands by A. Rudin, Brown's own window coverings; dining table, fireplace tile, and mantle by Brown Design.

approachable style for which Brown became known to millions of viewers—dining room bedecked with industrial French sewing stools, walls adorned with wooden oars, and console table flanked by a pair of weathered temple monks. “They exude peace and tranquility,” says the designer, whose style has shifted over the years. “Originally, it was very clean and modern. Now I’m definitely more contemporary with vintage and antique pieces mixed in. It just warms things up.”



**“SANTA BARBARA EMBODIES THE THINGS I LOVE ABOUT EUROPE—A STUNNING COASTLINE MADE UP OF QUAIN T COVES, GREAT CULTURE, AND WONDERFUL ARCHITECTURE.”**

Brown grew up in an Oxnard beach community, the son of a custom homebuilder. “I was dragged from job site to job site,” he says. “My dad would drive around, point out houses and say, ‘What’s wrong with that building?’ He was often teaching scale, as in windows being too large or small for a house, or arches being too tall and narrow. We’d come up to Santa Barbara and look at the Spanish architecture and he’d say, ‘This is the way homes are supposed to be built.’”

As a young man living in Los Angeles, Brown worked in a furniture showroom whose clients sought his design advice. “I was exposed to so many great houses, and my design business grew from there,” he says. Before long, he was “flipping” homes: buying, redesigning, then selling. “I’d do it all,” Brown says, “from the plumbing to the toothbrushes.”

He was working with business partner Jeff Lewis when Bravo approached about a show based on their high-pressure jobs. For three seasons, Brown charmed viewers as the cool-headed foil to Lewis’s stress magnet, but the tension—though it made for good TV—made for poor working conditions.

Ready to make a change, Brown and Monchamp consid-

ered leaving their Los Feliz home and moving abroad. Then they realized they didn't have to. "Santa Barbara embodies the things I love about Europe," Brown says, "a stunning coastline made up of quaint coves, great culture, and wonderful architecture." He's crazy about the Santa Barbara County Courthouse: "Sometimes at night, when it's all lit, I just sit and I stare at it. It's such a marvel."

Together, the couple runs Brown Design out of offices in Santa Barbara and Los Angeles—and hopes to soon open a retail store in town with their handpicked home accessories and furniture. Meanwhile, they stroll farmers markets, poke through Upstairs at Pierre Lafond, and tour local home sales, just for fun. "I could go through open houses every single day," Brown says, laughing. "I just love houses! What else can I say?" ■

## FROM HOUSE TO HOME

### *Ryan's tips for personalizing a rental*

**PLANTS** transform a space and bring life and warmth into a house. When we moved in, I bought olive trees in containers and put them in the backyard, and I buy these great succulent arrangements in sandstone containers at the Montecito farmers market. I find they look great in the house or outside. And they are both things that I can take with me when I leave.

**WINDOW COVERINGS** dress up a room, define the space, and make it feel more tailored. You can also bring color into the walls that way. Everybody has these drapery panels now that aren't expensive, or you can do Roman shades in bamboo or natural fiber.

**FAMILY PHOTOS** make a room feel more lived in. I like to print them all in a sepia tone (it's warmer than black-and-white) and you can even do this on your computer now. They can be all different sizes and shapes, but it's important to keep your frames consistent. Let the pictures really be the part that jumps out at you. ■■