

# A Charitable Take on Design

THE PHILHARMONIC HOUSE OF DESIGN RETURNS FOR THE LATEST IN LIVING DECADENTLY



One of the most luxuriously designed and well-appointed French-inspired estates overlooking Newport Harbor and surrounding coastlines just made its debut. The Philharmonic Society of Orange County opened the Crystal Cove masterpiece February 26 for the annual House of Design, and it is nothing short of spectacular. Open for the public to tour Tuesday through Sunday from March 1 through March 27, the house is also available to rent for private and corporate events.

Considered to be one of the most ambitious and stately Houses of Design since its inception, no detail has been left to the imagination. Built by Haigh Builders,

Inc., the sprawling, 10,000-plus-square-foot Provençal-inspired estate features a theater, a wine-tasting room, sweeping ocean views, a separate guest casita, walnut and stone flooring throughout, numerous outdoor fire pits, and an infinity pool with spa.

"This home has been built with attention to the finest details," says Sabra Bordas of the Philharmonic House of Design Board. "The woods are lighter, the beams smaller and fireplaces finer. It differs in scale from the Tuscan theme, and the floating staircase adds a freer look."

Aptly dubbed *Maison De La Mer*, the estate is luxury at its best. Modern amenities mixed with floating staircases

and spectacular views are some of the strongest statements the house makes. The most coveted and influential designers Southern California has to offer transform the house into a design mecca behind the scenes.

Fifteen esteemed and award-winning Southern California designers are handpicked to showcase their individual talents within the estate's rooms. Bringing everything from velvety soft window treatments, inset fabric panels and upholstered headboards, the designers' creative visions culminate in an unparalleled venue where design meets music and charity. "We're revisiting things in a different way this year," says Frank

Pitman of Frank Pitman Design, who is designing three of this year's spaces, including the home theater. "The French detail is more apparent in this house, and the introduction of some handsome pastels to the color palette is refreshing," he says.

Months in the making, the Philharmonic House of Design offers not only a show-stopping location, but a taste of luxury. "We chose a mix of exotic fabrics and items that reflect what we see in nature ... colors that are soft, fresh and lively," says Melinda Ritz of Melinda Ritz Interiors.

Giving the Philharmonic House of Design another layer of interest, the public is welcome to meet the designers behind each of the coveted rooms. "The designers or their representatives are frequently in their spaces to greet guests," says Bordas. The designers are available on Thursday nights throughout the event to meet their guests and give a more in-depth understanding of their vision.

Since its inception in 1954, the Philharmonic Society of Orange County has been the oldest and most recognized regional music organization. Reaching nearly 200,000 local students annually, the Philharmonic Society of Orange County's youth program has been nationally acknowledged for its efforts to expand musical awareness and development. Having produced more than 1,500 no-cost musical events to both public and private schools around the country, the society is considered one of the major catalysts for educational development. Offering an array of professional musicians, well-appointed docents and extraordinary musical events, the society has been a continual contributor to cultural and musical expansion throughout the region.

The guidelines for choosing which house is to become the next Philharmonic House of Design are quite stringent. Lot size, square footage, accessibility, community awareness and attention to fine architectural details are all carefully considered before the unveiling. Many of the chosen showcase homes of the past have been graciously offered for use by



the builders and have proved successful in assisting in the sale of the home. Currently available for purchase, this year's Philharmonic House of Design is slated to sell during or shortly after the event closes in March because of the publicity the event brings.

Following the close of the event, a large portion of the custom-made furnishings are offered for purchase, often at deep discounts. One-of-a-kind antiques, intricate

chandeliers, hand-tufted rugs, engaging window treatments and even bedding are made available at the discretion of the designers themselves. Using industry connections and resources made both by local and international artisans specifically for the showcase house typically prove to be an investment worth making.

*Tour the masterpiece: [philharmonicsociety.org](http://philharmonicsociety.org)*

