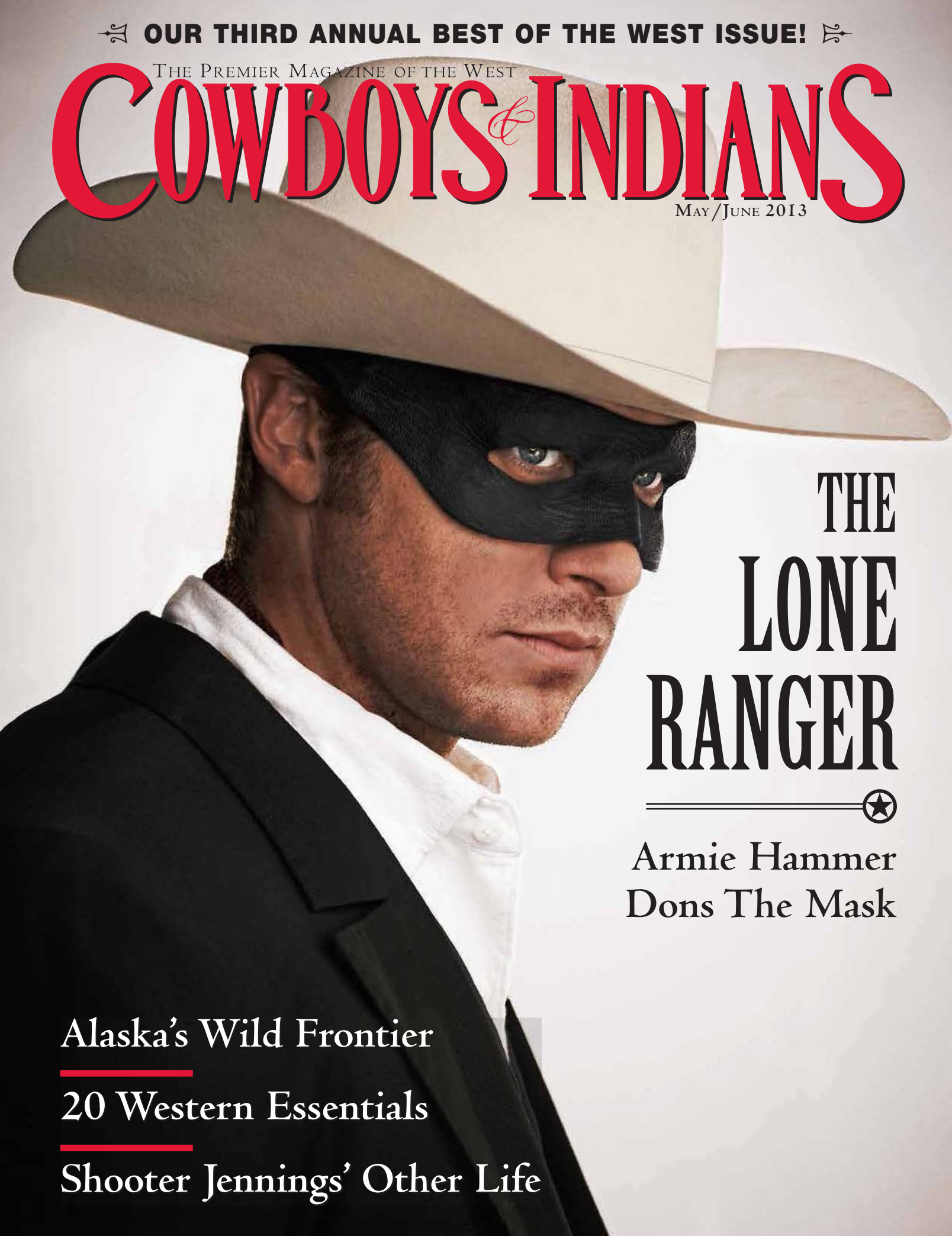


OUR THIRD ANNUAL BEST OF THE WEST ISSUE!

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COWBOYS & INDIANS

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THE LONE RANGER

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WANTING A RESPITE FROM THEIR BUSY MANHATTAN LIFE, A FAMILY BUILDS A PRIVATE RETREAT ON A HISTORIC RANCH PRESERVE ALONG CALIFORNIA'S CENTRAL COAST.



By Allyn Hulteng
Photography by Matthew Millman

RENOWNED FOR ITS SCENIC BEAUTY AND YEAR-ROUND temperate climate, Northern California's Central Coast fosters a lifestyle of relaxation centered on quaint communities with abundant outdoor recreation. Many who visit are inspired to move to the region, and no one understands its attraction better than interior designer Barbara Scavullo. "There's a warmth and casualness to life here that is rare," she says.

Based in nearby San Francisco, Scavullo has helped many clients establish new roots along the Central Coast. One such family found a private escape on its Santa Lucia Preserve, a stunning 20,000-acre historic ranch property mere minutes from Carmel-by-the-Sea. "The family lives in Manhattan, but the husband attended Stanford and always had a fond connection with Northern California," Scavullo says. So when he and his wife decided to build a vacation retreat, they returned to the West Coast and chose a location on the ranch.

Home to just 300 families, the Santa Lucia Preserve is held in a conservation trust in order to protect its wide-open spaces and native habitat in perpetuity. "Gorgeous views of the mountains and the Pacific, miles of trails through wooded hills, plus wonderful amenities," Scavullo describes. "It is the complete antithesis of East Coast life, which was highly appealing to them." After the Stanford grad selected a secluded lot on a promontory overlooking the beautiful Carmel Valley, he hired Scavullo as the principal designer and gave her a single directive. "He wanted the house to have the 'barefoot freedom of summer,'" she says.

As is customary in the region, the outdoor living areas would be as

Connected to the main residence by an outdoor corridor, "the barn" is inspired by Spanish colonial architecture popular in the Central Coast region and is ideally decorated for gathering and entertaining.





important as those indoors. So architect Hart Howerton conceptualized a courtyard-style entrance connecting to a series of distinct living spaces. "It's a design rooted in Spanish colonial architecture, which is prominent in California and was also the vernacular for the original buildings on the ranch property," Scavullo notes.

From the courtyard, the main entrance leads into a large, open-concept space housing the great room, kitchen, and dining room. Inspired by historic national park lodges of the 1920s and '30s and infused with the casualness of old California, the interior conjures a warm ambience. Autumnal tones in rich ocher, brown, burnt orange, and red work in concert with the wood beam ceilings and walnut floors, beckoning guests into the home.

In the center of the space, a free-standing fireplace presents a dual focal point—one side facing the great room and the other facing the formal dining area. Far from feeling stuffy,

OPPOSITE: The dining room, intentionally designed with an informal feel, boasts a vintage table and chairs that look out onto the home's back patio through glass-paneled doors. **ABOVE:** Separated from the dining room by the central free-standing fireplace, the main living area likewise reflects the casualness of old California, featuring overstuffed seating, dark wood accent furniture and rafters, and rich autumnal tones. **RIGHT:** The French doors in the dining room open to the private patio, where additional seating allows the family to dine outdoors and enjoy the Central Coast's scenic landscape and pleasant climate.





the dining room is light and airy due to a wall of windows and glazed French doors that open onto a protected patio. The room is minimally furnished with a vintage wood table and chairs set beneath a classic wagon wheel chandelier. Even the flooring was designed with subtleties that suggest casual dining.

“We used walnut floorboards and set concrete grout in between each piece, giving the floor a tile-like appearance,” explains the designer. “Altogether the space has a wonderful unstudied quality that does not look like we worked too hard on it.”

Down the hall beyond the great room, the guest bedroom enjoys the same orientation as the dining room with an expansive view to the west. Simple yet refined, the room exudes rustic elegance. An intricately tooled leather headboard harkens to the Spanish colonial history and brings a touch of Western sophistication to the room, while turned-wood lamps on the nightstands and a vintage bench at the foot of the bed suggest a more bucolic aesthetic.

ABOVE: Boasting a second-story balcony that looks out across the valley below, the master suite is a haven of serenity with an intimate corner fireplace and refined furnishings. “Everything in this room is rich in a simple way,” says designer Barbara Scavullo. **LEFT:** The connecting private bath likewise embodies the laid-back elegance of the Central Coast, taking advantage of a neutral color palette and understated décor. A windowed nook fills the room with natural light and provides a cozy spot for lounging while taking in the surrounding beauty.

For visitors to feel similarly at home when washing up, the guest bath features an old-style claw-foot soaking tub as well as a separate modern shower. “The tub is incredibly inviting and comfortable,” Scavullo notes. “And it’s completely private, even with the windows—that’s one of the beauties of this house.”

But the guest accommodations can’t compare to the master suite in luxury. At the far end of the main structure, the bedroom is peaceful and smartly designed with classic furnishings and warm neutral tones. “Everything in this room is rich in a simple way,” says Scavullo. Exposed wood on the ceiling and gleaming walnut floors provide a beautiful contrast to the ochre-colored walls. A corner fireplace, typical of colonial architecture, adds a measure of grandeur, while French doors open onto a balcony with a view of the valley below.

When not enjoying the serenity of their private haven, the couple likes to gather with family and friends in a big space they call “the barn.” “It’s used for just about everything. There’s a game room, TV room, even a place for overflow guests,” Scavullo says. Separate from the main residence but connected by an outdoor corridor, the barn is the one place in the home where the designers used exuberant color. “The palette is still in autumnal tones, but much more saturated and lively here.”

Off to one side of the room, four daybeds serve dual duty, providing comfy spots for lounging by day and extra beds at night. But the barn’s highlight is the opposing sitting and entertaining area. A hemp rope sofa designed by Parisian artist

Christian Astuguevieille sits directly across from an adjustable oak armchair by Blackman Cruz, and between the two designer pieces is an equally captivating coffee table made from a double block of a natural tree trunk that’s been peeled of its bark.

“This is a wonderful example of how the entire home is furnished with an eclectic collection of natural and simple but rich pieces that go well together,” says the designer. From its décor to its architectural design, the ranch is a harmonious embodiment of the Central Coast’s relaxed elegance and tranquility. “[The owners] come here, unwind, and take a deep breath. It’s the casual lifestyle they were seeking.”

Resources

Barbara Scavullo, principal designer
ScavulloDesign Interiors
San Francisco
415.658.8774, www.scavullogdesign.com

Hart Howerton, architect
San Francisco
415.439.2200, www.harthowerton.com

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