

AT HOME WITH ... >

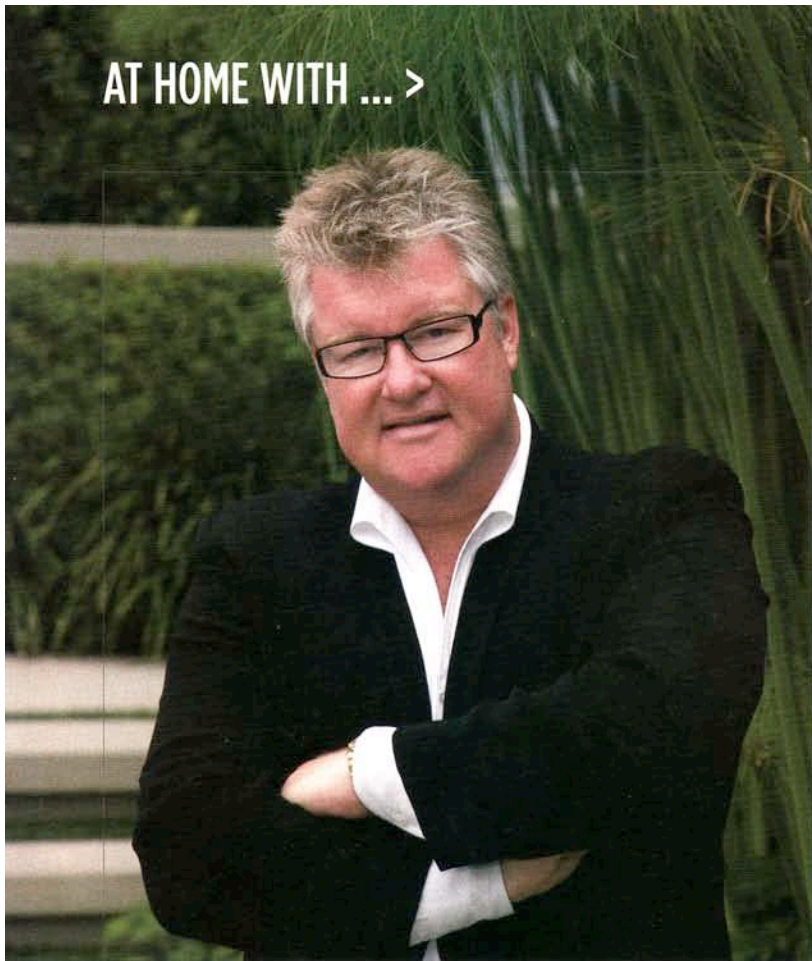


PHOTO BY JOHN BLOM PHOTOGRAPHY

Sheldon Harte

One cannot grow up in a Cliff May house, spend years antique-hunting with mom and not become a fabulous interior designer. At least, Sheldon Harte can't. The founder of Harte Brownlee & Associates may be one of the best kept design secrets on the West Coast, even though he counts some of the most prominent names in the financial and real estate world among his clients. Here, Harte talks to *Coast* about his personal style at home in Laguna Beach.

Aesthetic sensibility of the home

My home has a very collected and comfortable sensibility. I started collecting California plein air paintings in the '80s and have since mixed up the collection with more modern pieces from artists such as Mark Beck, Jeff Krueger and Linda Christianson.

Favorite room

Our family room is where my partner and I meet at the end of the day to relax and rejuvenate, discuss the day's events, eat dinner, and watch a movie or possibly something recorded on TiVo. It has three distinct seating areas and a great antique French

desk. So many different things can be going on at once, yet we can still be together. The room has great, rustic, quartzite floors and a wonderful array of textural fabrics and furniture, all sublimely comfortable. The view of the pool and private backyard is sensational, too.

Favorite chair

An 18th century French Fauteuil chair that I bought in Paris and is signed by Louis XVI's cabinet maker. It has perfect lines and proportions.

The one thing he can't live without at home

The kitchen. It is a wonderful space that is beautiful and perfectly laid out. The appliances are all the latest versions from each manufacturer and help to make cooking a great way to create, relax and spend time with my partner and occasionally, family and friends.

Bedroom sheets and linens are by...

Barbara Martin Custom Linens made of beautiful hand-embroidered Egyptian cotton. They are amazing when you slip into them at the end of a long day.

On his bedside table

The book *Culture Code*, pictures of people who are near and dear in simple silver frames, and an antique wood vessel filled with an array of exotic orchids.

Wine or cocktails for entertaining

If I'm in the mood for a cocktail, I love a Maker's Mark Perfect Manhattan in the cool months, and Hangar One Mandarin Blossom Vodka and soda in the warmer months. Otherwise, it might be a newly discovered red wine that we just picked up on a trip to the Russian River Valley over Labor Day.

Intimate gatherings vs. big parties

I like both types of gatherings, although it is usually smaller dinners on the deck overlooking Emerald Bay and beyond. Sometimes, we have a big soirée for a birthday or the holidays, which is fun because we pull out all of the stops.

If your house had a signature soundtrack, the song would be

"At Last" by Etta James.

Fall at home

Fall is a time to rejoice that we have our town back and the days and the evenings are still warm. It is my favorite time in Laguna. I start thinking about the upcoming holidays and start dreaming up what might be the theme for this year's holiday décor and festivities. -LISA LIDDANE