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The Society Edit

Sheldon Harte's New Book Launch at Hudson Grace



Lee Stanton, Ann Backen, and Sheldon Harte (photo by Medeighnia Westwick)

by Joanne A Calitri

Hello Loves, and lovers of luxury home interiors! **Sheldon Harte**, the luxury interior designer, celebrated his first book titled, *The Refined Home: Sheldon Harte*, at Hudson Grace on Friday, October 9, with a reception, meet & greet, and book signing. The event was hosted by Montecito Antiquarian, **Lee Stanton**, owner of Lee Stanton's Private Stash in the upper village, and **Ann Backen** of Backen & Backen Architects where she designed their regenerative well-being line. Stanton is a noted antiquarian and 30-year collector of 17th, 18th and 19th century British and European antiques.

Harte, the founder of Harte Davis Interior Design, said that writing *The Refined Home* was bookmarked by celebrating his 40 years as an interior designer. The glossy coffee table tome features his work in 13 different client luxury homes. Here we find a bird's eye view of the interiors of a Sonoma County wine country home where he mixes art and antiques, a contemporary San Francisco apartment, beach houses, and more. The book text is by **Mitchell Owens** and **Hadley Keller**, who gave the chapters clever titles like "Sensual Surfaces," "Breaking with Tradition," "Modernist Masterpiece," and "Mid-Century Dream." Harte's business Partner & Senior Designer is **Derrick Davis**.

Key to Harte's design work, is that he does not have "one" stylistic look he applies to all his clients. As he told me during our one-on-one interview at Hudson Grace, "I design for the client, so my range of work is as vast as my client list." Admirers of Harte's work remark on his keen ability to use a mix of antiques, vintage, custom creations, art, contemporary craft, and collectible design.

When I arrived at Hudson Grace to meet with Harte, I was greeted by his publicist, **Tamar Mashigian**, principal at Tamar Mashigian P.R. & Marketing, and Hudson Grace manager, **Medeighnia Westwick**. They shared that the conversation just before I arrived was focused on horses because a long-time client of Harte, who is featured in *The Refined Home*, has a son and daughter-in-law who live in Montecito and own a large horse ranch. They invited **John Combs**, Harte's husband, to keep his horses there. (A move to Montecito likely in the mix?) I then met Combs who shared that he influenced Harte to do the book.

From there, the conversation turned to Mashigian and Combs recommending to Harte a title of the book, neither of which suggestions were used. It was when speaking with Stanton I discovered it was he who titled Harte's book, *The Refined Home*. Stanton said, "I've been friends with Sheldon for 30 years, and also a client of his. When Sheldon first told me about his book, he wanted some ideas on the title. I came up with *The Refined Home*, because that is what his style is, refined." Harte added, "Lee is my favorite resource in the world, we travel together to buy for our clients, we take our clients on buying trips."

Meeting and interviewing Harte was a delight. He is a native Californian on his dad's side and his mom is from Texas. He grew up in the Bret Harte

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region of California, named after his great-great-great-grandfather. On moving to Montecito Harte explained,

"I keep telling John that I have this calling to be up here, [Montecito] I've been in this business since 1984, and every time we come up, we are good friends with Lee [Stanton], I've always felt like I'm drawn here, I belong here, I need to be here. So we are looking and figuring it out, and need a place for John's horses."

And on how he became a designer, Harte shared, "My mom was a clothing designer who took me antiquing as a kid. When I was young, I wanted to be either a haberdasher or own a Cadillac agency. As I got older I started appreciating houses. I love design. I love people. To me, it's about working with the client and doing something for them. I love doing it all – whether it's a ranch, or a contemporary apartment – it gives me great joy in life. And yes, Tamar and John kept bugging me to do a book, and now we are working on a second book because I have some new projects."

Other noted reception attendees were owner of Black + Steel Studio **Briana Hesse**, and leading Montecito luxury real estate peeps **Nancy Kogevinas** and **Cristal Clarke**.

411: *www.instagram.com/sheldonharte*

Till next week loves! XxJAC



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