



Boomerang

FOR MODERN

David Skelley: 25 years of bringing classic modern design to San Diego



Copyright 2010 by David Skelley/Boomerang for modern.
The book author retains sole copyright to his contributions to
this book.

On the cover; Higgins fused glass Rondelay.



The Blurb-provided layout designs and graphic elements are
copyright Blurb Inc., 2009. This book was created using the Blurb
creative publishing service. The book author retains sole
copyright to his or her contributions to this book.



This little book is most
sincerely dedicated to
my incredible family and
friends who encouraged
me, supported me,
consoled me, believed in
me and ultimately helped
make my dream
possible.

David Skelley

*Boomerang
for modern
September 2007*





Boomerang

Boomerang
FOR MODERN



Chapter One "atomic garage" 11

July 1985 to January 1987
3770 Park Bl. San Diego, CA.

Chapter Two "growing up" 21

January 1987 to May 1997
3795 Park Bl. San Diego, CA.

Chapter Three "refining" 37

July 1997 to July 2007
2040 India St. San Diego, CA.

Chapter Four "home at last" 65

September 2007 to July 2010
2475 Kettner Bl. San Diego, CA



Boomerang's entry circa 2007

Introduction

This book is a personal retrospective and celebration of the evolution of my mid-century design shop, "Boomerang for modern," from July 1985 to July 2010. For some time I had been collecting interesting fifties modern and post-war atomic-inspired items. I found the use of creative new materials (for the time) paired with ingenious designs, textures and finishes thrilling for me to discover. I had to learn more about these things and the people who created them. Furnishing my apartment with these items was a passion and when my collection got out of control, I figured opening a shop was a way to continue collecting that would make sense for me. Besides, I always wanted to own my own business and here was my chance. When I first envisioned a shop of my own, I knew I wanted to present something very different, fun and unique to San Diego. Something engaging that would evolve while holding true to my original concept. In many ways, something that reached further than its four walls. I also felt it should fill a social need as a gathering place for interested people to exchange ideas and experiences. Needless to say, due to the products sold, I found this the tiniest niche and the customer base equally tiny. Staying afloat would be a challenge! As most people didn't yet "get it" I felt I needed to create my own customer through promotion and education. And I must say the folks who patronize this establishment tend to be the most interesting, educated, classy and unique people I have ever met.

In the beginning, mid-century modern was not yet on the public's radar screen and I had little competition in the search for inventory. After a few years, all of a sudden it was hip and new competitors were out there scouring the estate sales, flea markets and auctions. Finding appropriate items became a huge challenge. These days, most pieces come via phone calls and e-mail inquiries, usually from the original owners. This has the additional benefit of the stories that go with the items and it also explains the great condition of most things I sell.

Over the years Boomerang has established an international cast of customers and friends. Items purchased here have found their ways into homes around the world. Very satisfying.

David Skelley

OPEN THIS FRIDAY!

Everyone's set...

for the best lunch yet!



Thanks to ...



3770 PARK BOULEVARD
SAN DIEGO, CA 92103
TELEPHONE 295-1953

DECOR
BAKELITE
CLOCKS
LIGHTING
40's 50's 60's
TABLES
ADVERTISING
FABRIC
KITCHEN
ATOMIC
RADIOS
ART
KITCH
SEATING
AND MORE
11:30 - 5:30
TUES - SUN

BOOMERANG



Chapter One "*atomic garage*"

3770 Park Bl. (July 1985 to January 1987)

A tiny 9'x11' former garage space at the charming but somewhat dilapidated Egyptian Court Apartments became Boomerang's first location on July 25th, 1985. Built in the early 1920's, the complex was designed in the then popular "Egyptian Revival" architectural style, a tribute to the discovery of King Tut's tomb. After many years of waiting tables and doing garage sales on the weekends, it seemed it was time for me to do something on my own and worthwhile with the wild lamps, streamlined toasters and space-age clocks that I had been collecting. Opening a new shop seemed like a good idea. The space fit my needs for getting my feet wet as it was conveniently located across the street from my apartment and the rent was

only \$75.00 per month. A struggle? A big fat YES! Even though it was gaining popularity in major cities around the world, this post-war modern thing was not yet on San Diego's radar. I really had my work cut out promoting mid-century design. To attract attention, I put a mint-green washing machine with pink mannequin legs sticking out in front of the shop every day.

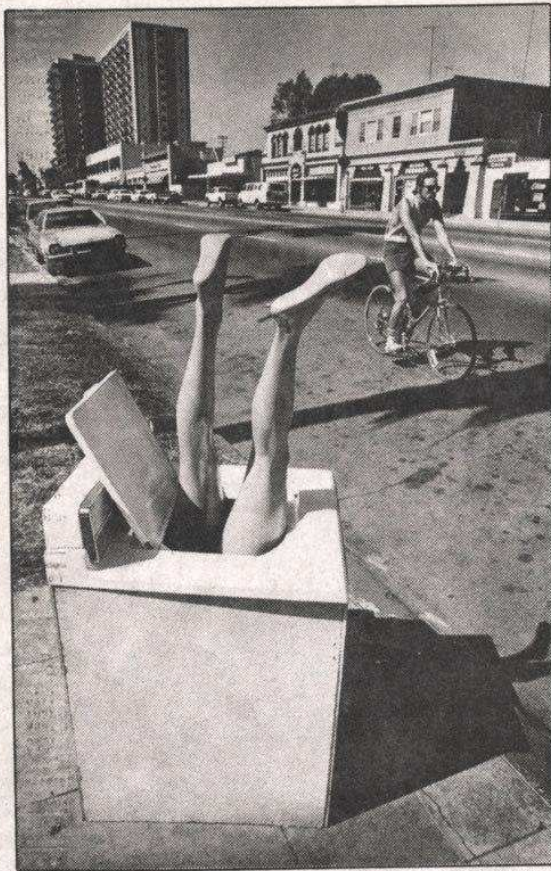
I went as far as dressing in period clothes and playing vintage LP's in the shop. As difficult as it was in the early days, I decided that I was not going to give up and return to waiting tables; I was going to see it through and make it work somehow. Happily it was unique enough that I was at least able to capture the interest of the print and television media. People in the business responded immediately and have remained great friends and associates to this day. There were a few other shops that started around the same time and handled similar merchandise,

though each had their own styles and approaches. You may remember the pioneering Michael Dunsford Gallery (1981), followed by Inside, Metro, Divine Decadence and Papyrus. All are long gone but helped pave the way and are remembered with respect and warmth.

In the early days I was still struggling with the name. I wanted a name that was fun to say as well as write. One that sounded successful, was memorable, and if possible was early in the alphabet and so early on any lists. Two other names I considered were Galaxy 500 and Atomic Planet! First it was just plain Boomerang named for the iconic and cliché design motif of the fifties. A few months later it was Boomerang Fifties Fabulous. Then it went to Boomerang Décor and then Boomerang mid-century. I finally landed on the current “Boomerang for modern” several years later, which is a small

tribute to Edward Wormley and "Dunbar for modern." After a year and a half of selling Rocket Ship inspired lamps and sparkly Kidney Bean shaped coffee tables, a larger space became available across the street just below my apartment! It was a huge and frightening decision but I felt I had to make the leap.

SAN DIEGO COUNTY DIGEST



VINCE COMPAGNONE / Los Angeles Times

Advertising art — A bicyclist seems unaware of a washing machine with legs on Park Boulevard in front of the Boomerang secondhand store. Owner David Skelley placed the 1957 Maytag out front eight months ago.



Previous page, the mannequin legs caught the eye of an LA Times journalist in 1986.

Above is a typical day at Boomerang circa 1985.

Maxine, one of three shop mannequins, is getting ready for a picnic at the beach. The early windows were always playful and had a humorous theme.





Above is a selection of the merchandise circa 1986. Those days most items came from garage sales, thrift shops and swap meets. It usually took LOTS of work to make them saleable. Kitchen clocks, plastic radios, fiberglass shaded lamps, a Saturn coffee urn, wrought iron stands, a remote juke box and Bakelite jewelry were the picks of the day.

"With religious intensity I scour the yellow pages for mid-20th Century shops. It's one of the first things I do once my partner, Peter, and I settle into the hotel room. He is here for a conference. I am here on a mission.

The next day, I grab a cab. A place called Boomerang sounds promising. The cab leaves me at the corner of Kalmia and Kettner. I walk a few steps, find myself in front of the display window of Boomerang, and peer into the shop. I get giddy.

This is going to be wonderful!

Good design and quality will sell itself. But there was a man named David, the shop owner, who met my questions regarding price -- or history, with such warmth, knowledge, and good conversation that I returned to the shop later that day (important things cannot wait until tomorrow), with Peter in tow.

Peter and I live in Brussels, Belgium. That is the final destination for the Herman Miller, Eames designed, DTM-10 (Dining Table Metal), and the four white fiberglass side chairs with original Eiffel tower bases we purchased at Boomerang.

Brussels is also where you will find a hearty recommendation, fond memories, and anticipation of future visits to a mid-20th Century shop in San Diego called Boomerang."

Charles & Peter

"We first discovered Eames furniture in the 1950's while visiting New York City. Subsequently in the 1960's we had the opportunity to visit the Eames house and met Ray. We told her about saving up so we could buy their furniture. She was delighted. We found Boomerang in the 1990's and were happy to see Eames furniture displayed beautifully there. David has since become a good friend. Congratulations on your twenty-fifth anniversary. "

Ginny and Jack C.

"Boomerang is much more than a shop. Like its contents, it always appears to me to be timeless. And like a fine museum, no matter how often you visit, there is always something new to see and an instant kinship with fellow 'clients.' It's almost like an unspoken understanding, or a communally held secret. The simple joy of interaction with an object, but an object that has a soul. A chair that has a story to tell or maybe a table that has the patina of decades of service. Whatever seems to catch your fancy, invariably there's more to it than meets the eye. And orchestrating this ensemble of delights, like a conductor sitting omnipresent on his Aeron throne is David. His eye as sharp as surgical steel and voice gentle as a your favorite Uncle's. The line between shop and curator is indistinguishable, for they are synonymous. For a quarter-century, he has provided ground zero for lovers of great design. Everyone from the aficionados to those who simply want to have a nice chat is treated to the same hospitality. Always as accommodating as he is knowledgeable, David almost seems to be from another time. There is no doubt that the shop's longevity is tied to his understated likeableness. Based on that alone, in a world of increasing uncertainty, you can be certain that Boomerang will continue to be what it is, and always will be . . . much more than a shop."

Gary L.

"At auction years ago, I bought a mid-century desk that we believed to be from the offices of Alcoa. David saw it; years later he called me, having found a version of the same desk with a larger wood top, not the smaller white formica top desk I had. Nothing escapes his mid-century brain. Now we have the executive version and the associate version of these big aluminum sided desks.

And finally, I completed my Malcolm Leland Space Bank collection at David's. All three spacemen sit proudly on my desk."

Alan J.

BOOMERANG

3795



Chapter Two *"growing up"*

3795 Park Bl. (January 1987 to May 1997)

The second shop was positively enormous by comparison, 1,000 square feet. It was overwhelming to me. So much so that I invited Kal Powers, a good friend who had expressed interest, to share the space. She was thrilled. We had a great time fixing up and selling the pieces we had found at various sales though it was still a real struggle. Eventually the dogbone sofas and atomic-inspired kitsch items were replaced by the timeless classic designs from the era. I was growing and learning along with the rest of the world about real rib-stickin' classic modern design and it felt great to really zoom in on my chosen niche. Though you have to remember these were pre-internet days and information was not so easy to come by.

It was rather dicey at times researching these (then unknown and mostly forgotten) items. There were no auction records to go by, no eBay or Craig's List to compare pricing. It all had to be done on the fly, mostly at the library by thumbing through old books as new books on the subject were yet to be published.

Kal eventually moved to Los Angeles to start an upholstery business so I invited former co-worker Jeff Spence to share the space. During this time, the mid-century modern movement was beginning to catch on. You were now seeing ads with lanky models splayed out in colorful Jacobsen Egg chairs or movies using these iconic pieces in their set designs. Finally validation in a strange way! It was then that the public really started to make the connection and realize there were sources to acquire these items here in San Diego. Early in 1993 I learned that Herman Miller was about to reintroduce some of their



The San Diego Union/Charles Starr

Bringing back "fun" furniture from what they call the Golden Age of the 1950s are David Skelley and Kal Powers.

Furniture: Fortune seen from nifty '50s

Continued from B-1

humored then; and the boomerang comes back to tickle us now," he says.

"It's a cult," says Powers.

"An acquired taste," says Skelley. In their previous, separate work with refurbishing and selling relics of that past age, the two say they noticed that many customers came, scoffed, looked again, said well maybe, bent closer, said not bad and then proclaimed it good and paid.

"To dislike 1950s furniture is to dislike Wally Cleaver, my idol," says Skelley, a high priest defying unbelievers to toss dead cats into his sanctuary.

Wally Cleaver was a character in the 1950's TV show "Leave It to Beaver." They say they watched The Beaver in living rooms dating back to the dark ages before The Golden Age.

"My parents had this white sectional sofa which, thank God, they finally have gotten rid of, after 50 years," says Powers.

Says Skelley: "I grew up with

Early American Maple and lots of ruffled lamp shades. Our living room looked like the setting for a really boring play."

He says he was jealous of friends: "Their folks had lamps that looked like rocket ships." Lamps that launched the 1950s.

The pair say 1980s furniture lacks the boomerang flair. "It's generic stuff," says Powers.

Skelley for the past year ran a closet-sized Boomerang across the street. To the bigger shop he has brought his symbol, a 1950s top-loading Maytag washer painted mint green. It has a pair of mannequin legs rising out of the washing chamber.

"Some people saw it out front and came to rescue the woman," he says. "Two fellows in a pickup came by and tried to kidnap her. The 1950s is life."

"The Maytag and legs we brought over. And we are adding background music. Lots of Xavier Cugat and also Julie London, who had an awful voice but don't you love it?" says Skelley.

classic pieces so I dashed off a letter of interest to them. Our letters literally crossed in the mail as a day or two later I received an invitation from Herman Miller Inc. asking Boomerang to be one of the first 25 retailers for the re-introduction of their classics--seating, tables and case goods by their iconic designers,

Charles and Ray Eames,

George Nelson and

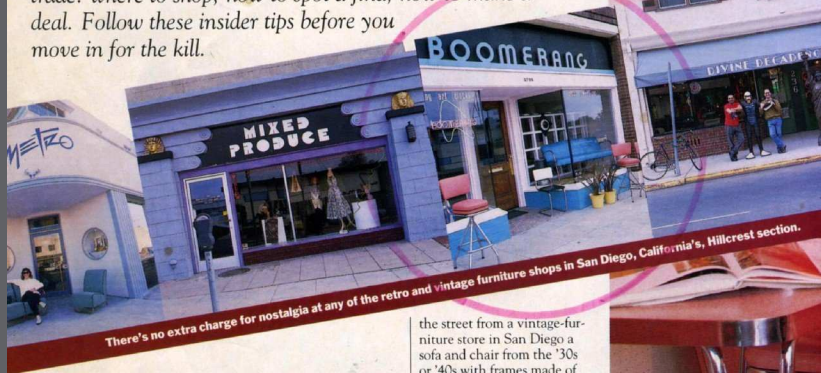
Isamu Noguchi. The timing was perfect as good vintage pieces were getting harder to find and coordinating the sale of original pieces with current production pieces made good business sense.

It was and remains a perfect fit.

BARGAIN HUNTING COAST TO COAST

Through the years, Boomerang has grown and evolved along with my taste and the taste of the public, but the focus on that magical post-war era has remained constant. After ten years in this space, I was ready for a change and I decided to relocate Boomerang.

Furnishings are fair game when you know the tricks of the trade: where to shop, how to spot a find, how to make a deal. Follow these insider tips before you move in for the kill.



There's no extra charge for nostalgia at any of the retro and vintage furniture shops in San Diego, California's, Hillcrest section.

Hunting for bargains is like hunting for big game: You have to dress comfortably, keep your eyes peeled and think strategically. The prey can be elusive and the setting a jungle, but the rewards are great and you may even learn to love the thrill of the hunt. Stalking bargain furnishings is eminently practical. Sofas, tables, chairs, accessories abound, waiting for smart shoppers who know what slipcovers, reupholstery, fresh paint or spiffy hardware can do. To prove it, we dispatched bargain hunters in three cities—New York, San Diego and Dallas—with instructions to bag some buns. We hope their reports will inspire you to hit the hunting grounds in your own area.
—Elise Vider

SAN DIEGO

by Gretchen Fallon

The need to furnish a spare room prompted my bargain-hunting expedition. I wanted to turn the small, 11-ft. square space into a stylish family room, work space and guest room. The pieces would have to be few and small in scale, with clean lines. Something stylish and flexible enough to be used later in other rooms. I thought of designer pieces but I knew they would be impossibly expensive. But what of secondhand vintage 1930s and '40s furniture? The hunt was on for retro furnishings.

On day one, I spied in a pickup truck parked across

the street from a vintage-furniture store in San Diego a sofa and chair from the '30s or '40s with frames made of chromed tubular steel. Flashes of snappy red vinyl could be spotted beneath their makeshift gray covers. A poke disclosed the squish and squeak of steel-spring construction. Here were the pieces I'd been looking for.



Amid the leatherette-vinyl and tubular chrome vintage furniture at Metro (above right) are appliances from the '30s and '40s. Most vintage-shop pieces lack a designer pedigree, but not the Gilbert Rohde three-piece sofa, a find at \$1,850 (above, far left), upon which bargain hunter Gretchen Fallon sits. At the Public Guardian sale (left), one earlybird made off with a haul of wicker and rattan.

SAN DIEGO PHOTOGRAPHY: LAURIE BLACK & ROSLYN BANISHARK



Classic Boomerang circa 1988. A "dogbone" sofa and chair with a matching bar and coffee table!



To keep with the theme, deliveries were made in either my turquoise 1958 Edsel Station Wagon or my Coral 1958 Oldsmobile Fiesta Hardtop Wagon.



David Skelley and Kal Powers look like a typical fun-loving couple from the '50s amid the furnishings they sell at their store called Boomerang.

Gene Reed/The Times-Advocate

*Atomic kitsch all
the way in the
early days!
Kal and I in the
pink, turquoise
and grey painted
shop along with
stuffed poodle
and working
Philco-Predicta
Television set.*

Nifty '50s furniture

Store boomerangs to the past

By E'Louise Ondash
A Schwartz Book writer

SAN DIEGO — They call it "mid-century modern." It's the interior designer's trade word for furniture from the 1950s, and you either hate the stuff or love it.

Furniture dealers and collectors David Skelley and Kal Powers are members of the latter category. They've got a thing for lime-green Naugahyde chairs, chrome and laminate dinette sets, and Melmac dinnerware, and they have turned their thing into a business.

Skelley and Powers have assembled their collection of '50s furniture and artifacts in their Hillcrest store, Boomerang, named after the shape that was omnipresent in the designs of this post-war decade.

Like a boomerang, "nifty fifties" furniture keeps coming back. It brings back memories of a simpler time, say devotees, and boomerang-shaped tables and wall

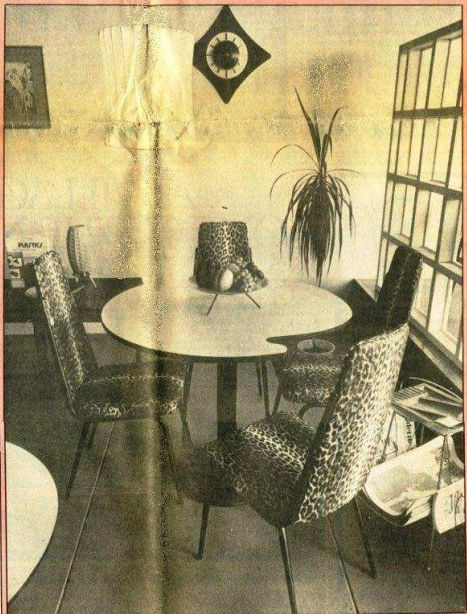
clocks resembling little Sputniks represent America's attempt to get comfortable with the Space Age.

But symbolism is not foremost on the minds of Boomerang's visitors when they first step through the door.

"I love the reactions from people who come in here," said 33-year-old Skelley. "We see everything from absolute horror to laughing — because the shapes are so much fun."

Perhaps more fun now than ever. The Suzy Homemaker ice cream maker (\$14.95) is sure to draw a memory and a smile from those over 35 ("Oh my gosh! We had one of those!" and "Thank God for women's lib!"), and who could ever be serious about leopard vinyl chairs or lamps that look like rocket ships?

Please see Fifties, page G4



This dinette must have been designed for the wild at heart.



A selector box set for \$175.

Back to the '50s

What: Boomerang
Where: 3795 Park Blvd., San Diego
Phone: (not coincidentally) 295-1953.

Offerings: Naugahyde chairs, stainless steel dinettes, boomerang-shaped tables, Sputnik clocks and all those other home furnishings from the '50s that seemed a little odd even at the time.

Hours: 11:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday, noon to 3 p.m. Sunday and Monday.



Chet the mannequin in the window with a vintage Coke machine.

As my "eye" developed, there was a rather abrupt transition in Boomerang's offerings from the atomic kitsch "dogbone sofa" approach to a more classical modern one in the early-mid nineties. As an example, here's an extremely rare pair of Arne Jacobsen Swan chairs with molded ply legs.



I found this mint and unusual Eames set in a mobile home in Carlsbad. The original owner had duplicated the dowel chair legs for a dining table he had custom made.



ECHOES

THE MAGAZINE OF CLASSIC MODERN STYLE + DESIGN

Pierre Koenig
Julius Shulman
Fornasetti
Scandinavian Greats
Lounge Music
Vicke Lindstrand
Knoll Museum
Modern Interiors

*Boomerang on
the cover of now
defunct Echoes
magazine
Circa 1996.
Featuring a
George Nelson
Miniature
Jewelery Chest,
Watermelon clock
and Leo Amino
sculpture.*



USA \$4.95
Canada \$6.00

Danish and from the 50's is this rare Hans Wegner desk chair and boomerang-shaped teak desk. They were purchased from a man who had lived in Denmark and bought them there. When he moved to an SRO downtown he found he no longer had room for them.



An exotic wood Herman Miller Desk and chair from the 1970's designed by Peter Protzman.





A super rare Noguchi coffee table by Herman Miller from the late 1940's



For several years in a row in the mid-nineties Boomerang showed at the Los Angeles Modernism show in Santa Monica. This is our display in 1992. We were in very esteemed company along side 50/Fifty and Full House from New York, LAMA, Fat Chance and Modern One from L.A. It was tons of work and very expensive but very glamorous and fun.

*The first Herman Miller for the Home display at Boomerang in 1993.
It featured items by Eames, Nelson and Noguchi.*



"My first memory of Boomerang...was in the Park Boulevard location in the early 1990's, when David was still in business with Jeff. Steve and I were relatively new homeowners, and were in the process (slowly) of furnishing and decorating our house in Solana Beach. I recall entering the shop and being stopped dead in my tracks by the colors of the hanging Higgins rondelays.

Being seized by a consuming "I must have this" impulse, I was dismayed to learn it was NFS-not for sale. Undeterred, I persisted: "If you ever consider selling this, please call me." I insisted on leaving our phone number. Months later, David called, saying "I spoke to the Higgins in Chicago, and they are willing to make a comparable rondelay set." Learning the artisans were elderly (my recollection was that he was about 85 years old at the time), we wondered if we would ever see receive them. Months later they arrived, neatly and securely packaged, and their vibrant colors, undiminished over the years, have enriched our lives ever since. This was the first major art purchase we ever made, and was to become the first of a series of pieces we acquired over the years from David.

Over the years, as we made a habit of stopping by the shop on India Street on Saturday social rounds, we gradually got to know other habitués. One afternoon, Jackie and Jerry Wilson were there, and we began comparing notes. "Oh, you have Higgins rondelays as well . . ."

From there, it was but a short leap to musing out loud, "It would be fun to see each others' collections." Thus was the idea born for a series of rotating evening open house soirees, hosted by mid-century design enthusiasts. It was great fun seeing the variations of mid-century design thriving in environments ranging from apartments to tract homes to mid-century and contemporary icons. From there, we met a delightful circle of friends, who in turn introduced us to others who have become close friends. Raphael and Candace Lopez, on learning of our photographic interests, introduced us to their professional stock photographer friend, Steve Simpson. In turn, Steve "set us up" with world traveling and diving friends, Nancy Bushnell and Gerry Soifer, who have since become dear friends."

Marie T.

"I had just finished my first San Diego lunch at the landmark Chicken Pie Shop in Hillcrest. A friend who was showing me the neighborhood hot spots asked if I would like to see a store that looked like a scene from the "Jetsons" TV series. I laughed, and said sure.....this was July 1987. As we drove up I was dazzled by the gorgeous 1958 Edsel station wagon parked out front. We walked in, and I was hit in the "emotional gut" by the greatest bunch of fun stuff I had ever seen. I think I walked around with big ole dumb smile on my face the entire time I was there which was over an hour. Two fun guys and a girl could tell I had been smitten, and by the time I walked out the door...I had a quite a few things to take back home to the Bay area....and a life-altering new design path to follow. There would be many future buying trips to that great store on Park Blvd. and my style of collecting, and even my professional life, would be changed dramatically by this new direction in style and design. Since that wonderful day almost a quarter century ago, I have been blessed with the wonderful friendship and professional fun that David and I have shared. We have bought and sold together....and from each other. I have had the pleasure of being a guest in his amazing series of homes.....and watching his personal collections change and mature as my own did with his influence. A weekend in San Diego with David...both at the store and as a guest at home...always puts new inspiration into my professional life. The fun nature of our friendship over the years, and David's relaxed style as a host can bring me calm and tranquility like almost no one else can. I am thrilled to be part of the history and growth that has made BOOMERANG an important part of the modern movement in Southern California."

John T.

"My first introduction to Boomerang was on India Street. I was deeply attracted to the way cool mid-century planters outside the store paired with a red Pantone chair. I had to go inside to see more!" **Maura V.**



Chapter three. "refining"

2040 India St. (July 1997 to July 2007)

Yahoo! On my own again! I was so very excited to have a new start. In searching for a new location, I made a list of potential areas that I felt could work, from Hillcrest and Normal Heights to La Jolla. Among them was Little Italy. I had heard good things about it but there was not much in the way of design-oriented business yet. My childhood friend, Elizabeth Scalice, who had just opened Architectural Salvage there, encouraged me to settle in this growing and diverse neighborhood. A suitable rental space that was well situated adjacent to Assenti's Pasta had just opened up. It was a good size but a huge challenge to make the space work because it was divided into nine small rooms. I had to do invasive and expensive structural work.



The result was so worth it! Although, like the previous location, it leaked! Damn! Buckets were my friends once again. The business continued to grow and at last I found myself able to purchase a home of my own. My good friend, architect Jonathan Segal offered me first choice on a house he was designing in Little Italy. I jumped on the opportunity and am still extremely happy living in this amazing little award-winning gem. Marvelous doors of opportunity like this have opened for me through these years. I feel tremendously fortunate to have met incredible people and to have formed many lifelong friendships. Additionally, how fun is it when Vladimir Kagan walks in or Malcolm Leland or even David Byrne!

STYLE

By Phyllis Van Doren



PAUL M. BOWERS
David Skelley



PAUL M. BOWERS
Mary Kellejian



MARFLETROPE, ESTATE

Talipi, 1987 Robert Mapplethorpe

Table
Tops

Top Shops

◀ David Skelley has moved his 12-year-old shop for '50s and '60s furniture design classics downtown and it's a first-class act. This look is hotter than ever and the 1,300-square-foot space shows it off to advantage. You'll find period glass, lighting and other accessories, too. Boomerang, 2040 India St., Little Italy, 619/239-2040.

◀ If you like to shop bazaar-style, you'll love Merchants Passage. Joe and Mary Kellejian, ASID (Polo Bay Interiors), have 60 spaces for dealers in home and garden furnishings and accessories, plus some clothing and were filled up by the time they opened a couple of months ago. You'll find old favorites like Yorkshire Pine plus antiques and collectibles and mini-shops by Denise Cerro and Gary Woodward, who both recycle furniture with whimsical paint and upholstery options. Merchants Passage, Eighth Avenue and Island Street, downtown, 619/696-1146.

▲ The history of the modern still life is the subject of the engaging exhibition, *Table Top: Morandi's Still Lives to Mapplethorpe's Flower Studies*, through Jan. 21, 1998, at the California Center for the Arts Museum (CCAM). Manny Farber, Audrey Flack, Elsa Rady, Wayne Thiebaud and Tom Wesselman are among the artists included. Stephen P. Curry, whose evocative paintings of fruit and vegetables are prized by their owners, is the youngest artist involved. CCAM, 340 N. Escondido Blvd., Escondido, 760/738-4138.

more

NOVEMBER 1997 33

*Volkswagen of America
shot this image for their
sales brochure featuring
their newly-styled Jetta.*



-
- 05** At some point, even if just for a moment, you'll find yourself alone on the road. And maybe, just maybe, you'll remember reading this caption.
- 06** When you open the door ambient lighting³ kicks in and illuminates the area surrounding the car. It's equal parts seeing and being seen.
- 07** Refined but never boring. The European styling and attention to details says "let me just sit here and be admired" even if everything else about the car says "let's drive already."



Over the years on India Street I had four very special associates to help me by watching the shop one day a week--Alison Neeley, Lisa Gooding, Brian Asdell and David Horst. Each added their own unique personality to the flavor of Boomerang.



After renting all these years, I figured I was in the business for the long run and began to consider purchasing my own building to move Boomerang into.

Top are Alvar Aalto chairs from the 30's. Below a Dunbar Tete a Tete 1956

George Nelson Swag Leg chairs from 1956 found at an estate in North Park.



Swiss Terrazza sofas in red leather by Ubaldo Klug from 1968. This set came from an eccentric collection I was invited to check out in a Mission Valley warehouse.



Boomerang at night - shot from the front door.





SD HOME

THE SAN DIEGO UNION-TRIBUNE • FRIDAY, MAY 1, 1998

INSIDE

- Collecting '50s furniture classics
- Life in a modern master's glass houses
- Ranch houses and gardens revived



in a modern
mood

Boomerang on the cover of SD Home section, San Diego Union/Tribune in 1998. It featured a rare Spiderweb clock by George Nelson and a Danish Cone chair by Verner Panton.

I am extremely fortunate to have been invited to furnish and style some very impressive period houses. Pierre Koenig's Stahl house or Case Study house #22 for Arts and Architecture magazine 1960 is the pinnacle as far as I'm concerned. It is one of the most photographed mid-century modern houses in America.

In 1998 when Echoes magazine invited me to furnish and style the house, I couldn't resist. I piled everything in my small pickup and drove to Hollywood for the day. The Stahl's and Pierre Koenig were there as well as Julius Shulman's protege' David Glom, the photographer. It was a day I'll never forget!



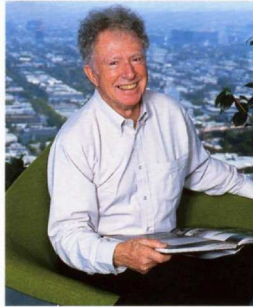


1960 Case Study house #22 by Pierre Koenig. Furnished and styled by Boomerang



Models sit on Van Kepple-Green furnishings, circa 1960

BELOW: Case Study House #22
architect Pierre Koenig, FAIA



DAVID GILLOU



View to the south and the sea, 1999. The catwalk was added to facilitate window washing. Lounge chair by Van Kepple-Green

Incredible soaring living space at the Case Study house #22 in Echoes magazine.



Another favorite project was Richard Neutra's "Bond House" from 1962 in San Diego's Alvarado Estates. It was an untouched original and relatively unknown at the time. Lots of built-in furniture, beautiful original birch paneling and huge walls of glass facing the view. I found a perfect shade of sage green to set off the signature fireplace. The house had been neglected but after many months of respectful finessing it was a show piece once again. It was subsequently published numerous times and featured in the book "Classic Modern" by Deborah Dietsch in 2000. Sadly the house was "improved" some years later and that beautiful original patina on the birch panels became shiny orange shellac and the fireplace was painted white.



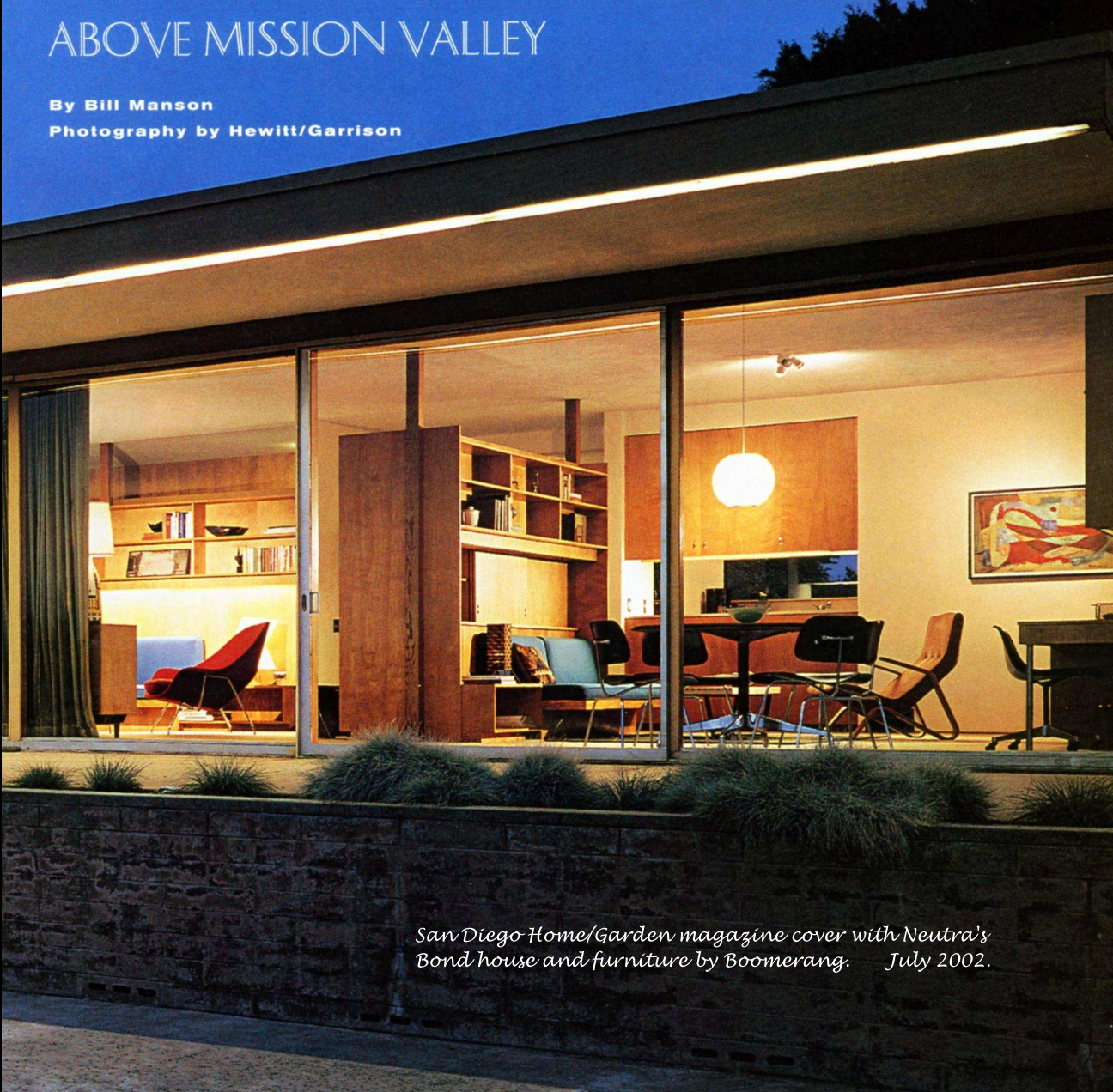
CLASSIC HOME FLOATS ON A HILLSIDE



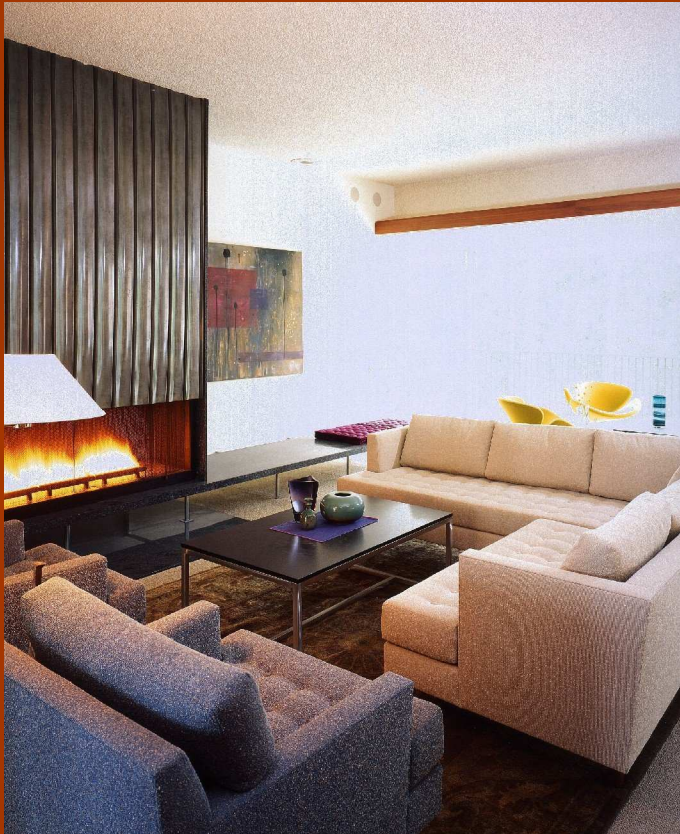
ABOVE MISSION VALLEY

By Bill Manson

Photography by Hewitt/Garrison



San Diego Home/Garden magazine cover with Neutra's Bond house and furniture by Boomerang. July 2002.



In 2005 the historic Solomon Apartments by architect Henry Hester was purchased and converted into condominiums. It was renamed 3200 Sixth and Boomerang furnished and styled the model penthouse (above) and two other units. The penthouse had a pewter fireplace hood and sparkly granite hearth.



This unit at 3200 faces Balboa Park and features a Grasshopper chair, Noguchi coffee table and an Eames dining set.



This unit's master bedroom has a Case Study bed and Nelson Bubble lamp sconce.



Here is a loft space called ModDom in Middletown. The building is a converted machine shop built in the 1950's. Boomerang furnished and styled the model unit.

modernism

DECO > MID-CENTURY > POP > POST-MODERN

MAGAZINE



Boomerang design featured on the cover of Modernism Magazine in 2003. Award winning author Cara Greenberg wrote the article. This shot features a Greta Grossman Grasshopper lamp, Charles Eames Sofa Compact, George Nelson Miniature Jewelry Chest, Eero Saarinen Tulip Table and ceramics by Natzler, Scheier and Cabat.

U.S. \$6.95 Canada \$9.95
Euro € 10.00



Spring 2003

www.modernismmagazine.com



For Boomerang's 20th anniversary I invited my dear friend jazz singer Peggy Claire to perform. She brought her guys and we had a very special and swinging evening. I'll never forget it or her. She is greatly missed.



San Diego's only Modernism show was held at the Community Concourse downtown in 2005. The weekend included modern architecture tours, and symposiums and lectures with local experts and architects of the day. The honored guest speaker was the always amusing and marvelous Julius Shulman. Here was Boomerang's display front and center.



For several years running, Boomerang featured local and national artists and craftspeople in a revolving exhibition gallery space created in the center of the shop. The first one in 2004 spotlighted Dot Kimura and Min Koide. Subsequent shows featured Nathan Gluck, Higgins Glass, Josh Herman, Matt Devine, (who also built the space) Malcolm Leland, Jeremy Gercke and Homer Delawie.

D O T

K i m u r a



M I N

K o i d e

Beautiful works in Ceramic and Wood



December 3 2004 to February 3 2005

Boomerang for modern

2040 India Street
San Diego, CA 92101
619.239.2040

This issue of San Diego Home/Garden spotlighted Rudolph Schindler's 1926 historic Pueblo Ribera cottages in La Jolla. Boomerang supplied the Alvar Aalto chairs and Noguchi coffee table for the shot.

Best Preservation of a Historic House

Photography by Roland Bishop

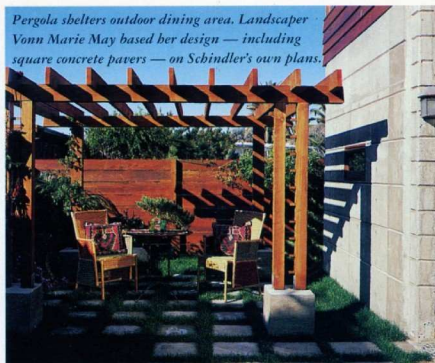
Owner: Roy Hagen

Architect: Jeffrey D. Shorn, AIA

The reconstruction of a fire-ravaged unit in the 73-year-old El Pueblo Ribera — a historic residential living court complex in La Jolla — was a labor of love for architect Jeffrey D. Shorn. Not only is Shorn a great fan of the original architect — the legendary Rudolph M. Schindler — but he lived in one of the spaces for four

CONTINUED ON PAGE 77

Pergola shelters outdoor dining area. Landscaper Vonn Marie May based her design — including square concrete pavers — on Schindler's own plans.



HOMES
of the
YEAR
2008



Living room ceiling and walls are bathed in light from clerestory and modular windows. "Schindler himself said 'the distinction between indoors and outdoors will disappear,'" Shorn says. Isamu Noguchi coffee table, Alvar Aalto chairs and table from Boomerang; painting, La Jolla Meadow by Robert Goldman, is from Shorn/Kaminski collection.

Pauma Valley, 760/742-4561

Architect: **Kevin deFreitas, Architects**, 619/235-8858

Bedsprad: **Crate & Barrel**, 7007 Friars Road, Fashion Valley Center, Mission Valley, 619/295-6600; 4545 La Jolla Village Dr., University Towne Centre, Golden Triangle, 858/558-4545

Kitchen cabinets: **IKEA**, 2149 Fenton Pkwy., Mission Valley, 619/563-IKEA

Furniture and pottery: **Boomerang for Modern**, 2040 India St., Little Italy, 619/239-2040



CAROL PIERCE

The 1,600 square-foot residence seems larger. Hardwood floors are laid lengthwise to make things seem spacious. A creative floor plan provides flexible living. With windows on just two sides of the building, bringing light in was paramount.

The first floor is given over to a home office and bath that double as a guest room. The wall facing the hall is floor-to-ceiling obscure ribbed glass to let in light. The stainless-steel risers on the stairs between floors also reflect light into the space.

ABOVE: Living room on the second floor is furnished with pieces by Charles Eames, Pierre Paulin and other mid-century designers. Kitchen has IKEA cabinets above and custom red cedar cabinets below. **OPPOSITE:** Dining room can be closed off from kitchen with pocket doors.

For this photo shoot for San Diego Home/Garden Magazine, architect Kevin DeFreitas's newly built row homes in San Diego's East Village featured a crazy Rosewood and Yellow leather Eames lounge and ottoman as well as a Surfboard table. The blue chairs from the 1960's are by Pierre Paulin.

THIS PAGE AND OPPOSITE: The living room puts you amid the treetops in a forest of eucalyptus trees. Pieces of classic Mid-century furniture live happily in this aerie. Coconut chairs were designed by George Nelson for Herman Miller. Eames *Compact* sofa is served by a George Nelson *Platform* bench table and an Eames prototype *LTR* table. Behind a LeKlint Danish lamp is an Eames folding screen.

Sophistication, high style and design, that's what this client wanted. Built for the speculative market, the house is owned by a single man — a former San Diegan — who works in real estate development in Manhattan. This dream project turned out so well the owner thought for a time about returning home and moving in. September 11 nixed that plan. There's too much that has to be done in New York.

What makes this house seem like it was born on the drafting table of Richard Neutra or Rudolph Schindler, two Vienna-born architects who started shocking neighbors in Southern California with





This beautiful new house by Hannah, Gabriel and Wells is tucked away in South Mission hills and Boomerang was called in to furnish it for this photo shoot for San Diego Home/Garden Magazine in 2005. The furnishings include lots of Herman Miller...Coconut chairs, Sofa Compact, Platform Bench and a rare rosewood Folding Screen.



In the summer of 2006 Boomerang displayed a retrospective of the works of Malcolm Leland. The show featured items from his personal collection exclusively. He also designed the show space within Boomerang.



"David's shop was our first stop when we moved to San Diego in 1998 - what a delight to find terrific vintage mid-century design plus new signature classics. And as we've moved three times since then, David's keen sense of design has been a constant - a visit to his store to see what's new and have a chat is a fine Saturday tradition. And, another talent of David's: Introductions. We have met many new fascinating people, brought together by David.

Heather J.

"Boomerang has allowed many of my family and friends to share in one of the true gifts of modern design - falling asleep cradled in comfort and timeless beauty.

As Ray Eames noted...'*We are not collectors. We found things and kept them as examples of the principles or aspects of design. We kept it to show it, to use it, to share it, to give insight to others and ourselves.*' Ray Eames, *Furniture History* 26, 1990, pp. 140-14

Thank you,"

Max U. (former Eames office associate)

"Boomerang for Modern has been our source for answers to mid-century architecture and furniture questions. David is a mid-century treasure trove of information!"

Gertie and Allan S.

"My earliest memory is when I first went into Boomerang in '85. My girlfriend at the time was living in an apartment on the east side of Park Blvd about 4 blocks to the south of the store. This was when the store was next to The Flame on the west side of Park Blvd. The thing I remember the most was the "flying saucer" round coffee/tea pot with the tripod legs and round balls for feet hanging at an angle from the ceiling. Thought it was way cool."

Danny P.

"I loved the Boomerang website and was so excited when I found out I was moving to San Diego. Every time I was in the area, it was never open. One day I finally made it and it was better than I imagined. I had never seen a Charles Eames or Eero Saarinen chair in person until visiting Boomerang. I now have a renewed appreciation for modern furniture and something to save up for."

Alison R.

"I remember the first time I walked into Boomerang (in the former location). I saw furniture that was unfamiliar to me, but that I instantly admired and appreciated. David was using words like "mid-century" and "Eames"; I didn't care about the terminology-I just knew that these were some of the coolest designs I'd ever seen. Since that time, I've acquired a few pieces of mid-century design, and I've even learned what "mid-century" and "Eames" mean. I'm also proud to say that "mid-century", as first introduced to me at Boomerang, is now the central design element for my own retail business.

So, thanks David and thanks Boomerang. Thanks for educating me, influencing my business design, and making the world a little more beautiful place.

Here's to 25 more."

Chris R.

"I appreciate Boomerang whenever I use the wonderful pieces in my office that I purchased there. They hold all my important business documents as well as miscellaneous stuff. Thanks for being there for me and my clients."

Sandra W. ASID

"I'll always remember the first time I walked into Boomerang. You told me you already knew of and admired my work. It was a nice ego boost for me in those days!"

Malcolm L.



Chapter four. *"home at last"*

2475 Kettner Bl. (September 2007 to present)

The shops evolution continued when architect Brett Farrow contacted me concerning a new commercial project he was planning in Little Italy North. At last an opportunity to own my own business space! I couldn't pass it up. Especially when the architect lets me collaborate on the interior layout. In his new ten-unit project he calls West Laurel Studios, I was fortunate enough to get the pick of the litter. This incredible space is the culmination of my many years of work in mid-century design and architecture. The soaring spaces showcase the furnishings to their best advantage. The story here on Kettner is just starting to unfold and this northern end of Little Italy is beginning to blossom with interesting and compatible shops, galleries and eateries.

Over the course of these 25 years business has changed dramatically but happily people are still discovering mid-century modern design. I think it's interesting to note that

some of my current customers weren't even born when Boomerang opened 25 years ago. But for many of us modernism is a passion, a life-style and mind set that permeates our everyday lives.

Uncluttered, intelligent, clean, honest, orderly, interesting, colorful, sophisticated, fun



Mid-century mod

These walnut storage cabinets with laminate face details and a steel base are a local riff on classic Nelson and Eames pieces. They arrive just in time to spruce up the dining or any other room for the holidays. Wood artisan Joey Vaisuso, metal sculptor Matt Devine and shop owner David Skelley collaborated on the design. Custom finishes and configurations available. Boomerang for Modern, Little Italy.



Silver song

Birds of sterling silver fused and painted onto white ceramic dishes provide the right glitz for holiday entertaining. Emilio Castillo La Jolla, La Jolla.

I tried my hand once more at furniture design and together with Matt Devine and Joey Viasusso created these storage units for the new shop. San Diego Home/Garden featured them on this page from the November 2007 issue.





Here are two different views of the current location showing a view of the second floor down to the street taken from the third floor mezzanine, and one of the main level which has a more intimate feel.



Living room at a Palmer and Kreisel home in La Jolla styled by Boomerang.

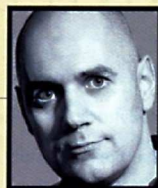


Above is the view from the rear of the middle level toward Kettner Boulevard. Right is a fabulous Danish Teak credenza by Arne Vodder circa 1958.



☐ STYLE MAKERS

Vintage- and antique-shop owners have long regarded the trend of mixing vintage furniture and collectible pieces into any style, whether a home is modern or traditional. As the concept catches on with designers and homeowners, there has been a surge of high-end vintage and antique shops dedicated to promoting fashionable wares from every era. In this issue of LUXE, five Californians in the know about all things vintage share their appreciation for fine antiques and collectibles.



DAVID SKELLEY

BOOMERANG FOR MODERN

Since the inception of Boomerang for Modern in July of 1985, David Skelley's love of mid-century design and keen appreciation of aesthetic excellence have stirred the imaginations of antique aficionados. And with a thriving new location in San Diego's historic Little Italy, Boomerang for Modern continues to uphold Skelley's tradition of offering high-quality selections that embody a sense of wonder.

"I offer serious items," Skelley says. "But at the same time, there's a lighthearted nature and an uplifting quality to every one of them." Each hand-selected, vintage furnishing pays homage to Skelley's devoted fascination with the shapes, contours, materials and colors of Post-World War II design, enchanting a new generation of admirers and collectors with whimsical and unusual pieces of history. "When I first opened the shop, people weren't really interested in vintage," Skelley says. "But today, it is an explosive trend, and I'm proud to be a part of that awakening."

FURNITURE FIND

Eames Leather Sofa, \$6,975;
boomerangformodern.com



Where do you source your merchandise?

These days, happily, people come to me. When they're ready to sell, they call me up. They want their items to go to a place where people will appreciate them. I prefer it that way, too, because then I also get the stories behind the pieces, and I like that. I can look at a vintage item and know intimately where it came from, what the people who owned it were like and what kind of lives they led.

What's your most recent best find?

A sculpture by Leo Amino. It's a biomorphic sculpture from 1951, and a prized piece.

What should homeowners splurge on?

Something that they would consider keeping for the rest of their lives, whether it's something to sit on or look at. I would encourage them to choose something with an eye of permanence rather than with a fleeting, faddish desire.

What is your own home like?

It's a city house in Little Italy, and it probably has one of the smallest footprints in the city. It's 24' by 25', consisting of three floors plus a roof garden. It has wonderful city and bay views and high ceilings.



Favorite design icon?

Charles Eames. The Eameses are very inspirational. They changed the face of American decorative arts.

Which item in your own home would you never part with?

I have a mobile that was given to me by some dear friends. It's a Van Keppel-Green from the early 1960s. It's beautiful and unusual.



smith+noble®
windoware®

**MADE FOR YOU
IN JUST 1-6 DAYS**

CUSTOM BLINDS+SHADES
MADE TO YOUR SIZES

BUY DIRECT+SAVE
UP TO 70% LOWER THAN STORES

FREE SHIPPING
ON YOUR ORDER

ROOMS WITH PERSONALITY

HOW TO DESIGN YOUR ROOM TO REFLECT YOUR STYLE, P40-41



Previous page: Smith+Noble catalog cover shoot.

This page: One of several units designed by architect Jonathan Segal that I have furnished and styled for various photo shoots over the years. This one is at the Union Lofts project in Golden Hill.

*Cover San Diego
Home/Garden magazine
July 2008 featuring
Larry Richard's Bay
House in Point Loma. A
crazy tiny jewel of a
house. The wide open
living room here uses
Vessel/Architectural
Pottery for a coffee table
and fire pit supplied by
Boomerang.*

SAN DIEGO HOME/GARDEN

L I F E S T Y L E S ®

Seaworthy

Tiny "boathouse" makes big splash



14 Silver Fork
winners —
with recipes

A new
Craftsman
devoted to family







In December of 2009 Boomerang was invited to submit an entry in Arclinea's "Gingerbread Collective" competition with all proceeds benefitting Second Chance. 13 of San Diego's top designers, architects and artists designed and constructed amazing and beautiful houses. Boomerang's was called the "Holiday Budget Vacation House." It was made from high strength gingerbread, crushed white peppermint, extruded dates, Necco's, chocolate graham crackers and seaweed! The window walls were real glass. All houses were auctioned off at the big gala and we bought ours to display at the shop at holiday time.



And so it continues....on to the next 25 years!

I must acknowledge the support of many incredible people (you know who you are) and would specifically like to express my appreciation to my wonderful and talented partner, Kurt Stell, as well as to the various business, associations and groups I have been associated with...and still am. Namely (especially) Herman Miller for the Home (who generously helped sponsor this book), Vitra design museum, Higgins Glass, Cherner Chair, Flensted, Roland Simmons, Stelton of Denmark, Modernica, Jazz 88, San Diego Home/Garden magazine (particularly Phyllis Van Doren, senior editor), San Diego magazine, San Diego Union-Tribune, Luxe magazine, Riviera magazine, Modernism magazine and Echoes magazine. It continues to be an exciting, challenging and rewarding journey. Stick around, there is more to come!

David Skelley

Boomerang

FOR MODERN



A Generation of Good Taste, Good Friends and Discovery

True love. Not often does one have the opportunity to be so influenced by someone or something that they are positively changed forever. Such, however, has been the case with countless numbers of people who have crossed the threshold of "Boomerang for modern" during the last quarter century and been infected with the mid-century design bug and the hospitality and spirit of David Skelley. David embodies excellence, diligence, graciousness and generosity, and the business he has built and nurtured is more than just a business.

Like any living entity, Boomerang's life has been one of progressive evolution, starting during the Fabulous Fifties craze of the mid-1980's and eventually becoming San Diego's premier source for classic modern design. David has consistently pioneered the way for others to follow. Design maven and nexus at once, David has been the link between classic modern design in San Diego and the rest of the world.

Then again, if you are holding this book, you probably know a lot of this already. As a customer for nearly all of the years, I remember with joy the times David holds "Saturday Court," taking my wife-to-be to Boomerang on our first date, and the birth of my son on the evening of one of our famous modern dinners. Boomerang and David are more than just a store and a friend to so many of us. Boomerang is family.

This leads me back to the first comment--true love--for the store, for the stuff, but most importantly for David and all the cherished friends who over the years have shared in this very special thing called "Boomerang for modern." The first 25 years have been a blast, David. Here's to the next 25 and beyond!

Bryan Forward

