

TRUE-CRIME SHOCKER HISTORY, MYSTERY, FELONS & FIENDS!

# Orange Coast

OC's  
GRANDEST  
HOMES

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IS THIS LAGUNA BEACH  
STUNNER WORTH  
**\$30** MILLION?



#### NEW IT MADE WAVES

Built in 1996, the Rock House survived political battles with the California Coastal Commission, the city, environmentalists, and preservationists. It's both an engineering feat and an environmental trendsetter; topsoil and native plant material that were removed during construction were nurtured offsite and later returned to their original locations.

## SEASIDE GROTTO

A SPECTACULAR, WHIMSICAL HIDEAWAY FIT FOR A MERMAID

#### LEGENDARY QUALITIES

The Rock House has been featured on a number of real estate-themed programs this year. Among them: HGTV's "15 Most Amazing Homes," CNN's "Money," Qatar TV's "Design," and NBC's "New York's 'Open House.'"

The aptly named oceanfront Rock House is a South Laguna landmark. The home is nestled into a huge excavated boulder at the mouth of Aliso Creek. From the street, the house blends into the rock formations on each side—there are even boulder pieces on the home's concrete rooftop. The 3,000 square feet flow whimsically. Rooms curve. A creek runs through the entry level, where flooring is faux stone. Abalone shells sparkle in the black terrazzo floor of the circular kitchen, and glass embellishments replicate the texture of a mermaid's tailfins. Another creation of Brion Jeannotte Architecture, the 1996 steel-and-glass residence's other nautical nods include rippling handrails with alternating etched glass and stainless-steel spa patterns, and curved walls and ceilings painted in muted turquoise shades. Two bedrooms and a media/family room, which can be made into a third bedroom, are downstairs. Walk through the sliding doors on the lower floor and the sand is just steps away. **OC**

#### THE ROCK HOUSE

LAGUNA BEACH

BEDROOMS | BATHS |

**AMENITIES** An 800-bottle wine cellar and beachfront terraces with spa and water fall. The built-in furnishings were created by interior designer Annie Speck, fiancée of the house's late owner, software magnate Dennis Morris, who commissioned the house.

#### FOR SALE!

asking \$22 million

**ABOVE** The orientation of outside terraces, which include a heated spa and cold plunge, provides privacy. **1** The entry, with flowing creek, leads to the living room and the view beyond. **2** From Pacific Coast Highway, the house is hard to see. **3** The Rock House is just steps from the public beach.





THE **ULTIMATE**  
**O.C.**  
**HOME TOUR**

A wall-mounted Lamborghini?  
Four guest villas perched above a cliffside manor?  
A stony creek that flows through an entryway?  
Orange County has all that—and more.  
Come inside and take a look.

*Stories by* PAT H. BROESKE

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# COASTAL CONTEMPORARY

*CURVILINEAR ELEGANCE  
AT WATER'S EDGE*

**B**uilt into a cliff next to a footpath that leads to Little Corona Beach, the house called Crown of the Sea is nearly invisible from the street. Such modesty only amplifies the jaw-dropping effect of stepping inside the front door—a 270-degree ocean panorama through floor-to-ceiling windows. The house, which appears to float over the water, also is pretty terrific. Noted Laguna architect Brion Jeannette designed a curving shape for the three-story, 7,000-square-foot home, built in 2000, that matches the cliff's irregular site. This undulating flow is a Jeannette design signature, and emulates both the motion of the waves and the rocky face. Every room has a view (There's Palos Verdes), including the ensuite bedrooms, office, and the lower-floor media room. Outdoor decks cantilever over the waves and tide pools. Inside and out, there's a feeling of unfettered freedom.

Preceding pages: Views from the Crown of the Sea, which shares the English translation of its community's name.

- 1 Outdoor deck's project over the ocean.
- 2 The chef's kitchen has an island of Brazilian granite with leather stools.
- 3 An informal dining area opens to an outdoor terrace.

**CROWN of the SEA**  
CERRITA DEL MAR

**BEDROOMS | BATHS |**

**AMENITIES** Lighted sushi bar canopy and tropical landscaping

**POSTSCRIPT** Owner's son and brother-in-law, who's founder of 24-hour Designa Barre office and home entertainment hardware store, wanted to update, remodel, and renovate.

**FOR SALE!**  
asking \$11 million



## BRION JEANNETTE

*One of South County's renowned architects talks about amenities, design, and O.C.'s appeal.*

### ➔ What kind of luxuries are today's clients seeking?

Home theaters and wine cellars are pretty commonplace. We've done bowling alleys, pistol ranges, indoor pools, spa treatment rooms, wine cellar dining, and model train rooms. But the most common desire is for a home that's comfortable and informal, but also entertains well. Kitchens—both inside and outside—are bigger, and more and more the central core of life.

### ➔ What do you consider when coming up with a design?

The client's desires—then the site, views, solar access, and the project objectives. These vary from small homes of 2,000 square feet to multigenerational estates of 62,000 square feet.

### ➔ Do you have a signature design feature?

The first 10 years of my career (and a large round window in the front elevation) poster wall of every home I designed. Eventually, I began designing contemporary homes with gentle curves. They offer a connection with the Earth and feel more organic than angles.

### ➔ Why is O.C., specifically South County, such a desirable address?

It's the Gold Coast of Southern California, far less dense than the fashionable L.A. communities, and far less formal. And our oceanfront is pretty accessible with lots of older homes just waiting to be reimaged.

See Page 96 for another Jeannette home.

**POSTSCRIPT** Another Brion Jeannette-designed home in Corona del Mar made headlines in 2010 when it was listed for \$75 million. At 22,000 square feet, it included a movie theater with a ramp, a jewelry "store" for displaying heirlooms, and a climate-controlled polo museum for a dozen cars. The estate sold for about half the asking price.

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