

Home: Sweet Sanctuary

At home with Extraordinary Desserts' chef-owner Karen Krasne and her family

Archana Ram | Photography by Robert Benson May 22, 2015



robert@robertbenson.com



Her Story

Karen Krasne has built a wildly successful dessert empire around ornate cakes topped with flower petals and gold leaf, but step into the Mission Hills home she shares with her husband, Jamie Kiskis, daughter, Sahara, 11, and their three Weimaraners, and the aesthetic is decidedly less frilly. The Balinese-style abode is decked out in a neutral palate of black, white, brown, and grey, with subtle pops of color. "I need my space to be calm and monochromatic," says Krasne, a San Diego native, who bought the property in 1997. Back then, one of the home's major drawbacks was a lack of connection between the interior and exterior, so Krasne worked with architect Aaron Anderson to meld the two spaces and turn it into a contemporary zen palace. "I like the mix of modern and the old," she says. "If it's too modern, it feels cold. Mixing warms it up." Much of that softness comes from antique pieces Krasne has collected during travels through India, Morocco, Paris, and beyond, including a candle holder from Kyoto and bean bag from South Africa. With seven years of renovations under the family's belt, the home feels complete—almost. "I'm happy to be done, but I'll find something else because I can't stop," she says. "I love design."

Neighborhood
Mission Hills
Stats
2,000 square feet, with two bedrooms and 2.5 bathrooms



Robert Benson/Robert Benson

Trending in People

- 10 Historic Milestones of San Diego's Black Community
- Local Tastemakers Put Together Your Go-To Valentine's Day Gift Guide
- Spotlight on Women: Darlene Shiley
- Jason Mraz Is Growing Coffee on a Farm in Oceanside
- Love in the Time of COVID

Newsletter Sign Up

Email*

- Best of San Diego: Things to do in SD
- The Main Dish: All things food
- Getaways: Where to go now
- Exquisite Weddings: Local inspiration
- Charitable SD: Non-profit news
- San Diego Homes - Design & décor

Subscribe

The Magazine



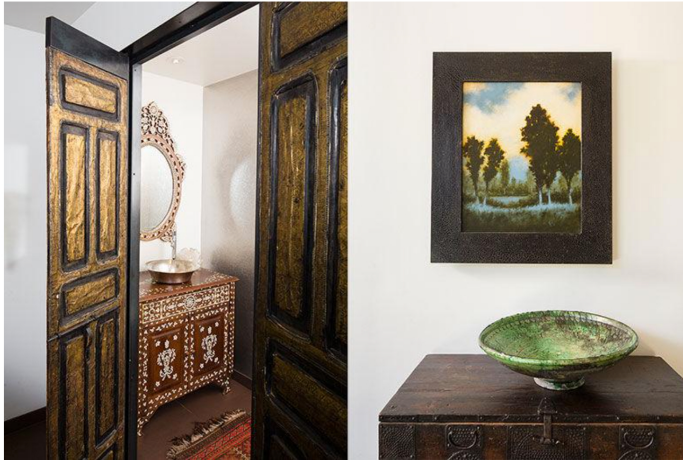
- Print and Gift Subscriptions
- Digital Archive
- Buy Single Issues
- Client Gift Program

Find a local business

I'm looking for...



Upon entering the home, visitors can relax in the open and airy living room, which includes a jewelry chest designed in Santa Fe, traditional batik prints from Jakarta, and three pieces by the famous glass sculptor Dale Chihuly, who is friends with Krasne's stepbrother. The chef is partial to neutral color schemes but knew the room needed a pop. "I thought, 'I need to step out and get some color,'" she says. "I like fuschia or green."



robert@robertbenson.com

Morocco Memento

"I have a door fetish," Krasne admits. For the powder room (far left), she repurposed two regal Moroccan doors. Inside is an intricate Moroccan mirror and dresser, which Krasne and her husband previously used as a changing table for Sahara before turning it into a sink. In the living room, a Brad Durham oil painting hangs above an antique Chinese trunk topped with a piece of Berber pottery from North Africa.



robert@robertbenson.com

Tricks of the Trade

"The kitchen is more technical," says Krasne, who worked on her first cookbook during the space's renovation, which involved doubling its size, and increasing counter space, prep areas, and storage. The cabinets are made of an eco-friendly farmed teak, while the countertops are sustainable quartz. A built-in sofa in the dining room (above) gives the family a place to lounge, and a custom bookshelf next to the dining table keeps Krasne's reference books handy. Her father found the chandelier at an auction in Austria, and Chula Vista-based Gibson & Gibson Antique Lighting turned the piece, which was originally used in an opera house, into a light fixture.



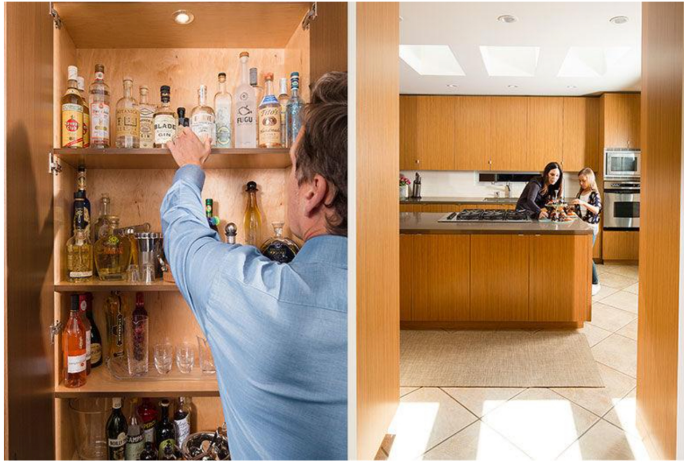


robert@robertbenson.com

"Once a week she probably creates something new," Jamie says of his wife's culinary prowess. "She's an amazing cook. She has a passion for it."

PREV

NEXT



robert@robertbenson.com

A liquor cabinet is neatly tucked away in the living room and incorporates the same farmed teak used in the kitchen. To keep with the home's Far East aesthetic, they added Asian-style handles from L.A.'s Berbere World Imports to the cabinet doors.



robert@robertbenson.com

For the master bathroom, Krasne pulled inspiration from a past vacation at an Aman Resort, the luxury hotel chain known for its minimalist design. "I love to stay at too-expensive hotels," she says. "If I see something, I think, 'I have to do that!'"





robert@robertbenson.com

The newly completed master bedroom patio is outfitted in highly durable, low-maintenance ipe wood. Pieces from Bali and the Philippines along with a bean bag from Restoration Hardware give the space warmth—as does the patio's west-facing direction. "It's going to be a good spot for tanning!" Krasne says.



robert@robertbenson.com

"I love to stay at too-expensive hotels. I see something, I think, 'I have to do that!'"



robert@robertbenson.com

Custom Courtyard

The entry patio was one of the first areas Krasne and Anderson tackled, 10 years ago. Moroccan lamps purchased during her travels served as inspiration, which led to the cement panel with perforations similar to the lanterns, as well as a custom Starphire glass fire pit and handmade metal furniture by local artist Brian Linn. The space is a favorite for entertaining. "We use this as an extended kitchen," Krasne says.

An earlier version of this story incorrectly stated that Little Italy's Extraordinary Desserts was designed by Aaron Anderson. It was designed by Luce et Studio.





f t e p b

Welcome to the discussion.

[Log In](#)

SanDiego
MAGAZINE

707 Broadway Suite 1100
San Diego, CA 92101
Phone: 619-230-9292
Email: hello@sdmag.com



Our Company

- [Advertise](#)
- [About Us](#)
- [Contact Us](#)
- [Careers](#)

Services

- [Subscribe](#)
- [Subscriber Services](#)
- [Give a Gift](#)
- [Customer Service](#)
- [Newsletters](#)
- [Privacy Policy](#)
- [Do Not Sell My Info](#)

GIVEAWAY ✕

Copyright 2021 San Diego Magazine, 707 Broadway Suite 1100 San Diego, CA | [Privacy Policy](#)