

## kids

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ED OLEN

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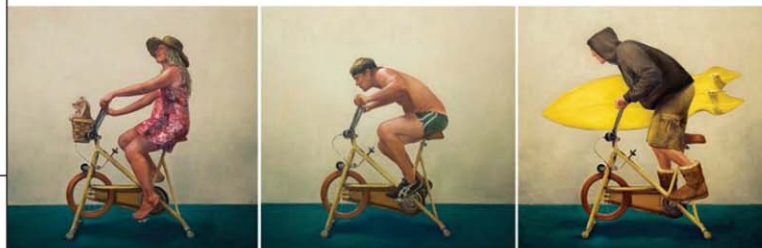
Insider travel tips from some of our favorite travel bloggers and websites

BY TIFFANY HAWK

## About the Cover

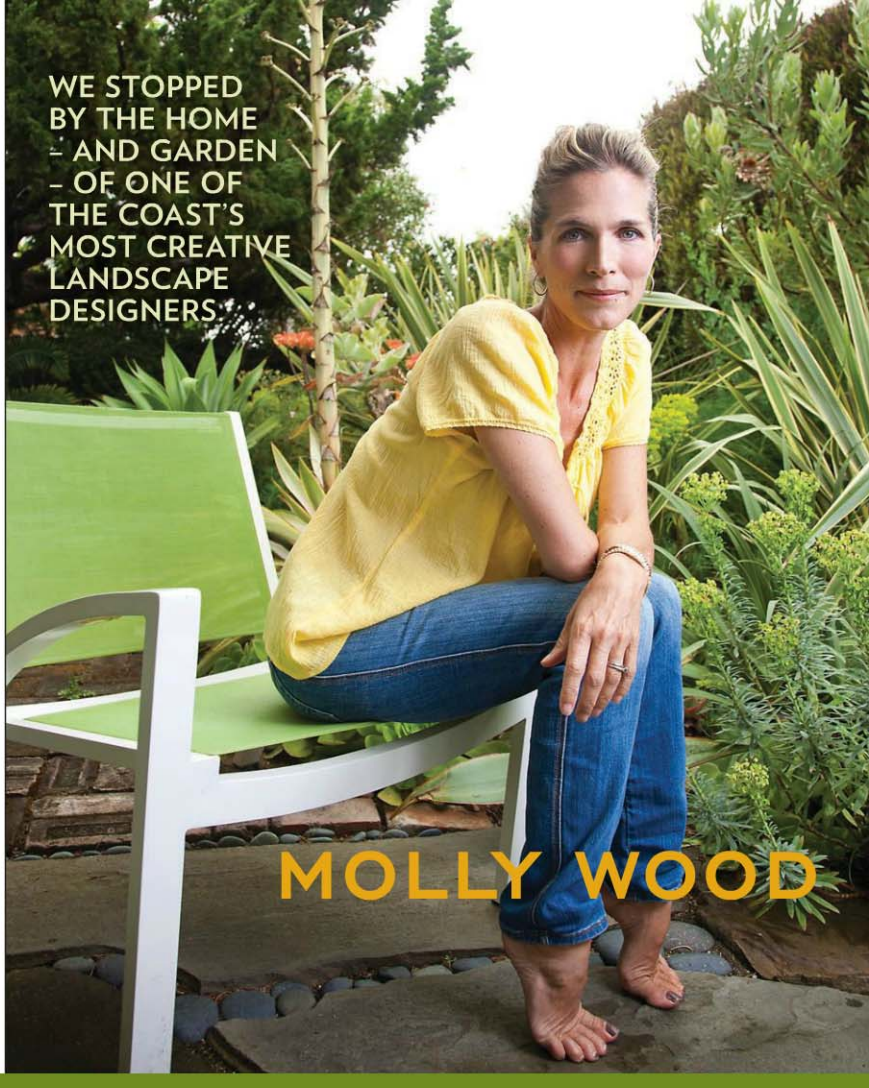
This month's cover is an oil on panel by San Juan Capistrano artist Robin Johnson, entitled *Semi Pro*. The image, influenced by the natural and cultural milieu of Laguna Beach, is the third panel in a triptych called *Cycles*, which according to Johnson "explores themes of identity within the eclectic sub-cultures of Southern California. Presented on identical vintage exercise bikes, *Amateur*, *Novice* and *Semi-Pro*, are personifications of individual expression and purpose. Through the collaboration of the old and the new, these riders embody a region rich in style and diversity." Johnson's work will be featured at this year's Festival of the Arts in Laguna Beach, which opens July 1. To view more of her work, go to Johnson's website, or the Festival of Arts' website.

[robinjohnsonart.com](http://robinjohnsonart.com) :: [foapom.com](http://foapom.com)





WE STOPPED  
BY THE HOME  
– AND GARDEN  
– OF ONE OF  
THE COAST'S  
MOST CREATIVE  
LANDSCAPE  
DESIGNERS.



MOLLY WOOD

When she was a child, Molly Wood says her Barbies were very outdoorsy types. Instead of cruising the mall or playing dress up, they hung out at rock pools and planted organic gardens. So it's only natural that years later Wood created Molly Wood Garden Design, an award-winning landscape design firm that provides everything from conceptual landscape plans and construction documents to installation and final decoration.

Her firm embodies Wood's philosophy of creating stylized nature by embracing the art and ecology of each site. It's a philosophy that was sewn by the side of a creek playing with Barbies and then, after high school, was encouraged through years of travel and work in Europe, and finally refined at San Francisco's Academy of the Arts. Still, for all that, Wood began her firm the old-fashioned way – through hard work. She took a job at a Laguna Beach nursery and completed small jobs with little more than a shovel, a truck and a lot of sweat and

determination. Naturally, it didn't take long for her business to grow.

For over a decade, the boutique firm was run out of Wood's home, until in 2008 the company opened a showroom, which features vintage garden ornaments, exclusive furniture and fountains, interior and exterior plants and pottery, and other unique treasures hand-picked by Wood herself.

We stopped by Wood's verdant Costa Mesa home to see why this successful businesswoman says she still likes getting out in the garden and digging in the dirt – without Ken and Barbie.

**WHAT IS THE AESTHETIC SENSIBILITY OF YOUR HOME?** I would call it California clean. We have white walls and big windows to create lots of light. To add interest and color, I like to rotate accessories. I love the idea of finding beauty in everyday objects. My husband collects surfboards and has convinced me to display them throughout the house. It's also a busy house, with two

working parents and three kids under 12, so my goal is to make living in this home easy. I have big bowls of fruit for anyone to grab and eat at any time and I don't try to hide the Legos – I celebrate them!

**WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE ROOM OF THE HOUSE AND WHY?** My favorite room is outside in what we call the "shade house." It is a dining area smothered in roses and grape vines, at the back of our garden. I love to bring piles of food and drink out there and hang out till dark. Good times!

**DID YOU RENOVATE ANY PART OF YOUR HOME, AND IF SO, WHY?** Yes, we took the house to the studs about six years ago. We had to re-imagine our space. We are on a big lot on a busy street so we opened our living areas to the back garden and privatized ourselves from the street. We had to make the house work for our family, so we added a bedroom and an office, and created a big kitchen and dining room, where we spend most of our time.

**HOW WAS THE PROCESS OF RENOVATION?** A dream and a nightmare – I can't wait to do it again.

**FAVORITE THING ABOUT YOUR HOME?** The people inside it and that it is more beautiful and fabulous than I ever dared to dream my home could be.

**THE BEST PLACE TO THINK/IMAGINE IN YOUR HOME IS...** The shower, naturally.

**WHAT'S YOUR PERFECT DAY AT HOME?** A slow morning that involves bacon, a little gardening, some slip-n-slidin', and finally friends over for an early barbecue.

**WHAT IS ON YOUR NIGHTSTAND?** Reading glasses, stacks of magazines and fresh cut sweet pea blossoms.

**THE LATEST THING YOU BOUGHT FOR YOUR HOME?** A gigantic bunch of Casablanca lilies and the most amazing vintage lounge chairs you have ever seen!

**YOUR HOME IS NEVER WITHOUT...** Love, laughter, drama, and butter.

**IF YOUR HOUSE HAD A SIGNATURE SOUNDTRACK, WHAT ARTIST WOULD YOU MOST PLAY?** That's a tough one... I love music and its ability to create a mood. At our house, it's everything from ABBA to Ozzy.

– TERENCE LOOSE