

spotlight

# COMMUNITY SPONSOR - ABOUT:SPACE, LLC

By Josette Murphy | Photography by Nicole Leone



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Manhattan Beach home, outdoor living area designed by About:Space



Hermosa Beach home, on the Strand, interior architecture by About:Space



El Segundo home, fully remodeled and decorated by About:Space

I have always been aware of interior spaces, and I vividly remember the floor plans of many houses I visited as a child. I still recall the day my four sisters and I were dreaming about future careers. I was perhaps ten years old. An older sister mused: "Wouldn't it be fun to choose wallpaper for other people?" I thought, "Is that a job!? Really?! I want that job!"

Later, while studying Interior Design at ASU, where I earned my Bachelor's Degree in 1994, I learned that in order to be a fabulous interior decorator (and select the perfect wallpaper) one has to first understand, and know how to design, three-dimensional interior architecture.

The name of my studio, which I founded in 2001, was born of the conviction that you cannot decorate your way out of a bad floor plan. You have to get the "bones" right. First, you have to carefully consider basic architectural design principles such as order, light, flow, balance and scale. Interior design is not just about pretty fabrics. Interior design is About Space!

Often, when a new client approaches me about a project, the client assumes they will have to add square footage or even start from scratch to achieve their goals. Often this is simply not the case. My team and I love to save existing buildings by reworking what does not work, whether it is a terrible floor plan with tiny rooms and dark hallways, or an outdated exterior facade that needs a fresh look. We can often work with the "shell" that is already there, but dramatically alter the interior spaces and the exterior appearance as well. A favorite mantra of ours is "Don't Tear It Down!"

Our design team at About:Space loves to decorate! We have amazing trade resources and impeccable taste in color and materials. We intentionally do not have a "signature style," preferring instead to be guided by cues from the project's exterior architecture and location, and by the personal preferences, histories and lifestyles of their clients. Our style has been described as "classic," "tailored" and "unfussy."



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A client once mused, "you always to know when to stop," which we took that as a compliment. Good decorating and design is truly timeless. For most of our remodel projects, we create our own computer-generated technical drawings. These are used for pulling a permit and for a contractor and his/her field crew to execute the vision of the project. If structural work is required, we partner with a structural engineer. But for most remodel projects, where there is no major expansion of the square footage, we are the only design professional needed. We study and draw the interior spaces in great detail, and our design work often carries to the outside, whether to re-imagine the façade, or create amazing outdoor living spaces.

Our studio is purely a design firm. However, our preferred partner for general contracting and woodworking is my talented husband, Jean-Louis Boudreau ([www.boudreauconstruction.com](http://www.boudreauconstruction.com)). Jean-Louis is a meticulous wood craftsman making custom cabinets and furniture by hand; he is also a seasoned, experienced general contractor (27 years and counting!). We often collaborate on remodel projects, and our mutual clients greatly benefit from our ongoing project conversations, which often spill over into personal time. We are both very passionate about the work we do, and have developed an amazing core team of subcontractors that are reliable and committed to excellence in building. Jean-Louis and I don't always agree on everything (our marriage is "real"! ) but the one thing we do agree on is the importance of quality for project work. It has often been said that in a construction project, there are three key parameters: price, schedule and quality. In our opinion, the most important factor is quality; for that is what will be remembered and appreciated long into the future.

My husband and I are the proud parents of two young girls, and I love to plug in to their world and the local El Segundo community too. I volunteer often in both girls' classrooms, teaching art and gardening. I am also active with the local MOMs Club, school fundraising and the PTA; folks call me the "Silent Auction Queen!" I believe in supporting our local schools, so my company is a Community Business Partner with Ed! Fund. I am also passionate about art, and am a volunteer member of our small committee organizing the El Segundo Art Walk "ESAW" this summer ([www.elsegundoartwalk.com](http://www.elsegundoartwalk.com)). Last, but not least, I am a wife! Jean-Louis and I make time each week to practice yoga together (we are that annoying cute couple who holds hands during savasana!) and we are committed to our weekly "date night" ... although we cannot help but sketch

Team About:Space, "hanging out" at a construction site in Rancho Palos Verdes



project details on the napkins while waiting for our salads! Jean-Louis and I live each day with gratitude, trusting that our benevolent universe will provide for all our needs.

We have been blessed with some of the most wonderful, loyal clients! Here are a couple quotes describing their experiences with us:

Andi Moreland, “Gas-Lamp” section, Manhattan Beach (current project): “Our family recently relocated to California from Illinois and purchased a 1960’s beach home. Our purchase quickly turned into a “gut rehab.” The project needed TLC! We had the pleasure of being introduced to both our general contractor and interior designer in one meeting. This is a husband and wife team: Jean-Louis Boudreau, our general contractor and Josette Murphy, his wife, from About:Space.

They are both professionally talented, creatively innovative and have many contacts/resources between the two of them. We are happy with the customer service, communication and efficient meetings while renovating. This duo has kept in mind our monetary comfort along the way. Lastly, in our opinion, to have a general contractor and designer on the same page is priceless.”

Kathy Shoemaker, “Hill Section” Manhattan Beach (repeat client): “My husband and I are architecture buffs without any formal training. We began our home building adventure with sketches on paper in 2008, with a Spanish colonial revival style in mind. We knew

we wanted very distinctive features such as 1920’s style tile to adorn the house, but quickly (or not) realized we needed some expert help to bring the whole vision together. Thus began our journey with the creative design team of About:Space. Josette and her team made it so easy and fun as we explained or explored elements we desired, adding details which appear very subtle in the built home, but very dramatic to the overall style of the house. For example, thanks to About:Space our home features wide archways which align through the home, defining transitions between individual rooms. These thick archways identify the Spanish architecture and the “enfilade” effect of these arches is a defining moment.

Now, five years since the home was completed, we are fully rested and ready for more, so we have again engaged About:Space to continue the move towards intricate detail with stenciling, window coverings and an outdoor living area.”



Manhattan Beach home, designed by About:Space; General contracting and custom millwork by Boudreau Construction