



Santa Barbara

MAGAZINE

SPANISH REVIVAL

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& FASHION**

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Bellosguardo's Secret Past

GLOBAL GIVING
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AUG/SEPT. 2009 \$4.95

Elizabeth Poett
with Annibale

STYLE

CAROLE RIDDING

Earth-tone minerals, faceted crystals, precious gems, and gleaming gold surround this established jeweler every day. Whether designing a one-of-a-kind bauble for a collector or circling the globe for that elusive stone, Ridding's cool, calm, and elegant style stands the test of time and travel. This year, she and her husband/business partner, Michael, are >

Ridding—pairing a Diane von Furstenberg dress from Diani with a gold link necklace from Silverhorn—at home in front of her prized Kuno Stöckli painting, *Directions*.

celebrating the 25th anniversary of their sophisticated boutique, Silverhorn, as well as 40 years of marriage. Known for her mix of European quality with contemporary chic, Ridding reveals her refined sensibility for clothes, curios, and casual Santa Barbara living.

Were you always interested in gems, or did that come about when you met Michael? Definitely when I met Michael. He had an interest in natural materials, especially gem minerals. We both pursued gem collecting as a hobby in our early years being married—while we had other careers, of course. I was a child-care and social worker for different organizations such as the Children's AIDS Society in Canada and for juvenile delinquency programs, and Michael worked as an administrator at the National

TOP TO BOTTOM: Silk beaded blouse by Velvet from Diani, Christian Lacroix embroidered shawl found in Paris; Prada animal-print handbag and Robert Marc sunglasses from Montecito Optometry; citrine and amethyst necklaces with an emerald cabachon ring, Silverhorn.

Museum of Canada in Ottawa. We started a little side business and it gradually developed, then we decided to make it our full-time careers and became entrepreneurs.

Where did the name Silverhorn come from? Silverhorn was a mountain in Banff National Park near where we lived at the time. We thought of the Matterhorn in Switzerland and decided Silverhorn would work. We had this idea not to just hook our personal names for the business, we wanted more of a catchy title.

When did you bring the business to California? We had a lot of California-based customers in Banff and they particularly liked colored stone jewelry and were open to a lot of ideas. So we ventured farther afield, looking at California, and this community really appealed to us. We moved to Santa Barbara in 1984.

How would you describe a signature Silverhorn piece? Our pieces incorporate natural gemstone materials. The customer will be able to wear them most of the time. The design is simple and classic in the lines yet makes a statement. Our collector clients have a passion for design, interesting pieces, and unusual or very fine examples of rare stones.

What are some of the more unusual stones you're known for? The hot-pink sapphire is in vogue right now, but an even rarer and spectacular example is the sherry orange-pink padparadscha sapphire from Sri Lanka. There are Tanzanian sapphires that change color depending on whether they are in natural or artificial light. Alexandrite—one of the most rare and valuable of exotic gems—is found in the Ural Mountains and goes from a gorgeous green color in the daylight to reddish purple in artificial light. I love the beautiful green garnets from East Africa and, especially, the really hot-orange garnet, spessartite, from small mines in Namibia. Pakistan and

Carole's **BLACK BOOK**

Having burgers with my husband at the **BILTMORE** bar, 1260 Channel Dr., Montecito, 805-969-2261, fourseasons.com/santabarbara; taking a week-end drive to the Santa Ynez Valley to dine at my new favorite restaurant, **ROOT 246**, 420 Alisal Rd., Solvang, 805-688-9003, root-246.com.

Gardening at home with succulents I find while walking the outdoor "rooms" at **SEASIDE GARDENS**, 3700 Via Real, Carpinteria, 805-684-6001, seaside-gardens.com.

Running with my dog, Ruby, on **HAMMONDS BEACH**.

I never miss the **GIRLS INC.**, girlsinc.org, annual luncheon. The 100 Committee is a diverse group of women that come together for an important cause.

STYLE

Afghanistan—with aquamarine and tourmaline—had enormous gem potential, but it is difficult at the moment to go there.

Most of the places you mention as gem sources are politically challenging and even dangerous. Care to share a few adventures you and Michael have had abroad while looking for stones? One of the most exciting trips I made was to northern Pakistan during the '80s when the mujahideen were fighting the Russians and there were Afghan refugee camps in places like Peshawar. We arrived in the middle of the night, drove for several hours in jeeps, then trekked up mountain roads to meet with villagers who came down from their camps with rough stones. We had to make several trips to get the material out, but we did it.

Your home is filled with global curios that reflect your travels. Favorite finds? Our outdoor garden tables are made of petrified wood edged in black walnut—a complete slice of a natural tree trunk that fossilized probably around 250 million years ago. My husband found the specimens in Arizona and turned them into patio tables with glass tops. We also collect antique porcelain from all throughout Asia and China. Many are several thousand years old—some date to the Han and Tang dynasties.

What fashion designers do you mostly favor? I shop locally at small independent stores, or I pick up things when I travel. I like Max Mara and Elie Tahari. I recently bought a great jacket by Korean designer Hanii Y at Diani, but I have collected a few of her pieces before in London and Paris. Wendy Foster is a local favorite and I find many interesting things at stores that aren't just selling clothing—such as Maison K or Objects. Kim Phillips [owner of Maison K] has a great eye.

Being a Canadian by birth, you must have been bundled up most of your life. How did your style change when you came to California? I was born in Montreal, but as a child I lived mainly on Prince Edward Island in Nova Scotia, in the Maritime provinces. Winters were extreme. Santa Barbara's more temperate weather is ideal for me because I still love layering [clothes]. I adore jackets, scarves, hats, and fedoras, although I don't get a chance to wear them very often here. I like the fact that most of the year, we wear a lightweight jacket in the evening, or a sweater. We get the best of both worlds! ■

ABOVE: Ridding in her Mission Canyon garden wearing a Ya-Ya leather jacket, Velvet blouse, GoldSign jeans, and Sergio Rossi stilettos, all from Diani. BELOW, LEFT TO RIGHT: Natural agate bowl carved in Idar-Oberstein, Germany; collection of ancient Chinese pottery; mica and iron chandelier from Waterloo Designs.

“MY FAVORITE GEMSTONE IS THE REALLY **HOT-ORANGE** SPESSARTITE.”

