



Los Angeles



Newport Beach



Carlsbad



Joshua Tree



Maria and Max Isles

Owner/Designer and Woodworker/Furniture Maker, Isles Interiors



Brooks and Jenny Crawford

Founders, Brookside Design



Jen Robin and Nicole Dines

CEO/Founder and COO, Life in Jeneral



Sara and Rich Combs

Creators, The Joshua Tree House



Better Together

These Dynamic Design Duos Prove That Two Heads Are Better Than One

WRITTEN BY: JORDAN NISHKIAN

Creative Collaboration

For This Husband and Wife Duo,
It's What's on the Inside That Counts



Newport Beach



"I love our location. It's so fun to get to know the whole design community out there!"
—Maria Isles

Names: **Maria and Max Isles**

Job Titles: **Owner/Designer and Woodworker/Furniture Maker, Isles Interiors**

Ever since she was little, Maria Isles wanted nothing more than to be an interior designer and to own her own shop. And while life initially took her off-course from that dream, by the time her son was old enough, she went back to interior design school.

That was eight years ago. Since then, Maria finished school, and she and Max found a space to turn Maria's business goals into reality. "We found this little space on old Newport

Boulevard. It was so cute, so ramshacked...it was perfect!"

"Max is a woodworker and furniture maker," Maria notes. "He's awesome at fixing anything. We revamped the whole store; now I do my interior design out of here. We have our style, so customers and other designers can shop our look, and we have a lot of Max's pieces in here, so they can get an idea of what they can [have] made by him."

It's easy to see why a marriage between an interior designer and a furniture

maker seems almost too good to be true. "When I started interior designing, I found that a lot of our clients needed one-of-a-kind pieces or custom furniture," Maria explains. "[Max] can make anything—I was so lucky. I'd ask, 'Can you make a coffee table in a week?' And he'd be able to whip it up! He's so talented—it was the perfect combination for us to start a business like that."

Isles Interiors is not only a culmination of the couple's talents and skill sets, but of their styles as well. "It's so nice to design [pieces] together with the client's input," she shares. "It all works out really well."

"It's fun to bring out a story for the client—whether it's the room or the whole house, it just really has to flow," she explains. To achieve that, Isles Interiors' process relies on finding or creating one-of-a-kind pieces that tie it all together.



From Max's conscious selection when it comes to materials to Maria's enthusiasm for antique and reclaimed pieces, the couple is putting an environmentally friendly stamp on a style that is uniquely and completely theirs.

"We mesh really well together," Maria says. "It's fun being creative with him!"

The Essentials:

1. Have a good relationship with your client.
2. Map out your story and your plan.
3. Don't deviate from the plan!
4. Find unique or custom pieces.
5. Make the space look like the client!





PHOTOGRAPHY BY: **LANE DITTOE**
& **JESSICA BODAS**

The Total Package

This Couple's Design and Decor Know-How Goes Hand-in-Hand



Carlsbad

Names: **Brooks and Jenny Crawford**
Job Titles: **Founders, Brookside Design**

Brooks and Jenny Crawford share more than a marriage—they share a business and a passion to combine their skills to create beautiful spaces.

“At the beginning of January 2019, we started this adventure fully self-employed, and it’s been great so far,” Brooks says. And while Jenny was always supportive of Brookside Design behind the scenes, her true niche in the company swiftly made itself apparent.

“When Brooks started in January...I was helping him with social media and background things,” Jenny explains. “But then we decided to do photoshoots of his projects to really build our portfolio.” Upon seeing outdoor furniture à la Home Depot paired with her husband’s stunning work, Jenny decided to pull everything out and stage it herself for the shoot. When the clients saw the decor transformation, they were amazed, making her “realize that there was a real niche

and a need in the landscape design industry to include exterior decor.”

Since then, the pair has been proudly offering clients the entire package—literally. “You’re not just seeing a landscape installation, like hardscape and plants,” Brooks says. “It’s all those furnishings that give the space that magazine-quality look, which everybody wants!”

“It takes really great taste and curation to create that composition,” he continues. “That’s where Jenny has been really amazing.”

Interacting with the couple, it’s clear to see that the bond they share is the epitome of what a healthy marriage looks like, and they’re proud of the efforts that they’ve put into that. “Working together has forced our relationship to grow—running a business is a pressure test on your marriage,” notes Brooks. “I really enjoyed growing with Jenny this last year. It



*“We’re always trying to find ways to educate people.”
—Brooks Crawford*



means humbling yourself sometimes; it means standing your ground at the right time and just using better judgment across the board.”

“One thing that’s really cool about working together is to share our successes and our victories,” Jenny beams. “It feels so good because we built it together. It was a collaborative team effort.”

Together, Brooks and Jenny are changing the way the industry and their clients see landscape design and decor—both are valuable on their own, but they are even better paired together.

The Essentials:

1. Patience is a must.
2. Keep the goal in mind.
3. Be a good decision maker.
4. Collaboration is key!
5. Trust the process.



BROOKSIDE DESIGN

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PHOTOGRAPHY BY: **LENS + SOUL**
& **EMMA ALMENDAREZ**

Jenerally Speaking

These Organizational Pros Are Helping Others Live Their Best (and Tidiest) Lives



Los Angeles

Names: **Jen Robin and Nicole Dines**

Job Titles: **CEO/Founder and COO, Life in Jeneral**

Birthed from a natural talent and a passion for bettering the lives of others, Life in Jeneral is the professional organizing company that's making dreams come true for clients—and also for Jen Robin and Nicole Dines.

When Life in Jeneral first came to fruition in 2014, it was sparked from founder Robin's eagerness to help the people around her move and live more joyfully in their own homes. "My family thought I was so crazy," Robin laughs. "I was doing it on the weekends for fun!"

Now, business is booming—so much so that Robin needed to expand her team, and that's where Dines, the director of business development and sales, comes in. "Nicole is my right-hand soulmate," Robin says. "She used to be an organizer in the field, and I always knew there was something special... From the moment I brought her in-house, the company changed... She understood the heart and soul of helping people..."

It's clear that Dines was a natural fit for the role and for her close working-

relationship with Robin—the two work so well together that their emails have started to look and sound alike!

Together, Robin and Dines are helping people find systems that not only work for them and their homes, but ones that will also grow with them. "Every space is different, and every client is different," explains Robin. "But [both] the overall foundation of what we do and our goals to achieve are really simple. You pull everything out of the space, you sort like items, you purge what you no longer need, love or use and you come up with a creative plan for how you're going to install it back in... then you create that system in a new way, and that's what sticks."

The seamless synchronicity of Robin and Dines is at the helm, meaning that the sky's



"Your happiest self is when, at the core, you're very organized."
—Jen Robin



the limit for Life in Jeneral. With the expansion of their brand to Closets in Jeneral and Products in Jeneral, along with the opening of their new 5,000-square-foot HQ in El Segundo, the company is spreading joy the best way they know how—neatly folded and color-coordinated, of course!

The Essentials:

1. Start small with drawer dividers.
2. Containment for any space is key!
3. Matching hangers are a must.
4. Give yourself grace and stay positive—it's okay to take breaks.
5. A label maker.



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Manhattan Beach, CA

Interior Design By:
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HEADSHOT BY: CHARLIE CHIPMAN
PHOTOS BY: LIFE IN JENERAL &
MARISA VITALE PHOTOGRAPHY

In Their Element

These High School Sweethearts
Are Bringing Desert Dreams to Life



Joshua Tree

Names: **Sara and Rich Combs**

Job Titles: **Creators, The Joshua Tree House**

For Sara and Rich Combs, what began as a cross-country road trip to escape the daily grind turned into a booming project, dedicated to helping others reconnect with themselves and with nature.

“We really fell in love with Joshua Tree on that trip,” Sara says. “After we went back [home] to New York, we kept thinking about how good it felt there, how creative we felt there with the open landscape.”

The couple was drawn back to the California desert, and

“without questioning it,” they bought The Joshua Tree House. While it originally began as a home for them to reset and work on their own projects, the Combs soon found success in listing their home as an Airbnb.

“We realized other people were craving a space like that as well,” Sara shares. “We eventually opened it up full-time for bookings, and then we fell in love with creating spaces for people where they can reconnect with nature and have that time to reset.”

From there, the couple began renovating more spaces and taking on more projects, which has, in turn, shone a light on how they work together as a team. While both share a similar aesthetic, Rich is more detail-oriented, and Sara is more big-picture. “Even when we were [painting] in high school and college, Sara would always work with all these really big brushes and use her entire arm,” Rich explains. “Then I would come in with a very small brush and paint the little details.”

While both their business and personal relationship sound worthy of a storybook, the journey hasn’t been without its obstacles. In 2019, the pair took on their largest and most challenging project yet: The Posada in Arizona.

“We got this property in Tucson that was an old, abandoned inn, and we wanted to renovate it,” Sara shares. “It was the biggest space we’d ever done, and we just went for it because it felt perfect.” They soon found



that perfection doesn’t come easily. The property was draining both their energy and finances, and the space was simply not cooperating with them.

Not ones to turn away from a challenge, the duo pushed through, prevailed and opened the space, transforming their biggest obstacle into a joint victory. Now the couple is taking a well-deserved break—“resting, relaxing and reconnecting,” the Joshua Tree way.



“Everything about [The Posada] was difficult, but we wanted it so badly.”
—Sara Combs

The Essentials:

1. Vintage pieces are more eco-friendly and have more character.
2. Natural materials are perfect for the desert landscape.
3. Plants blur the line between indoors and outdoors.
4. Coffee—of course!
5. Get a good playlist going.





PHOTOGRAPHY BY:
THE JOSHUA TREE HOUSE & TIM MELIDEO