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in our home or to sell to her friends. Seeing that before-and-after transformation is what created my passion for transforming spaces and the creation of new homes.

What inspires your designs? Classic architecture, travel, history and clients. Our clients are a never-ending source of inspiration. Whether it is a hotel suite in Paris or a cold Corona on a beach in Maui, our clients' vast experiences are something we try to recreate for them in their homes. That can be done by implementing certain textures, wood species, wood finishes, cabinetry designs, stone, colors, patterns or lighting.

What's the major difference between the East and West coasts in terms of style? The West coast may be a bit more casual in the sense of attitude and entertaining. Almost everyone that comes to us for a living room says, "I really want to make sure we can use our living room for entertaining and just hanging out." People in California want open, flowing spaces conducive to casual entertaining.

What are some hot trends in coastal home design? We are involved in a few Cape Cod homes now and we are designing the spaces to look as if they have been there for some time. I think people are always pulling from their past to try to recreate a feeling or experience, always trying to design

something unique in each room. People are well-traveled and, as such, are inspired by those journeys and want their homes to reflect this. Also, because people may be spending more time in their homes entertaining, smart homes and whole-house entertainment systems are on the rise. We want our clients to have the home that everyone wants to visit.

What's your favorite room to design, and why? I love to design a kitchen that flows openly to a family room, as I know I can really influence people's social experience in this space. I know that what I envision and design will be experienced in so many ways. Whether it is a family dinner at the nook table or cocktails with friends around the center island, I know it will be a great place to experience life.

What is your favorite coastal destination? Wind and Sea Beach in La Jolla, California. It is a gorgeous beach with amazing rock formations. When I arrive, I just immediately feel the decompression—it is also where I asked my wife to marry me. By the way, she did say yes, so I can still enjoy the beach!

COASTAL CHARACTER

Phil Norman's unique designs reflect his own passion for beachfront style.

BY LINDSAY LAMBERT

PHIL NORMAN FIRST ARRIVED in California driving a 1984 Chevy Citation and with a mere \$400 in his pocket. After cold-calling his way through the San Diego *Yellow Pages*, Norman landed entry-level positions at area interior design firms. Ultimately, he worked his way up before launching his own Los Angeles-based Norman Design Group in 2003. Norman prides himself on the relationships he builds

with his clientele and his ability to weave their most precious memories into the very fabric—literally—of their homes. Here, Norman tells *OceanHome* what inspires his creations, and why La Jolla still holds a special place in his heart.

How did you get into the home design business? My mother used to buy antiques at Midwestern flea markets and refinish them to place

DESIGNER DETAILS

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