Designing Women

Meet the faces behind three of Coronado’s successful interior design practices and the trends they see coming.

By Kris Grant
“I feel like there’s nothing more rewarding,” said Jessica Tompane, owner and principal designer at J Hill Interiors, “than when you come to the end of a project and you’ve done that final installation — the furniture and accessories and artwork — and the client walks in and you see their reaction. They are over and beyond thrilled.”

For each client, J Hill Interiors begins the design process with a meeting and questionnaire. And while every client will see and approve beforehand all the fabrics and furniture pieces that are going to go into the home (via actual pieces or on vision boards with product samples), Tompane finds that most clients aren’t able to fully visualize the end result. “So when they come there after the installation, they are genuinely surprised and delighted at the amount of thought and detail that goes into it.”

“And that’s why they hire us,” she said. “We have the training, the ability to understand scale, proportion, color.”

Sometimes clients contact her office first and if they need a general contractor, Tompane will suggest they secure three bids, and will make referrals if requested. “Every general contractor

This great room design by J Hill Interiors features accordion (folding) doors, a popular trend in Coronado and Southern California, where homeowners want to enjoy an indoor/outdoor lifestyle.
approaches a job differently,” she advised. “You want to feel good about the person you work with.”

Jessica Tompane hails from a small town in Texas and that same small-town ambiance is what drew her and her Navy husband to Coronado last year. The couple had met at the University of Colorado, where Jessica graduated with a double major in business and Spanish. They first moved to San Diego and after Jessica worked for a while in advertising, she realized she was blessed with a passion for interior design (which she had since childhood) and entrepreneurship. After working with other designers to hone her craft, she established J Hill Interiors in 2010 (Hill is her maiden name).

Tompane also moved her company to the island last November. J Hill Interiors’ offices are at 1307 Ynez Place, and Tompane plans to host a series of community design seminars in the remodeled space over the coming year. She and her team of designers are all members of the American Society of Interior Designers (ASID). McKnight holds a B.A. in interior design from Westwood College of Design and is pursuing certification for the National Council for Interior Design Qualification.

Tompane serves on the board of The Design League of San Diego and is excited about the group’s fundraiser set for February 2017. “It’s a series of room vignettes that will be staged on the Broadway Pier,” she said. “All the proceeds will go to the San Diego Center for Children.”

J Hill Interiors specializes in residential construction, including new construction, where they collaborate with architects and general contractors, as well as renovation work. The firm’s portfolio includes projects throughout country from Mission Beach to Mount Helix and Rancho Santa Fe. In Coronado, current project work includes new construction on F and H avenues and a full house remodel.

Tompane said she is often asked what kind of style the company does, to which she explains, “We do the style that fits within our clients’ visions. We’ve done everything from Spanish Revival to very modern. I think that speaks to our talent as well. We have the ability to challenge ourselves to do several looks and designs.”

“We work with a lot of families,” added McKnight, who has five children and whose real world experiences often come into play when advising young families. (The Tompanes welcomed their first child, daughter Paisley Sue, this summer.)
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“Our company values are about relationships and results,” Tompane said. “Yes, we often are dealing with luxury design, but we are down-to-earth. We want our clients to use us now and come back to us in years to come. “And as for results, we strive for quality — we use quality vendors and quality materials so that the design holds up over time.”

Whether their work for a client is a single room or an entire home, Tompane says that the over-arching goal is to improve their clients’ lifestyle — “The way their family lives in a space. Or when they have company over, they’ll have a sense of pride in the home.”

Trends that J Hill Interiors sees happening now and on the horizon include:

**Tile detail.** The use of the same material but in unique patterns, such as a subway tile in a basket-weave pattern.

**Natural stone countertops** and also “waterfall counters” in which the stone (or other material) carries over to the side of the counter (or kitchen island) and extends to the floor for a modern, sleek look.

**Outdoor fabrics used on indoor furniture.** “They are getting so soft,” said Tompane. “There are so many options that offer durability and sheen.”

**Black and white** “Sharp contrasts are popular,” said McKnight. “Black accents in a white kitchen is trending now.”

**Gold and rose metals** “We use them in lighting, sconces, lamps and accent tables,” said Tompane. “We’ll sometimes do a mix of metal finishes; oil-rubbed bronze cabinet hardware with a chrome kitchen faucet and a gold chandelier, for instance.”

**Eclectic design** with the use of “busier” patterns. “Jacquard florals are popular and so is toile, which we might use as an accent, such as a pillow, an ottoman or an accent chair,” Tompane said. “Toile could adapt to an Asian design or be decidedly East Coast. We might use a jacquard pattern as a starter to pull colors from to make a concept for a room.”

**Folding interior/exterior doors.** “It’s a lasting trend, because it’s so functional for living in Southern California and makes a huge difference with lighting and the overall “wow” factor in a home,” says Tompane.