

Modern Interiors

by Mary Delaney



They ask an in-depth battery of lifestyle questions to get to know their coastal clients. "We want to get a picture of who they are, how they live and what they do," Todd says. Everything enters into the design formula: whether they have pets, grandkids, spend most of their time indoors or outdoors, entertain every weekend or just every now and then, whether they prefer muted tones over bold ones. They tie in all the lifestyle elements and design tastes of their customers and come up with a one-of-a-kind design for each home or condo. Customers often select furniture and accessory pieces right off

Recently, Jorge and Todd designed a home for an Emerald Beach couple with different design tastes. "The woman liked more traditional design and the man liked more European modern," Todd explains. "The guy loves to listen to music, so we are creating a special man cave for him." The woman test drove some modern furniture pieces and fell in love with their overall look and feel. "We were able to incorporate some of what she likes and some of what he likes to create a happy medium for both," Todd says.

"We're also really big on scale and proportion," Todd says. Attention to scale and proportion cannot be overlooked when creating a comfortable, downsized, lifestyle-friendly space. Treating the room's scale accurately is as essential as selecting the right furniture and accessories. Jorge explains, "Your design choices have to fit your space."

After creating a huge client base and home décor design buzz in America's heartland, Jorge Saiz and Todd Reeves decided to take their creative talents southbound. Some might say their move was bold. Some might even say their move was a little crazy. But Jorge and Todd had dreams of panhandle sunshine—and nothing was going to stop their "inner beach burns" from having their way.

Jorge and Todd met in New York City. Todd was designing and selling high-end couture evening wear for the rich and fancy while Jorge was putting together television and print campaigns in New York's fast paced advertising world. Both wanted to get out of the "rat race" and into stores of their own. So, the two put their innovative design brains together, formulated a plan, boxed up their lives and moved to Topoka, Kansas.

Since Todd grew up in Topoka, he was already familiar with the design mindset of the typical Midwesterner: traditional over modern; safe over bold; more over less. He knew that the challenge of helping Topokans to appreciate modern home design and décor would be ambitious but not impossible. With a background in marketing and advertising, Jorge was the perfect partner for this brave design crusade. The duo worked primarily in northeastern Kansas but also kept a design office in Kansas City, Missouri. The Kansas City office helped accommodate some of those customers who traveled far and wide for their design ideas. According to Jorge and Todd, "the modern customer will travel to get what they want."

They chose to name the store using a pairing of Todd's and Jorge's middle names: Isidro Dunbar Modern Interiors. Although both being separate gifts to Isidro Dunbar—Todd's gregariousness and Jorge's knack for marketing and the "business side" of things—they both love the creative component. When asked what part of their business they found most satisfying, they practically replied in unison, "definitely the designing and the customers." They quickly educated, enlightened, inspired and befriended their Kansas clientele. Their passion for modern design coupled with their warm personalities was a big hit with their Kansas customers. But after thirteen years of good business and hard winters, Jorge and Todd agreed that it was time to move south and bring their hands-on approach to the Florida panhandle.



the floor at the Isidro Dunbar Modern Interiors store. If they don't find exactly what they want on the showroom floor, they're able to find the perfect color, design and fabric through one of the Isidro Dunbar's numerous quality vendors.

Todd and Jorge love the "hid-back attitudes" of the Florida panhandle. This easy coastal attitude is one of the main reasons for the relocation of Isidro Dunbar Modern Interiors. Whether residents are seasonal or year-round, they have more informal attitudes toward their life and homes. "People want to downsize, and this attitude should be reflected in their homes," Todd says. They want to be comfortable, not fussy. They want to create an oasis for family and friends. Gilling out, relaxing on the deck and cat napping on comfortable sofas seem to be the common mantra for most panhandle residents. According to Jorge and Todd, modern design is a perfect fit for these hid-back sensibilities. Even though everyone has their specific design styles, most area residents are looking for the same thing: casual comfort and simplicity.

Jorge and Todd are champions of the modern movement. When asked what they would like to convey most about their store's philosophy, Todd replies, "Modern is here. Modern is comfortable."

"Modern design has received a bad rap," Jorge and Todd explain. In the past, people have misinterpreted the harder edges of modern for clunky and uncomfortable. But store goers are transformed the second they sit down in one of Isidro Dunbar Modern Interiors' colorful and angular chairs and find it both snug and comfy. It seems that changing minds isn't difficult when the furniture can do the talking.

Isidro Dunbar Modern Interiors is located at 36074 Emerald Coast Parkway adjacent to Cox Pools (between Bruster's Ice Cream and Carpet One) in Destin, Florida. For more information, call (850) 269-1699 or visit www.isidromoderninteriors.com.