



## INTRODUCING BRAZILIAN STYLE

TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHY  
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Look out, global design mavens and fans, there's a new look samba-ing its way into homes in California as well as New York, Florida, Texas, and points in between. Andrea Fonseca, the youthful and energetic ambassador for this look, and the owner of Brazil Baroque, a 5,000 square foot showroom in Santa Barbara, can be credited for importing Brazilian style directly to the West Coast.

Fonseca, a native of Rio de Janeiro, is a formally trained architect who designs and imports furnishings from her South American homeland, many of which are made of recycled rare hardwoods fashioned from elements salvaged from old haciendas, as well as other items and antiques.

"I love supporting the talented artisans in my country as well as sharing my passion for Brazilian furniture and antiques with the rest of the world," says Fonseca who divides her time between her showroom and buying trips to Brazil four to five times annually.

In the beginning, there was oak, maple, and pine. The Asian invasion followed. Indonesian style jumped on the bandwagon, as did East Indian. And while French, Italian, English, and other European furnishings, as well as the aforementioned, are still popular, and Mexican style has always had an influence on California living in general. South American styles and woods such as *ipe*, *cairo*, and Brazilian rosewood are now "in" thanks to the indefatigable designer and businesswoman.

Her business, Brazil Baroque, named for the baroque design influence in that country when it was colonized by the Portuguese in 1850, features a changing display of furniture, antiques, architectural elements, and accessories designed or discovered by Fonseca on regular buying trips to her native country. There, the Portuguese-speaking *carioca* (a person

from Rio) is able to navigate through the complicated highways and byways of doing business in Brazil.

"My dream is to be a model for other businesses. My environmental efforts include using sturdy recycled hardwoods in the production of my pieces. By employing Brazilian artisans, I am also helping support the economy of my homeland," says Fonseca, who also sells large ceramic vessels that help support women in small villages who make the pots by hand.

Original, handcrafted furniture designs in the showroom include massive, rugged dining tables constructed of 100-year-old recycled Brazilian rosewood, handcarved leather chairs, intricately

CENTER: Andrea shops for antiques.

RIGHT: Antique cheese molds blessed by priests

OPPOSITE: An artisan at work.