



★ OI ★ **BRASIL!**

SOUTH AMERICA'S LARGEST COUNTRY HAS PLANTED ITS FLAG IN SANTA BARBARA SOCIETY —WITH MUCH WELCOME BY COLLIN MITCHELL ★ PHOTOS BY BRENT WINEBRENNER



My first introduction to Brazilian culture in Santa Barbara involved a brief discussion on 18th century antiques, an inspection of raw granite slabs, and the sultry samba dancing of two buxom (and fleshy) femme fatales at a “Brazil Night” dinner on State Street. Ironically, the antique lecturer, Andrea Fonseca, was the person at our table who wouldn’t accept my pleas of apprehension as two samba dancers clad in *carnivale* costumes thrust me to my feet and onto the makeshift dance floor. No regrets here; I had a great time. But while losing myself in that brief instant of exhibitionism, I realized that Brazilian transplants in Santa Barbara really appreciate the finer things in life.

“Most Brazilians I’ve talked to are struck by the natural beauty of Santa Barbara,” says UCSB Spanish/Portuguese counselor Ivone Ghazaleh,

suggesting why many *cariocas* (inhabitants of Rio de Janeiro), *paulistinas* (those from São Paulo) and others, decide to stay put after just an intended visit. This understandable migration has made Santa Barbara the lucky benefactor of many talented and industrious Brazilians who have started their own successful businesses in our temperate town.

Sure, everyone is beautiful, extremely gregarious, and eternally young, but the nightlife and great tans aren’t the only things that Brazilian emigrés are thinking about. A trio of hard working ex-pats has lent their ingenuity to a variety of unique businesses that run the gamut.

BRAZIL BAROQUE

Without much more than a slight breath of air, **Brazil Baroque** owner and designer, **Andrea Fonseca** bursts with excitement over the latest shipment

of furniture to arrive from Brazil at her new 5,000 square-foot showroom. “I’m proud to bring these unique examples of Brazilian craftsmanship, because I think American people really appreciate beautiful pieces of furniture.”

In 1998, after studying fine arts and architecture in Brazil, Andrea moved to California to pursue a masters degree from Art Center in Pasadena. For the past year, she has been importing Brazilian hardwood tables, chests, armoires, and a variety of accessories, both old and new, from her homeland. Many of the antique pieces are quite rare and Andrea is very selective in what she imports to Santa Barbara. Often, after some thoughtful consideration, some items simply stay put. “Certain pieces belong in Brazil because they are a part of my country’s 500 years of history. We cannot lose that,” she says emphatically.

The Baroque style emerged in Italy during the 17th century and was brought



to Brazil about a hundred years later. Brazilian interpretations made during the 18th and 19th centuries from European design were fashioned out of *imbuía*, (walnut), *jatoba*, (cherry), and *cedro baiano* (rosewood) from the Amazon rainforest. Today these protected woods are prohibited from

being used as they once were in homes, churches and for furniture. But with some management help from her father in Brazil, Andrea is creating exquisite handmade baroque style furniture from salvaged wooden banisters, floor-boards and window

(continued)

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