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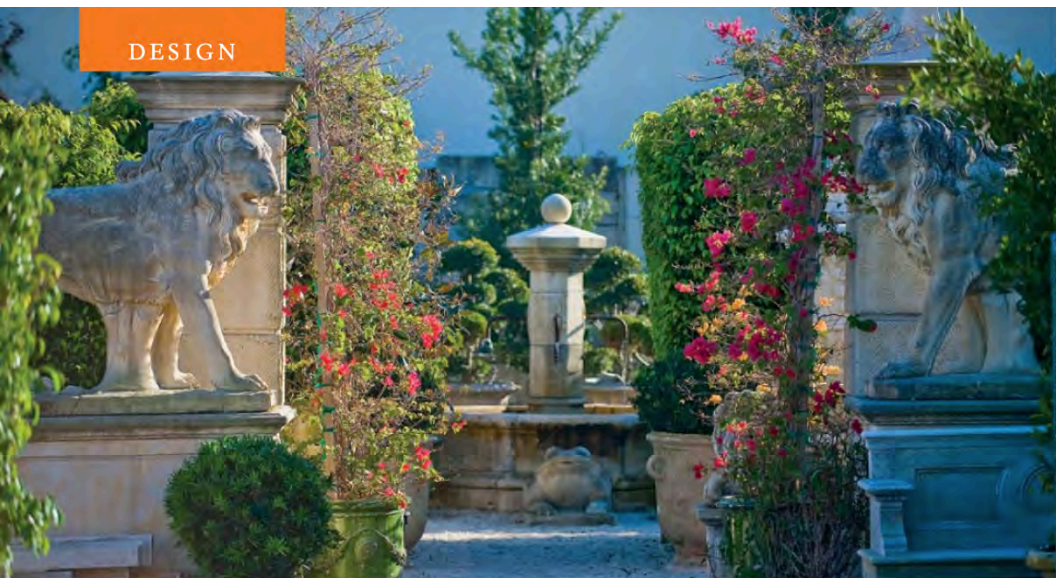


Be a fashion star this spring in Graziela's 18-kt. white gold and diamond earrings. \$2,950. At graziela.com.



Authentic Provence in West Palm Beach maintains a very large inventory of European Garden Planters from France, Italy, Belgium, and England. Visit authenticprovence.com.





AUTHENTIC PROVENCE, PALM BEACH'S TREASURE TROVE

BY ALEX TRAVERS

WHEN SUSAN and Wolfgang Hofherr scour the globe for precious artifacts and antiques, they have one particular thing in mind. To many, it may seem an odd detail, especially for such experienced treasure hunters. But the duo, who own and operate Authentic Provence in West Palm Beach, remain insistent. They want objects that aren't perfect.

"We are all not perfect," reflects Susan, "so let us accept the imperfections of a century-old fountain. Each piece should tell its own story, have its own history."

Finding a connection between charm and peculiarity isn't easily done. But the Hofherrs, who specialize in custom searches for their clients, came up with a plan: they solidified relationships with vendors and dealers in France and Italy, people they've been connected with for over 45 years, hoping to get special access to those unique pieces that inspire their audiences back home.

"We are not stuck to just antiques," Susan clarifies, "and with the high demand of our mid-century modern furniture and accessories, we can also introduce unusual garden ornaments and planters to complement the look."

Susan and Wolfgang met on the beach, in the Italian region of Liguria, and later married. Before they founded Authentic Provence in 1998, Wolfgang worked in the art and antique

markets, and also spent time at a French auction house. Susan got her start in couture. She helped create samples for the adventurous fashion designer Emanuel Ungaro. "If you are a visual person," she explains, "you like creating something beautiful in any field."

Not long after settling into Palm Beach, where Susan's father also lived at the time, the couple noticed that something was missing in this town filled with grand, historic homes: "Large-scale European garden antiques." That prompted them to expand Authentic Provence, adding new items their showroom and creating Authentic Provence's Secret Garden—an exterior oasis that highlights their monumental garden antiques. "It's exciting when we find a piece and it connects with our customer."

But what matters most for Susan and Wolfgang is that they love what they do. The Hofherrs take great pride in their knowledge, and their ability to bond with their clients.

Asked about what makes their business successful, Wolfgang replied, "You can only learn this profession by having many pieces going through your hands."

Susan had a good response to that: "Luckily, we have a lot of experience." ♦



This spread: Examples of Authentic Provence's home and garden furnishings; the main showroom is located at 3735 South Dixie Highway in Palm Beach; and the Secret Garden, featuring large-scale garden antiques and fountains, is located at 5600 South Dixie Highway. Opposite page: Susan and Wolfgang Hofherr. For more information, call 561.406.8015.

