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# LIFESTYLES

## **Fine Living: As Mill Valley's Maison Reve closes, Garnish and Farmhouse Urban open**

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WHEN ONE HOME décor shop door closes in Marin, it seems two new doors open.

Yasmine McGrane, who opened Maison Reve stocked with flea market finds from Paris, the south of France and Belgium, recently announced the Mill Valley favorite will close Jan. 31.

"Everyone wonders if it's because of the economy but the business just keeps growing," she says. "I turned down offers to buy it."

The vision for the Maison Reve concept simply "outgrew the walls," she says, from her first location near the Sequoia Theater to her larger space on Throckmorton near the Depot Plaza.

Her current plans include spreading her lifestyle vision of "simple, joyful living" to a broader audience while still having time to enjoy her young children.

She's testing the waters to author a lifestyle book and will learn if she's won a place on a new reality TV competition for home staging at the end of the month. She also plans to continue selling items online and conduct seasonal pop-up "urban farmhouse" workshops.

"A local chef might be demonstrating a recipe in the kitchen and a local gardener might be showing people what to do in the garden," says McGrane.

For now, shoppers looking for bargains can stop in at Maison Reve or shop online to buy tables and tablecloths, sofas, garden urns, bakers racks, bistro chairs, McGrane's

favorite Hunter boots, throws, blankets, Libeco bedding and Coyuchi organic bed linens and towels, handcrafted jewelry, barn wood shelving and store fixtures.

"I believe that no matter tough or challenging it is to close one door, another door will open."

Maison Reve is located at 108 Throckmorton Ave. in Mill Valley, and its hours are 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. every day through Jan. 31. For more information, call 383-9700 or visit [www.maisonreve.com](http://www.maisonreve.com).

'Coastal chic' at Garnish

"The concept behind Garnish, is my personal design aesthetic, what I call 'coastal chic,'" explains Lisa Benbow, a Tiburon resident who moved to Marin 16 years ago after living in Sacramento and San Francisco. Benbow has opened Garnish, a home décor shop, on Ark Row in Tiburon.

Encouraged by her Realtor, Benbow took the decorating skills she applied to staging her former Strawberry home and went public with Garnish Home Staging a few years ago. Last spring, she launched her online store, [www.garnishhomedecor.com](http://www.garnishhomedecor.com).

"As great as that is, it's not as great as having a store and I always thought I'd have a store," she says.

So, she opened Garnish in November.

The store is stocked with "elements for a beachy lifestyle, a little Nantucket, a little East Coast but all with clean, contemporary lines," she says. "The pieces will be unique, fun, current and not expensive. It's an alternative to shopping at West Elm and Pottery Barn."

Her customers, she explains, are people who are in their early 40s and finally ready to invest in their home even if they have children.

"But they don't want to spend thousands and thousands of dollars on a sofa," says Benbow. "I'll have cute sofas starting at \$2,000 and pillows starting at \$55."

Garnish is located at 80 E. Main St., Tiburon, and its hours are from 12 to 6 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday or by appointment. For more information, call 435-5472 or visit [garnishhomedecor.com](http://garnishhomedecor.com). For staging projects, visit [www.garnishhomestaging.com](http://www.garnishhomestaging.com).

FarmHouse Urban

When the architect that Serena Armstrong and her husband hired to renovate their Kentfield home tried to tease a preferred architectural style out of her, he offered the obvious. Mediterranean-style? Hamptons-style?

Neither, said Armstrong. What she had in mind, she says, was a home that had all the modern conveniences of a city house but the feeling of a home you'd find in the country — a FarmHouse Urban.

"It's a place that's not fussy or pretentious with great textures and fabrics, lots of art and books and a great combination of things that feel good and add a touch of chic," she explains.

That concept spawned her blog, then a pop-up store in Ross last year and now her permanent Larkspur shop on Magnolia Avenue between Bon Air Road and the College of Marin.

Armstrong, a former event planner from Seattle who focused on high-end events mostly held in homes, found that she preferred the decorating element of the job to the event administration.

"My job involved quite a bit of design from sprucing up the home to decorating for the holidays and buying furniture for the rooms," she says "That's what I really loved doing and after the event, clients would hire me to do more."

Today, she conducts her residential interior design business from an office in the back of her cozy shop and hopes to branch out into hotel and restaurant design.

"Customers can find everything from vintage to new to custom," she says of her shop, where a sturdy reclaimed barn door, a pair of turquoise chairs and pretty pillows are arranged. "It's a collection of what I think is unique to Marin and reflects the farmhouse urban look."

She's headed to the New York Gift Show this month but, she says, she already has "great things for spring — beach towels, pillows and some accessories with a boho vibe."

FarmHouse Urban is located at 1012 Magnolia Ave. in Larkspur. Hours are Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. and by appointment. For more information, call 464-8610 or visit [www.farmhouseurban.com](http://www.farmhouseurban.com). For design services, visit [www.serenaarmstronginteriors.com](http://www.serenaarmstronginteriors.com).

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