High Design
INSIDE THE WORLD'S ULTIMATE ESTATES
Since founding her eponymous company 15 years ago, the Los Angeles–based interior designer Joan Behnke has worked with myriad clients, from tycoons and professional athletes to the proprietors of boutique hotels. Her projects have been as varied as her clients—private planes, beach houses, penthouses, golf courses—and they have spanned the globe, from Southern California and Washington, D.C., to Tokyo and Abu Dhabi. Behnke is, quite simply, a master at scale. The interiors she creates for homes as large as 60,000 square feet still feel intimate and personal. Comfortable working in a range of styles—from midcentury to Moroccan, Cape Cod to Provençal—she approaches her projects with an eye toward one-of-a-kind finds, whether that means collaborating with craftspeople on custom furnishings or sourcing antiques worldwide. Robb Report Home & Style caught up with Behnke at her firm’s new location, in Beverly Hills, where she was working on a host of projects, including her inaugural furniture collection, which she hopes to introduce by the end of the year. [Samantha Brooks]

Joan Behnke

What is one of your strengths as a designer?
Balance. I know when to use restraint, which can sometimes mean advising a client not to put five TVs in the master bath.

Your most challenging project to date?
A hotel in Sardinia where everything had to come from Italy. The challenge was to update an already unique style and make it fresh and hip but still reference its 1960s roots [see page 48].

Which of your projects would you most like to live in?
There’s something about a house we did in Malibu (above). It’s a very relaxed home on the beach with interesting art, antique finishes, beautiful plasterwork, and comfortable furniture. Your blood pressure lowers right when you walk inside and look through to the ocean waves crashing on the sand.