

# SAN DIEGO BUSINESS JOURNAL

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# A Model Plan: From Startup to Proven Pro

## DESIGN: Rancho Bernardo Firm Caters to Homebuilders

By RAY HUARD

With the Great Recession still lingering, Jenny Bodem and two friends struck out on their own to start their own interior design firm in 2012 working on Bodem's dining room table.



Jenny Bodem  
Principal and Owner  
Within Design

"When you're starting out, you can do that," Bodem said. "My personal goal had always been to go into business for myself."

When the Great Recession hit in 2008 and 2009, Bodem said that the architectural firm where she was working started laying off staff.

"It was like somebody turned the faucet off in the home building industry," Bodem said. "I resigned my position after we got through all the layoffs."

Her plan was to take a break, but she quickly picked up a referral from her former employer for a private residential client.

"From there, one project led to another project," Bodem said. "It just kept picking up."

After working solo for a few years, Bodem teamed up with friends Kim Hosking and Suzi Gregg to form Within Design.

"We get to create the environment where people are going to live their lives, they're



Patrick Higgins  
Vice President of  
Sales and Marketing  
Southern California  
Landsea Homes

going to have birthday parties, raise their children, have grandchildren," Bodem said.

"Just the idea of that kept me going."

She has since taken over the firm, which has made a name for itself designing the model homes for home builders including California West Communities, Irving Company, Landsea Homes, Anthem Properties, Fairmont Management, and Intracorp Homes.



Within Design based in Rancho Bernardo designs covering everything from furniture to artwork and wall colors with clients including homebuilders, individual homeowners and multi-family developers. Photo courtesy of Within Design

### A Name with Meaning



Robert Thorne  
CEO  
California West

"We spend a tremendous amount of time in the beginning understanding who our client's target is. What's their socio-economic level, are they families, are they young couples, what are their lifestyle

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## Startup

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preferences," Bodem said. "We then take every design we make with that in mind, from the color palette to the furniture, the artwork style, how we accessorize the homes."

Designs for younger, first-time home buyers tend to be trendier, "what's the cutting-edge style right now," Bodem said.

For older executives and empty nesters, the look would be more sophisticated with a design that's "all about comfort," Bodem said.

At its peak, Within Design had a staff of 24 but has since dropped back to 14, which Bodem called "kind of a nice sweet spot."

"I'd love to grow the company in a managed way," Bodem said, adding that in the future, the firm may open a satellite office in Northern California.

Geographically, Within Design has clients in Orange County, the San Francisco Bay Area, Sacramento, Arizona, Nevada and Colorado.

The firm's name has a bit of a double meaning.

"The design comes from within, the design comes from all of us who are creating it and also, we're designing within architecture because we focus on the interiors," Bodem said.

She said that model home design accounts for about 65% of the firm's business, with about 35% multi-family and 5% private residential.

### A Dynamic Business

Robert Thorne, CEO of California West,

said that Bodem and her team at Within Design "understand us."

"Their team brings our homes to life," Thorne said. "Within Design has made it possible for young families and individuals to visualize what their very first home is going to look like and that's an exciting thing to witness."

Patrick Higgins, vice president of sales and marketing of the Southern California Division of Landsea Homes, said that Within Design "elevated our model homes in Avelina in San Juan Capistrano and turned them into works of art."

"The team was thoughtful with their design, making sure to celebrate and incorporate elements that reflect the stories history of the area," Higgins said.

A graduate of San Diego State University

with a bachelor's degree in fine arts, Bodem said that she started out as a psychology major but quickly changed course after taking a design course as a freshman.

"I fell in love with it and realized, wow, this could actually be a business," Bodem said. After graduating, she went to work for an architectural firm.

"I quickly realized a lot of projects you're working on are five to 10 years out before they would come to fruition," Bodem said.

One of the attractions of interior design is that it's always changing as styles come and go and personal tastes change.

"Each year, new colors come out. Architecture is kind of constantly changing and evolving," Bodem said. "I just find it very dynamic, how all of that can impact the way a person lives and feels." ■

### Within Design

WITHIN DESIGN

**FOUNDED:** 2012  
**HEADQUARTERS:** Rancho Bernardo  
**FOUNDER AND CEO:** Jenny Bodem  
**BUSINESS:** Interior Design  
**EMPLOYEES:** 14  
**WEBSITE:** <https://www.with-in-design.com/>  
**CONTACT:** (858) 412-5292

**NOTABLE:** Within Design is an award-winning, full-service interior design firm that specializes in model homes and multi-family project, renovations and new construction.