

Peter West and Jeff Holt of Hewn

Jeff Holt and Peter West, owners of San Francisco showroom Hewn, understand the importance of community. Before the Covid-19 pandemic struck, their ongoing connection to Northern California designers and global artists was already evident. However, it was their savvy sense for fellowship that swiftly inspired them to launch a central hub of support on Facebook where the Northern California design community could communicate about their concerns during the crisis. Here they share more about their time in isolation and how they plan to further grow the newly formed alliance.

What inspired you to start the #TogetherByDesign social media movement?

(Peter) #TogetherByDesign came about very organically, when we were meeting with our brand director, Alexander Bie, on March 15 to decide about closing the showroom for a week (prior to the shelter-in-place orders). We knew that the traditional way people were sharing information—face-to-face—was going to disappear for a while. There would be a need for connection, community and a central clearinghouse for information. Designers already feel isolated, so finding a place where they could lean on each other on bad days and celebrate each other on good days was critical. We were thrilled with how the community embraced the platform and even started a Southern California chapter. We are exploring how to keep the momentum going and expand the #TogetherByDesign philosophy into an organization that will have a mission to celebrate, promote, educate and sustain the entire community.

What gave you the most hope during isolation?

(Jeff) How the design community came together to weather the storm, the collaborations between showroom owners acknowledging



that we need one another to survive and the tenacity and resilience of designers to keep projects moving. People really showed concern for neighbors and colleagues, whether competitors or not. Thoughtfulness trumped self-interest and when everyone stepped back and took a breath, they seemed to realize that the race to the finish line wasn't the most important thing; it was the other people running the race with you, which, it turns out, is everyone.

Share one way you shifted your business during the pandemic that will remain intact?

(Jeff) We were so email-centric, trying to respond ASAP to everything. Since the shelter-in-place orders, we talk to our vendors and clients more and hold FaceTime and Zoom meetings. I see this continuing. The connection became critical and

important to maintain relationships that are still the heart of our business. Face-to-face meetings, even online, allow for clearer communication and a deeper connection.

How do you envision the floor plan of homes changing after this?

We expect people will reassess the value of the open-floor plan, which offers little separation. The home of the future will likely contain more private spaces so people can escape within the home, including offices, exercise rooms and studios.

What was your cocktail of choice during the pandemic?

(Peter) "The Mad Stu" created by the incomparable Madeline Stuart. I mean, is there anything she can't do?

If you could have been quarantined with any celebrity,

who would that be?

(Jeff) Martha Stewart. Oh, the things we could clean, organize, bake and smoke!
(Peter) Two words: Randy Rainbow!

Share one guilty TV pleasure you indulged in while at home?

While late to the party, we are deep into *Schitt's Creek* and loving the entire Rose family, especially David and Alexis.

What are you most thankful for right now?

The continued good health of our family, friends and staff. And the amazing network of small businesses that make up the interior design industry. We all rely on each other every day in order to succeed. These people are our extended family and we hope we show that in everything we do.