

HOME

CREATIVE IDEAS FOR HOME DESIGN

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Update



Maverick Frank Keshishian unlocks L.A.'s Pacific Design Center

Crashing the Design Centers

PRONOUNCING THE current "to the trade only" policy of the nation's design centers obsolete, Frank Keshishian

has taken the controversial step of offering a "no-frills" shopping service that gives affordable public access to the exclusive wholesale showrooms in and around West Hollywood's Pacific

Design Center. Meanwhile, Ron Simonian has initiated a similar program on the East Coast, offering clients a chaperoned spree in the Boston Design Center.

Both interior designers offer a full range of design services. Each found independently that there is a growing number of consumers confident of their own design capabilities but forced by the traditional system to pay high design fees and the standard 33-percent markup on furnishings that most designers charge.

"With many clients I was only providing access to the showrooms—I wasn't designing for them," admits Keshishian, who studied at UCLA and worked for two other designers before

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BLUE WHALE SPAWNS MATE

Fondly known as the "Blue Whale," the Pacific Design Center—Cesar Pelli's blue-glass architectural landmark in West Hollywood—is gearing up for Westweek 1988 (March 23–25). Themed "Overview: Expansion and Insight," the spring home furnishings market and international design confab will focus on space (as in outer, not interior) and man's expanded vision of the planet. More down to earth are programs featuring architects Richard Rogers, Cesar Pelli and Frank Gehry. A special treat for attending designers is the Blue Whale's new domed, green-glass companion, set for summer 1988 completion. Several Westweek events are scheduled inside the Green Giant.

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founding L.A. Design Concepts. His staff, consisting largely of students in the field, will guide clients through the Pacific Design Center for \$10 an hour, then charge 15 percent above wholesale for furniture; they handle all purchasing and delivery.

Simonian, whose firm is known as Rooms To Go, created his Access Plus service to enable clients to shop the Boston Design Center for an initial one-time fee of

\$150, which includes design consultation. They may then purchase furnishings at 10 percent over wholesale.

Keshishian says the showrooms' response "has been 100 percent for it—they welcome the business." But not surprisingly, other designers are less enthusiastic, claiming that you get what you pay for. "The only designers who are intimidated by us are the ones who are selling their access rather than their skills," counters Keshishian.

