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CELESTIAL CRAFT

OLD WORLD DEVOTEE KEEPS EYES TO THE SKY

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For some people, the urge to create is narrow and focused. For others, creativity is inherent in each breath they take and manifests itself in every project they tackle. Jorge Dalinger counts himself among the latter. From cutting hair and designing clothes to renovating homes, Dalinger possesses talents that have made him a success in a variety of arenas. But it is his latest venture, Dalinger Designs, that truly showcases his enterprising imagination: His handcrafted ceilings harness the essence of the Old World ornamentation that he holds dear. "I love the lost art of handmade things, and I am very passionate about keeping it alive," he says.

Dalinger's childhood home in Sevilla, Spain, prepared him for a lifelong love of Moorish architecture that continues to influence his work today. Drawing inspiration from the structural forms he recalls from his youth, Dalinger is able to envision the majestic coffered ceilings from his Los Angeles home. He sketches the elaborate plans while his partner, Paco Luis, hand carves them into reality from their workshop in southern Spain. The result is a fusion of time-honored craftsmanship and divine design that spans continents and reflects intricate and complex nuances. "The craftsmen we have are each personally trained by Paco, but most come from families that have been carving for years," Dalinger points out. "It's in their blood." And that, of course, is apparent.

But the work doesn't stop there. The ceilings are composed of individual components that, once crafted in Spain, are shipped back to the Los Angeles homes of Dalinger's clients for installation. Each piece, which has been numbered, is mounted overhead with puzzle-like precision to ensure that the final product is seamless. Although the process is certainly time-consuming and requires painstaking attention to detail, the result is a ceiling built to last, a throw-back to classic architectural elements that transform a home into a work of art.

Yet, for all the beauty that is brought to his discerning clients, what Dalinger treasures most is the opportunity to introduce them to custom craftsmanship. "I think it's amazing to show them how it's made and how it's done. It's something that is specifically created for the space—not a lot of that goes on anymore."

