

# 944

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San Diego™



# DEL MAR RACES

FASHION \* ENTERTAINMENT \* LIFESTYLE

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# follow her Lead

BY SANDRA FONG YOUNG PHOTOGRAPHY AMY K. FELLOWS

## 944 PRESENTS THE LEADING LADIES OF SAN DIEGO

Many of the most driven and inspiring entrepreneurs in the country call San Diego home. And leading the pack? Women — women who have followed their passions, overcome hurdles and built thriving businesses in our own backyard.

In honor of their success, 944 sought out the most accomplished, talented and respected women in town. As nominations came pouring in, narrowing down the list of honorees to just 14 proved to be an immense challenge. Yet, we somehow made it happen, and each woman selected is a true Leading Lady of San Diego.

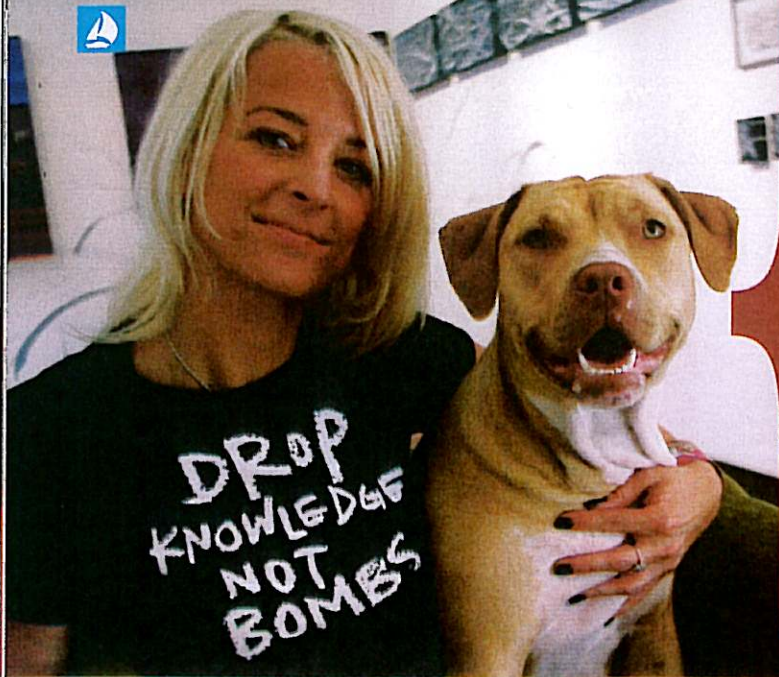
### AU-CO MAI

**President, Emitations.com**

Au-Co Mai started Emitations.com while attending UCSD by purchasing a \$7.50 pearl costume choker from Ross. Conducting market research on eBay to see how successful a jewelry business could be, Mai's choker ended up causing a bidding war with a winning bid of \$65. Several years later, Emitations.com is now recognized as one of the fastest-growing e-commerce Web sites in the country and was ranked number 14 in the jewelry category of the recently released "Top 500 Guide" by *Internet Retailer*. Mai's driven research and dedication has caused Emitations.com to sell numerous pieces of jewelry, including elegant pearl chokers. "Celebrity obsession in America is huge," Mai emphasizes. "We make the look more affordable, so instead of diamonds and platinum, we use CZs and sterling silver." The Web-based business prides itself in helping customers "get the bling without the sting." Mai believes if she starts another business, she would continue to market to women. "Women are relentless if you make them upset, but extremely loyal if you really connect to them," she says.

800.652.5002 [www.emitations.com](http://www.emitations.com)





**MONICA HOOVER**

**Lifestyle and Fashion Photographer, Owner, Founder and Creative Director of Voice 1156**

Sometimes Monica Hoover feels like she's back in high school, acting as student body president. Before each Friday of the month, when an art exhibit is about to open, she types up agendas, makes name badges and creates lists of tasks for exhibit participants. As one of the most respected and progressive photographers in San Diego, Hoover founded the Voice 1156 gallery for the community and emphasizes that it was not for money. "Voice 1156 is a collaboration of people with different strengths that might not otherwise come together," she says. With the gallery motto of "practice creative activism," Hoover sees the gallery as helping others express themselves through art and altering people's perspectives. She hopes that the gallery will always exist and act as a "springboard" for creative thinkers. Hoover even uses the gallery as her personal studio. "My fine art mission is to make women look powerful," she says. Seems like Hoover's gallery might be a different type of school to lead — one of art, education and ingenuity.

619.235.6922 [www.voice1156.com](http://www.voice1156.com)

**LAURA BARRY**

**Realtor, Barry Estates, Inc.**

"Mama, I don't want to do work stuff," Laura Barry's 4-year-old daughter pouts. Currently holding the record for the most expensive home sold on the Del Mar sand and consistently selling multi-million dollar properties (including the home of McDonald's heir Joan Kroc), Barry attributes her success to the hands-on attention she provides for every client. "My clients come first," she explains, which means her daughter frequently takes trips with her to drop off brochures or visit properties. "I can't help myself!" Barry says. In 1999, she became the first-ever San Diego agent to sell more than \$100 million in residential real estate in one year. But in the end, Barry considers all her hard work now will allow her to spend more time with her daughter as she gets older. Barry may practice "full-immersion" when it comes to her work, but she adds, "Life is not just real estate in Rancho Santa Fe and Del Mar."

858.756.2266 [www.barryestates.com](http://www.barryestates.com)

**CINDY KAUANUI**

**Founder, Owner, President and CEO, Jet Set Management Group Inc.**

Cindy Kauanui refers to Jet Set and herself as "C&H Sugar" ("C" for California and "H" for Hawaii). Her story begins after a hurricane hit her home in Kauai, Hawaii (as she was helping cast *Jurassic Park*), and Kauanui decided to move to California. She replaced the impossibly thin model image with Jet Set's healthy and active look for brands such as Roxy and the first San Diego cover of 944 Magazine with Sanoë Lake (*Blue Crush*). Kauanui says she wants Jet Set representatives "to be individuals, not clones." She recently launched two locals to the national market for GUESS? and Welch's. Achieving all she could want with Jet Set, Kauanui plans to move back "home" to Kauai in a couple of years. Always planning ahead, once there she hopes to start a juice bar business called Wiki Wacky. "Have a little Juice, become a little Wiki Wacky," she explains. And surely Kauanui will add some of her C&H Sugar.

858.551.9393 [www.jetsetmodels.com](http://www.jetsetmodels.com),  
[www.jetsetagency.com](http://www.jetsetagency.com)

**CARLA MANUEL**

**Founder and Designer, Kites by Carla Manuel**

"Most people don't know that I was a professional ballet dancer and professional boogie border when I was younger," Carla Manuel says. Although those facts are quite interesting, it's the handmade clothing crafted by Manuel today that showcases her assorted, yet perfectly fused influences. Kites by Carla Manuel offers a rough, romantic look, including patchwork dresses made of silks and chiffons, and built-in bra kimono tops. Manuel started her clothing line in order "to have the freedom to design whatever I felt." After only five years, her clothing continues to be featured in fashion shows (such as the Kites Fashion Show for the San Diego Museum of Art's Andy Warhol exhibit), television series (such as *Secret Obsessions: Fashion House* with Bo Derek) and movies (such as *Dick and Jane vs. the World* with Taryn Manning). In the future, Manuel plans to expand her clothing line and keep her inspirations diverse.

858.755.5021 [www.kitesdesign.com](http://www.kitesdesign.com)

