

# Lonny

LONNY LOVES

## Q&A: Interior Designer Cliff Fong

By [Melissa Goldstein](#) on January 22, 2014



**Name:** Cliff Fong

**Occupation:** **Interior designer** and co-owner of the recently expanded Melrose design boutique **Galerie Half**.

**Resides in:** Los Angeles

**Best known for:** Masterfully juxtaposing 20th century design elements with European antiques for residential clients including Ellen Degeneres and Portia De Rossi, James Franco, and Ryan Murphy, and commercial commissions such as Michael Voltaggio's Ink restaurant.

### 1. Antique or modern?

Antique or vintage. I prefer using items with age since they generally reflect more character.

### 2. City or country?

I like them for completely different reasons; it all just depends on the space and its surroundings. Being in nature is a truly great luxury and there's nothing like stepping outside and feeling embraced by it. But I also love urban stimulation and access to conveniences, social opportunities, and lots of shopping. I was born in a large city and I don't think I'll ever outgrow the feeling of cultural discovery that cities can offer.

### 3. Which colors do you use most?

Light neutrals and the entire range of greyscale, all the way to black.

### 4. Favorite materials or textures?

I always like to see humble materials used in unexpected ways. For textiles, I prefer warm, organic, and soft—like linens and cashmere.

**5. What is your favorite interior design-related word?**

Collector, curator, or eccentric.



Fong's living room, photographed by Mary Nichols

**6. Does your current home look like the one you grew up in?**

The architecture is similar to the home I grew up in, although now I live in a large condominium built in 1927, and not a house. The furnishings are quite different however, as my parents loved heavily handcrafted furniture with an English feel. There were a few hints of Chinoiserie, etc., but it was very stately, greatly substantial, and not very sexy. I prefer a looser aesthetic with a mixture of things; sculptural items, modern or significant design, and a few European antiques.

**7. Does a room need a view?**

If it doesn't have a view, one can be created; with paintings, for example. As long as there is a window, and some light—that is important—what's outside is secondary.

**8. Favorite designer or architect?**

Eileen Gray, for her mixture of texture, form, and line, all with a sense of incredible luxuriousness.

**9. Which design blog, website, TV show, or magazine would you be lost without and why?**

I'm not an avid TV watcher, nor a reader of any one particular source. I do tend to do a lot of research, though. Google or 1stdibs would have to be my answer.

**10. What qualities do you most admire in a room?**

Details and character that give it a soul.



Galerie Half, photographed by Shade Degges

**11. What is a forbidden word in your house?**

Reproduction.

**12. Design rule you love to break?**

I wasn't aware there were rules....

**13. What is your favorite room in the house?**

Depends on the house, but I love garden rooms.

**14. What is your most treasured possession and why?**

I'm not good at playing favorites.

**15. What do you wish you could do without?**

Luggage. Packing, unpacking, waiting for it at the airport. It really bums me out.



Fong's dining room, photographed by Mary Nichols

**16. How does West Coast design differ from East Coast design?**

The West Coast offers a different kind of freedom and flexibility because of our casual lifestyle here and more open-minded, experimental culture.

**17. What is your favorite thing about the West Coast—design-related or otherwise?**

I like to be able to design around the elements of nature that I enjoy here.

**18. If you could live in one historical figure's house, whose would it be?**

The home of Yves Saint Laurent and Pierre Bergé in Tangier, where I just spent New Year's Eve, or Pierre Chareau's Maison de Verre.

**19. On what movie set would you like to live?**

On just about any Woody Allen or Pedro Almodóvar set, either for its great luxury or great character.

**20. To which country would you move for the design?**

France. I like the diversity of its lifestyle and environments—much like the US has, but there is an incredible design and art-related history there.

**21. If you were reborn as a piece of furniture or an object, what would it be?**

Why would I want to come back as an inanimate object, no matter how beautiful or revered? If I were cursed to do so, for some reason, I would hope that that "life" would be short, as something cheap and disposable like a lawn chair...so I could quickly move on to the next one.

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