

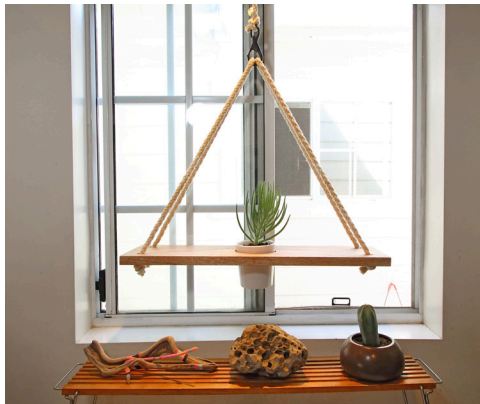


# *handcrafted* NATURE-INSPIRED

MEET THE CREATIVE COUPLE BEHIND MARLOWE+JAY, THE  
GO-TO ETSY SHOP FOR YOUNG L.A. BOHEMIANS AND THEIR TOTS

WRITTEN BY MICHELLE LYN  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY PAUL JONASON





*When artsy couple Ben and Shannon Watkins had their first child, they made her a teepee for Christmas. Friends started asking for them too, and before they knew it, demand was so high that they decided to launch marlowe+jay. Branded after their children's middle names, the growing art and design business uses all-natural, non-toxic and recycled materials, expanding beyond teepees to make block-printed tea towels and tablecloths, indigo-dyed throws, hanging driftwood mobiles, succulent planters and hand-screen printed wall art.*

*Here, Westside DIGS sits down with the L.A. couple for a behind-the-scenes look at their success.*

**What is the inspiration behind marlowe+jay?**

We've always been pretty artistic people (I'm a graphic designer and Ben is a filmmaker), and that's one of the things that drew us to each other. Creating—whether it's painting or block printing, filmmaking or designing housewares and plant sculptures—has just always been a part of what drives us. We like to call it 'surf ranch living for the modern rustic home.'

**How would you describe your style?**

Our lifestyle and personal style tend to be intertwined. I'm a California girl, and Ben was born in Hawaii and fell in love with California when he moved here with his family as a teenager. We've lived near the beach for most of our lives and have strong ties to California and its landscapes, whether it's the ocean, mountains or desert, and that love is definitely reflected in our home. Incorporating natural, textural and handmade elements make your surroundings feel personal, lived-in and vibrant.

**What's a typical weekend like for you?**

We're big on relaxing as much as possible with one another. We think time is the most precious thing, and just hanging out together as a family—in the sun, in our backyard, in our neighborhood in Venice, or out in nature—is truly priceless. Our kids, Una and Zephyr, love playing in water, digging their hands in the soil or sand and creating mud pits and forts.

Most weekends you can find us at our favorite Topanga beach spot. Ben is a serious waterman, and he likes to surf or swim with the kids and take the family on an occasional sailboat adventure.

**Where do you find your design influences?**

We've always been drawn to natural materials like wood, plants and fabrics, and to pieces that feel like they've been loved and come with a story of their own. Finding the perfect vintage textile or one-of-a-kind piece from a local artist is pretty exciting. A lot of our art and designs are influenced by both native California culture and global textiles and patterns.

**Who is the marlowe+jay customer?**

The marlowe+jay customer appreciates the unique style and handmade details in the products, and the simple natural lifestyle that is reflected in the brand.

Etsy has a great collaborative community of artists and craftspeople, and gives buyers access to affordable and really eclectic art and products. Our generation relies on social media to help with cross-promotion and getting the word out. There are so many great little businesses out there and it's awesome to see how supportive everyone can be, especially when most companies don't have a brick-and-mortar store. Follow us to see what comes next!

MARLOWE+JAY

[etsy.com/shop/marloweandjay](https://etsy.com/shop/marloweandjay) | [@marloweandjay](https://www.instagram.com/marloweandjay)

