

ORANGE PULP >



SHOP TALK

ART FOR THE SOUL



Valinda Martin

THE LOCATION 210 Marine Ave #A, Balboa Island (949) 673-1722, 272 Forest Ave, Laguna Beach (949) 497-8700.

THE OWNER When Valinda Martin broke her back 10 years ago, she could have wallowed in self-pity. She had after all lost not only the use of her legs, but a fast-paced career in the clothing industry. Instead, she started traveling with her sister, who helped her adapt to wheelchair transportation as if she were training for a sporting event. While visiting picturesque small towns up and down the coast, she was drawn to colorful, upbeat stores whose optimistic energies were an inspiration to live, and ultimately to open her own high-spirited store.

THE AMBIENCE Red and purple walls, hand paint-

ed furniture, and ceilings dripping with sparkling mobiles welcome visitors and ask them to leave their problems at the door. Regular customers return sometimes to buy but just as often to soak up the vitalizing atmosphere, a joy stronger than anything Starbucks can provide.

THE PRODUCT From magnets to books to rocks to tables, everything has a message: reach for the stars, be creative, follow your heart, seek knowledge, “I don’t buy anything unless it speaks to me,” says Martin. “I won’t stock it just because it will sell. It has to inspire. Whimsical, inspirational, colorful, and handmade – if it doesn’t have all those things, it’s not in my store.”

THE BOTTOM LINE Over the rainbow is only as far as Balboa Island –TIFFANY HAWK