



Los Angeles
Master Chorale
Grant Gershon | Music Director

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home

Accessories for living.



You can learn a great deal about a home and its inhabitants simply by observing its front door, which often says more about the soul of the place than any single design element. And nowhere in Southern California is its selection a more profound and personal issue than at **Portera Antique Spanish Doors**.

Portera, which is next door to the Pasadena Playhouse, was founded by John Simpson and Soraya Dancsecs after Simpson purchased an architecturally significant home in San Marino—but had to travel to Spain to find the perfect entryway for it.

Portera is now the preeminent purveyor of antique Spanish doors in America, with access to a collection of nearly 15,000 distinctive doors dating to the 15th century. In Spain, where the massive inventory is warehoused, skilled artisans lovingly restore the doors by hand before they are shipped to the U.S. within about four weeks after ordering.

Only about a dozen eye-popping doors are displayed in the Pasadena showroom, but clients may view hundreds of images on a large plasma screen to determine what style best suits their needs. Many clients initially contact the company in search of a front door, but subsequently recognize the tremendous opportunities for interior enhancement: About half of the firm's business involves elegant doors that will never

be visible to the outside world. Master bedrooms, powder rooms and media rooms are all dramatically upgraded through the addition of antique doors from Portera. Occasionally, clients mount an antique door on a wall as a piece of non-functional art; novel adaptations include converting a door to a headboard on a bed.

For \$95,000, one can obtain a grand 18th-century double door with antique iron clavos, whose massive scale and roughly hewn carvings convey a profound sense of impenetrability. A rustic arched door from the same period, also containing rivet-like clavos and a miniature view portal with ironwork, is priced under \$20,000.

Most doors at Portera fall into the \$5,000–\$25,000 range, but they occasionally hit six figures, with the most expensive to date approaching a staggering \$300,000. Visits to the showroom are by appointment only. The bulk of the inventory reflects the austere beauty of Spanish craftsmanship. Though the partners are dedicated to restoring doors to their original condition, a Catalán painter has been commissioned on occasion to add color or delicate images upon request.

Either way, a visit to Portera reinforces the concept that doors are not simply architectural accents, but powerful works of art. —Roger Grody

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only), www.porteradoors.com