

*Dan Fink designs the ultimate automobile-friendly man cave for real estate developer Rick Caruso*

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# CAR





A LIGHT-BLUE 1964  
SHELBY COBRA, A DARK-  
BLUE 1960 FERRARI, AND  
A RED 1955 LANCIA ARE  
JUST THREE OF THE  
AUTOMOTIVE TREASURES  
HOUSED HERE. CUSTOM  
POLISHED NICKEL-AND-  
BRONZE CHANDELIER BY  
DAN FINK STUDIO. FOR  
DETAILS SEE RESOURCES.



# TALK





LEFT A VINTAGE BANK-VAULT DOOR OPENS INTO THE WINE-STORAGE ROOM. RIGHT DESIGNER DAN FINK IN THE OFFICE. WALNUT-AND-BRASS DESK, CIRCA 1925; 1930s SIDEBBOARD; COWHIDE RUG BY DORIS LESLIE BLAU.

# I'm

fascinated by their design and history, but I also like cars that I can actually drive," says real estate developer Rick Caruso, who has built up a portfolio of upscale shopping, residential, and office complexes around Southern California over the past few decades. Caruso's drivable works of art include a 1930 Packard convertible (the first car in his collection), a 1955 Lancia Aurelia Spider America, a 1964 Shelby Cobra 289, and other gems that he enjoys taking out for a spin. One highlight is a Fiat Eden Roc, one of only two ever made. Dating from 1956, the yacht-inspired vehicle was designed by stylish Fiat chairman Gianni Agnelli himself, who used his to motor guests from the family's villa in the hills above Nice down to the plage. It's easy to imagine the dapper Caruso following Agnelli's lead, tooling down the Pacific Coast Highway to a nearby beach.

"They all play a role in my family," says Caruso, who rotates the vehicles, taking them in and out for weekend jaunts. "In fact, we used the Packard recently at my niece's wedding to drive her and the groom away from the church."

These marvels of engineering and craftsmanship have also inspired his own work. Speaking of the Fiat, for example, he notes that the car's "beautiful metal detailing" served as inspiration for the bar of the Rosewood Miramar Beach, on a historic property that he acquired in 2007; the resort opened last spring after a painstaking decade-long process. That love of design extends to The Coach House, the 8,000-square-foot personal office-cum-garage—though such a commonplace word hardly does justice to the space—Caruso commissioned to store and display his collection.

Caruso enlisted AD100 designer Dan Fink to transform the second-floor space in a building in Palisades Village, the bijou development he opened in tony Pacific Palisades in 2018. The designer had just completed the residential spaces in the complex, and "we hit it off," he recalls. "Rick has a strong aesthetic and style, which is reflected in his passion for this collection." So Fink looked to those cars as muses.

To begin, "we were really inspired by the raw beauty of the





**LEFT** THE TERRACE CHAIRS WEAR A STRIPED FABRIC FROM ROSE TARLOW. LIGHT FIXTURES BY URBAN ARCHAEOLOGY; CUSTOM MIRROR. **RIGHT** THE VINTAGE BARBER CHAIR IS UPHOLSTERED IN A HOLLAND & SHERRY LEATHER.

structure of the building. Instead of hiding it, we wanted to celebrate its industrial quality and strength.” But to soften that hard edge, the designer started playfully layering in materials that would reference the idea of a garage, but “express it in a dressier way.”

In the main space, Fink deployed sheets of stainless steel as a sleek, sexy wainscot along paneled walnut walls. Instead of the poured-concrete floor you would expect, Fink installed a beautiful terrazzo inlaid with graphic patterns. Other details evoke the components of a car. Enormous circular hanging light fixtures suggest gears, hubcaps, or headlights. Millwork of highly polished burl wood in the library calls to mind a luxurious dashboard. Stitched details on the tailored leather barstools are reminiscent of car-seat upholstery. Gleaming Art Deco furnishings and objects also mirror the luxurious machines.

“The whole idea was to match the elegance of these extraordinary cars,” notes Fink.

That elevated and subtle masculine playfulness extends throughout. A salvaged bank-vault door serves as the entrance to the wine-storage room. A vintage barber chair stands ready for business in a nook. A set of Robert Indiana numbers counts down—5-4-3-2-1—along one wall. A motorized

aluminum surfboard from the 1960s stands in a corner of the lounge.

For the bar area, Fink and Caruso took inspiration from the iconic Campbell apartment in New York’s Grand Central Terminal. The bar top, fireplace, and other trim are fashioned out of Arabescato Cervaiole marble, which brings “a sort of neoclassical quality to this industrial space,” says Fink. The enormous stained-glass window that extends up behind and over the bar was fashioned by L.A.’s historic Judson Studios.

“Rick really loves to entertain, and it’s just a great place to hang out,” says Fink. Indeed, the bar and office can be opened to a 2,000-square-foot terrace overlooking a small park to create an ideal space for parties large and small.

“I can host a few people or up to 30 for cocktails,” says Caruso, who uses the space a couple of times a week for work and pleasure, hosting clients, colleagues, and kin. He and his wife, Tina, have four children and an extensive network of relatives in the area. “We’re a traditional Italian family,” explains Caruso, a native Angeleno. “Sunday dinners are a big thing, and we often have them here.” Sometimes on the terrace or, he proudly adds, inside, where diners can sit among some of the world’s greatest automotive masterpieces. **AD**





A BESPOKE STAINED GLASS WINDOW BY JUDSON STUDIOS DEFINES THE BAR. CUSTOM STOOLS IN RALPH LAUREN HOME LEATHER; CUSTOM SOFAS IN A SCHUMACHER VELVET; CUSTOM BARREL CHAIRS IN A STRIPED NOBILIS VELVET. IN BACK LEFT CORNER, CIRCA-1965 ALUMINUM JETBOARD.



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