

## LIVING IN CALIFORNIA

profile



Clockwise from left: Cerno's Abeo pendant, from \$1,234; Penna linear pendant, from \$1450; Mica pendant, from \$556; Cerno owners Bret Englander, Nick Sheridan and Daniel Wacholder.



ORANGE COUNTY

# POWER PLAYERS

The future looks bright for the electric trio behind Irvine lighting design studio Cerno, who count 10 years of work under their tool belts this fall.

By Wendy Bowman

The roots of O.C.-based modern lighting design studio Cerno ([cernogroup.com](http://cernogroup.com)) run deep—Pacific Ocean deep. The owners, childhood friends and surfing buddies Bret Englander, Daniel Wacholder and Nick Sheridan, grew up together in Laguna Beach constantly seeking adventure and “making stuff” like boats and ceramics. They went on to pursue different careers—Sheridan in architecture, Wacholder in manufacturing, and Englander in land acquisition for a developer and, later, marketing—before reuniting to launch an endeavor. The result, Cerno, channels a combined passion for design and creation into their own hands, all with a nod to the California coast. “We started Cerno in our late 20s, when we had the right balance of experience, appetite for risk and entrepreneurial idealism,” explains co-founder Englander, the company’s director of sales and marketing. “We loved the idea of designing and crafting quality products in Southern California, and although we didn’t know much about the lighting industry, lighting excited us because of the art and sculptural side, the craftsmanship required to build the product, and science. Light fixtures are also an amazing way to add warmth and a personal touch to any space.”



Fast-forward to today, and the trio are celebrating their 10th year of designing and manufacturing stunning lighting products at their Irvine-based factory. They’ve become a regular fixture (pun intended!) of imaginative LED designs for high-end residential, hospitality and commercial clients carried in showrooms nationwide (as well as Canada and Mexico), with designs priced from \$275 to \$5,700. Among them are 60 families of lighting models (floor lamps, sconces, pendants and more), along with the recently launched wood, leather and brass Penna pendant and sconce collection; a new outdoor collection that’s an expansion of three brand-favorite scones with powder-coated finishes; and, coming soon, vanity fixtures. “Now that we have 10 years of business and decades of friendship to reflect on, we can see how the different milestones and pivotal moments fueled our passion over the years,” muses Englander. “The three of us have a similar visceral reaction and genuine excitement when we complete a new product or project; growing and building a business gives us that same satisfaction. We share a fundamental belief that something that does not exist *can* exist, which is arguably the most important part of the creative process and creating a brand.”

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