

MICHIGAN AVENUE



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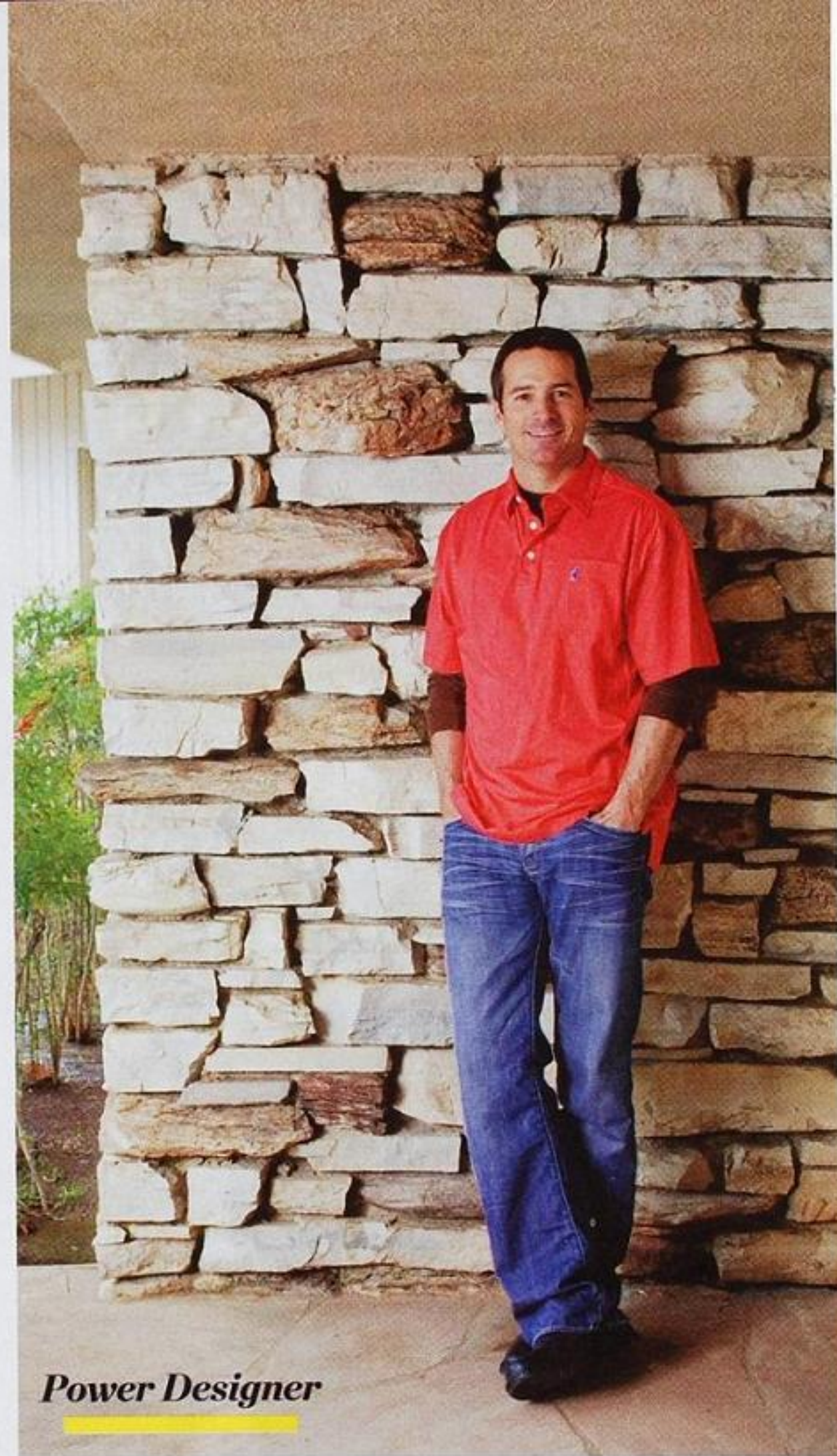
John O'Donnell ratchets up golf's hip factor with his hole-in-one line of activewear.

BY JACQUELYNN D. POWERS

AS GOLF BECOMES the go-to sport for the next generation, it only makes sense that some hip golfwear would emerge, too. Four years ago, North Shore native John O'Donnell (the older brother of actor Chris O'Donnell) debuted his Johnnie-O line on the links and it has since surged in popularity. Celebs like Barry Zito, Ryan Seacrest, Adrian Grenier, Pete Sampras, Drew Brees, Luke Wilson and, obviously, O'Donnell's younger sibling have all donned the apparel, which features a surfer as its logo. The collection offers polo shirts, waterproof shorts, baseball hats and belts—everything for an active lifestyle. “We refer to it as West Coast preppy,” says O'Donnell. “We're tweaking traditional, conservative pieces with an alternative logo. It's for

people who have worn Polo, Lacoste and Vineyard Vines and are thirsting for something new. But it's not dramatically different. They aren't going too much out of their comfort zone.” The lower-end price point is also appealing to budget-minded consumers. “People are sick of spending 90 bucks on an ordinary polo shirt,” he acknowledges.

O'Donnell, 44, grew up in Winnetka with six brothers and sisters. While he has since decamped to Los Angeles, several siblings still reside in the area. Although he visits often, O'Donnell notes, “I miss the people and the seasons the most.” It's fitting that he would make a foray into activewear: He's an avid golfer who's played all over the world. Last year, he was featured as one of *People* magazine's Hot Bachelors. “I was able to get some great publicity for the company,” he says. “But if being single and having a celebrity brother is all I got then I'm in real trouble.” O'Donnell is still single but right now, his focus is on building Johnnie-O into a nationally recognized brand for golfers and beyond. And to his credit, being a responsible businessman is also important to him: “I want a company that is profitable, fun, charitable and a good place to work.” Visit johnnie-o.com



Power Designer