



Claudia Leah Design

For her clients' new home in Tiburon/Naples, Fla., extensive structural work was needed, said Claudia Leah, of **Claudia Leah Design** | Decorating Den, Naples, Fla. In the kitchen, "we transformed the space by opening up the arched ceilings, taking out the narrow columns and filling in the recessed arched wall space in the breakfast area," as well as relocating the room's entrance.

The result was a gourmet kitchen with all new cabinetry and Thermador/Miele chef grade appliances. The kitchen island is topped with Calacata Vadara Nuevo, while the perimeter counters are ocean beige granite and the herringbone patterned backsplash is made of Astoria tile in Bergamot Gloss by Sonoma Tilemakers. The breakfast area is highlighted by a navy grasscloth print by Schumacher, with a live-edge bar height table on Lucite bases by Fairfield Chair and swivel stools covered in Kravet animal print, she said.

The arches disappeared in the primary bedroom as well, and the room is now a combination of blue and white hues. The wallpaper is Thibaut's Maranta Arrowroot in navy.

Photos: Darren Miles Photography

Mr. Alex Tate Design

Alex Alonso of **Mr. Alex Tate Design** in Miami was tasked "to create a boutique, hotel vibe for the clients who were downsizing from their more traditional home," he said. "The space had been opened up to create more flow, but we didn't want it to feel sparse or minimal. The clients both have such a fun, exuberant personality that we wanted to reflect their eclectic love for all things collected and found."

Furnishings in the dining room included Calligaris chairs, Mooi lighting and a Cattelan Italia table.

Photo: Juan Pablo Castro



Sandra Asdourian Interiors

This Mediterranean-style home needed updating, and **Sandra Asdourian's** clients wanted a fresh design, the Naples, Fla.-based designer said.

"We wanted to create a stylish, comfortable home for the whole family," and one that would allow them to entertain, she said. The couple has four grown children and they needed a home that could handle the flow of visitors. "The goal was to bring calming, neutral design without many colors; however, since the house is by the ocean, we added navy blue to the plan." Her clients gave her a budget and asked that she work with some of their existing furniture, so Asdourian repurposed and reupholstered many of the pieces in the project. That included the dining room chairs, which were re-

upholstered with Anna Elisabeth fabric. Other furnishings in the dining room include the Calypso chandelier and Bolton wall sconce from Crystorama, Candice mirror from Regina Andrew, NDI orchid, a wool-and-silk rug from International Design Source, drapery from Martha & Ash and Sherwin Williams paint (Sleepy Blue on the ceiling and Dover White on the walls).

In the bedroom, the chairs were upholstered with RH's Perennials performance linen weave. Other furnishings include a Harrison round cocktail table from Bassett Mirror.

Photo: ©2022 Nickolas Sargent of DBA Sargent Photography



The Sisters & Co.

"Our client purchased a new home but hated the kitchen and wanted to open up the space to the family room," said Barbara Elliott of **The Sisters & Co.** | Decorating Den in Stone Mountain, Ga. "She requested a color scheme of black and white and we added punches of pink for a pop. The bookcases and the fireplace in the family room were also updated to a more modern feel." Furnishings include an Ambella sectional, Bernhardt chairs and table, Caracole kitchen chairs and art by Nikki Chu.

Photo: Scott Johnson

A Southern touch

WHAT MAKES SOUTHEASTERN DESIGN UNIQUE? DESIGNERS SHARE THEIR THOUGHTS

What are the hallmarks of southeastern design?

Lance Thomas, Thomas Guy Interiors, Lake Charles, La.:



"Southern design is an unbuttoned elegance. It feels collected, curated, and classic. And just like people from the South, a Southern home should always come with a wink and a smile in the design. The fabric and prints are my favorite part of Southern design. Unassuming textiles like linen

and cotton come to life with the old soul patterns of the South; plaids, toiles, seersucker and floral prints to name a few. Mix them, and layer them; the more the merrier."

Kristin Bartone, Bartone Interiors, Chapel Hill, N.C.:

"Southerners use every part of their home; front porches for rocking and chatting, dining rooms for dinner parties (not fancy and stuffy, but we still have them!) sitting rooms for cocktails and a living room with a television to watch college basketball! Each space needs to be functional with comfortable seating and be aesthetically pleasing but relaxing and durable so guests aren't on edge if they spill a drink."

Monika Nessbach, Designbar, Charlotte, N.C.:

"Southern hospitality is one of the concepts upon which Southeastern design is built. Creating welcoming and inviting entertainment spaces (indoor and outdoor) is key for both commercial and residential design."



Claudia Leah of Claudia Leah Design | Decorating Den Interiors, Naples, Fla.

"With Florida being the Sunshine State, most of our clients are drawn in by our perpetual beauty of blue waters, sky and lush greenery along with outdoor activities like boating, golfing, tennis and pickle ball. Our lifestyle is casual and our entertaining informal. We create our livable luxury designs by blurring the lines between in-

terior and exterior spaces, using lots of blues, greens, sandy tones and clean neutrals, organic textures and plenty of performance materials in fabrics and rugs for easy maintenance."

Marie Cloud, Indigo Pruitt Design Studio, Charlotte, N.C.:

"Firstly, I'm a transplant to Charlotte, so I think I read the design temperature of the region with fresh eyes. Two things spark me. First, the wonderful sense of hospitality in this region, plus the pride of place and home that goes with that. My clients want their homes to be an experience for themselves and visitors. The second design hallmark is the amazing cultural and geographic diversity in the Southeast. You can get on the road and immerse yourself in different geographies - mountains, beaches, low country, cities, small towns - and local culture and community. Access to this stream of life is central to how I design."

What's the biggest issue facing interior designers right now?

Bartone:

"Sustainability. Manufacturers want to highlight their positive attributes, but many designers don't know what to look for. There are numerous certifications with various meanings and it's very difficult to understand where to start. Coming from commercial design and being a LEED accredited professional for 15 years, sustainability is everywhere. Residential designers are just getting started with integrating healthful choices in our daily activities and really getting into the details."

Alex Alonso, Mr. Alex Tate Design, Miami:

"Overall, I think it's managing expectations - internal and external. If I could highlight some of the top ones we see on our end, I'd say: Talent (it's still a challenge to find the right talent when hiring); industry speed of business (I find the industry still moves quite glacially, as a whole); and budgets (a perennial favorite that never really goes away), i.e., clients' expectations of how much



things should cost versus how much they really do cost. And in general, the rising costs of it all."

Leah:

"We are in this weird spot where on the one hand, we are still experiencing supply chain issues for certain quality items, components and trades, literally designing around availability. Yet we are also facing the threat of discounted overstocks on the retail side where mass-produced container items are being shoved into our clients' inboxes, making them question if we as designers are telling them the truth about those long lead times."

Cloud:

Design equity. My business is healthy and growing. I'm thankful and committed to expanding my design community. BIPOC interior designers are underrepresented in our \$17.5 billion industry. Inc reports that just 2% of interior designers in the U.S. are Black, for example. Design equity is about more inclusion and opportunity in the ranks of interior designers, manufacturing and furniture design, media and retailing - from break room to board room. It's also about attracting and celebrating an increasingly diversified clientele. We all deserve a beautiful home."

Nessbach:

"With increased interest rates, the housing market has relaxed. We are also seeing an effect of the uncertain economy on commercial developments. With that comes a change in design needs."

Brittany Farinas, House of One, Miami:

"One of the biggest issues facing designers today is the lead time on materials. We are still working through this post pandemic."

Barbara Elliott, The Sisters and Company | Decorating Den, Stone Mountain, Ga.:

"Online shopping and fear of recession"

Is sustainability top of mind for your customers?



Leah:

"I was raised in Europe where quality furniture and craftsmanship was and still is a hallmark of home interiors. Once the Sustainable Furnishings Council started offering their accreditation classes years ago, we got ours right away but had few requests from clients to implement more sustainable practices and products. Over the last years though, we feel that there has been a shift and people are starting to understand that Moth-

er Earth is vulnerable and has only so many resources to offer. By purchasing higher quality furnishings, we can break the cycle of fast, disposable goods, lessen the load on the landfill and get to enjoy better comfort, value and longevity."

Nessbach:

"In the commercial design world, numbers rule the game. While sustainability is certainly on client's minds, it also comes at a higher price. A lot of furnishings, finishes and materials get value engineered to lower priced, similar looking options when it comes to making budget cuts."

Farinas:

"We always aim to practice sustainability when it comes to our design projects. Whenever we can implement more sustainable options, we take advantage of it. Whether it's in our custom millwork or selecting fabrics that are more beneficial for the environment, it's important as a community to make these conscious decisions for long term sustainability."



What are some of your favorite local go-to resources?

Alonso:

"My local upholsterers are a godsend! Working with them for as long as we have affords us a shorthand when it comes to concepting and ideating things for our projects. Similarly, our detailer/finisher is always with us. He's a master at figuring things out and how to make them happen. You need someone who is curious and dives into the technical aspect of design. From a styling and décor perspective, we love the team at Monica James & Co. in Miami. Always a well-curated selection and great staff. On the trade side, for textiles we love the team at Schumacher at Florida's Design Center of the Americas. For tiles and flooring, the respective teams at Porcelanosa, Exquisite Surfaces and Ann Sacks are always on our speed dial. If we're looking for some funky, Florida pieces, we always head to James & Jeffrey Antiques in West Palm Beach."

Farinas:

"We love working with Grafton Furniture for our custom millwork and upholstery needs. Holly Hunt is always our go to for designer textiles and bespoke furniture pieces as well."

Amber Guyton, Little Blessed Bungalow, Atlanta:

"Atlanta is a great place to be with AmericasMart, ADAC and several vendor showrooms and offices right

at your fingertips. High Point is also right up the road and vintage destinations are endless."



Cloud:

"Oh, where to begin.... Charlotte is a design hot spot. I love Ariene Bethea's Dressing Room Interiors, plus Designers Marketplace, South End Exchange and various antique shops. I'm a big supporter of HPxD - full transparency, I'm a board member - and its movement to open High Point showrooms year round. For Charlotte designers, High Point is basically local!"

Thomas:

"We love online auctions such as Crescent City Auction House in New Orleans. You can bid online and they curate a beautiful array of French antiques and prized heirloom Southern art."

Bartone:

"I resource a lot from antique shows and estate sales. I feel strongly that everyone should have something historic in their home that adds interest and depth to the space. You find such quirky, interesting items and you are recycling pieces that are typically very well constructed."

Sandra Asdourian, Sandra Asdourian Interiors, Naples, Fla.:

"I love shopping West Home Collection for accessories for install day; Wilson Lighting for fixtures and accessories and The International Design Source for furniture and rugs."

What will you be looking for at High Point Market? And what's your favorite place to eat or drink during market?

Cloud:

"I think this is going to be a great market for color. I want to see experimentation, new colorways, combinations I've not seen before. Surprise me! Otherwise, I have some must-see showrooms of course. I plan to stop by Hooker's new space along with my other go-to faves. I also like to reserve time to explore entirely new brands. Market is all about discovery. As for food, drink and community, I love Universal's breakfast, but if I'm on the run, Splashworks serves organic juice and power bars to fuel the morning. The Eichholz party is a favorite and a great chance to connect with my High Point family."

Guyton:

"My favorite part of High Point is the people. This will be the third time I've attended and each visit feels like a family reunion. I credit a big part of my success in recent years to the community I've built and the networking I've been a part of. High Point reminds me that I'm not alone in this business and helps me embrace all that I have yet to learn."

Farinas:

"We're currently in the process of launching a staging division at House of One, so we'll definitely be on the lookout for inspiration for a signature collection."

Leah:

"Our team visits most of our staple vendors to see their introductions but InterHall and Suites at Market Square are always great places to browse to dig up fresh additions to round out the mix of resources. As regular market attendees know, food is always a bit tricky at High Point, especially during the later days. We found some unexpected pockets in smaller showrooms like Artistica that will serve nice food. For drinks, we love Eastern Accents secret punch bowl, Currey's Lavender Prosecco and Caracole has a gorgeous rooftop terrace. But I hope you will agree that our main sustenance comes from the thrill of being there and immersing ourselves in the things we love the most. Nothing beats hugging a fluffy pillow or finding a cool new vendor."

Elliott:

"Favorite place to eat - Print Works Bistro."

Bartone:

"I will be searching for more eco-friendly, fully sustainable products and hand crafted items. Since 80% of a product's carbon footprint comes from its content, we are hoping to partner with vendors that have a robust manufacturing process and use recycled materials. And my number one place for food is Jaipur Living! They have an all-vegetarian menu and a great lunch. I always plan my showroom visit around lunch time!"

Thomas:

"I will be speaking on two panels on antiques and sales marketing (at Universal and Odette, both on April 23). We just got back from our second buying trip to France and are excited to share insights with our fellow designers. Some of my favorite go-to spots include: A Special Blend, Blue Water Grille and Lulu & Blue."



CHELSEA HOUSE

200 N. HAMILTON ST., SUITE 104, HIGH POINT
CHELSEAHOUSEINC.COM | @CHELSEAHOUSEINC