

## **An Interview with Sandra Morgan**

Sandra Morgan Interiors

Photographs by ChiChi Ubina

### ***What influences did you have growing up that made you become a designer?***

My mother asked the decorating department at Lord & Taylor to help her with our house and it always looked cheerful and elegant."

As a young girl, I thought everyone changed their slipcovers and curtains with the seasons. I always looked forward to the seasonal transformation and the excitement it caused. It was fun to see winter's neutral silks be replaced by cheerful prints in the Spring. I think I was bitten by the decorating bug when I was about 10 years old!

### ***Tell us a bit about your business.***

I established Sandra Morgan Interiors, Inc. formally in 1988. After having had a retail home furnishings shop and art gallery in Greenwich for ten years, I started doing projects at the request of friends and gradually built up a clientele in the Greenwich area. Since then, I have had many projects throughout Fairfield County, Westchester, New York City, Maryland, Maine, Rhode Island and Florida and have been fortunate enough to have my work published in various magazines. I have also been invited to participate in Decorator Show Houses over the years, as well as offering my own homes for house tours.

In 2007, our interior design offices expanded to include a new retail adventure called SM HOME, which specializes in Swedish Gustavian style. Our shop offers a selection of Swedish antiques and reproductions, decorative accessories, lamps, and one-of-a kinds. We also have an art gallery within the shop featuring original works by artists near and far. Much of the art is contemporary in spirit, providing a fresh contrast to the more traditional antique furnishings. We are mainly a design firm with a retail shop as an extra added attraction.





***What would you consider your design style?***

My style ranges from traditional to contemporary, depending on my client's preference and the spirit of the architecture. It is safe to say I am a Modern Traditionalist. I love to introduce an element of surprise, but have great respect for classic design that has endured over time. I think a thoughtful mix of new and old gives a home a special energy and character.

***How long have you been designing? Where did you study?***

After receiving my B.A. in Art History from Connecticut College. I worked in the editorial department of House & Garden Magazine directly out of school. I haven't stopped since. I continue to learn from every new project and frequently work with architects from the ground up. This type of collaboration offers inspiration as well as education.

***How do you define "home"?***

Home is not a stage set, but an expression of who we are and how we like to live. It is a comfortable haven and a calm retreat where friends and family gather. It is where I relax and recharge and keep my favorite things.





***What are some questions you ask your clients before you begin a project?***

How did you find our Firm? Have you worked with a designer before? What are your expectations? What are your style preferences, your favorite colors and textures, your favorite restaurant, your favorite movie? Do you collect anything in



particular? Are you open to purchasing artwork? How do you spend your leisure time? Do you have children? What are their ages? Do you have pets? Do you entertain frequently? If so, are you more formal or casual? Do you have a budget in mind?

*What can you tell about a person when you walk in the room?*

I try to keep an open mind. I've been surprised many times. Usually I can sense a level of enthusiasm and grace right from the start.



*Who are some of the designers that have influenced your work and how?*

Mark Hampton for his classic design which always has an element of surprise. His projects are the result of an intelligent eye combined with a big dash of daring wit.

Elsie De Wolfe for her revolutionary use of mirrors and white paint.

Sister Parish for her instinctive ability to mix patterns and just about anything with her personal style.

Albert Hadley and Billy Baldwin for their clean lines and tailored approach that has never been boring. I consider them both modernists, although they are legends.

Palladio, for classic symmetry. Bonnard, the painter, for his extraordinary use of color.

***What are some trends we should look out for in design? Any particular colors?***

I think traditional style is making a comeback, just with a fresh approach. Trends show we are moving into a stronger color palette, bringing shades of orange and chartreuse into our homes. I think interior design takes its cue from fashion to a certain degree.

Personally, I love the serenity and elegance of a Swedish Gustavian color palette which focuses on grays, blues, soft greens and white. That being said, a red room has always been a winner, particularly a dining-room.



***How does your home design reflect in what you wear?***

I wear a lot of black and white. It's easy and always looks put together and sharp. Also, it doesn't interfere with colors I might be working with when meeting with a client.

My own home reflects the Swedish colors I've described with lots of antiques, blue/white porcelains and colorful paintings for added punch.

***Who is your dream client and why?***

James Bond. Just for the fun of it!