

Breathe New Life

Gray Walker shares insight on her interior design techniques.

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DESCRIBE YOUR DESIGN SERVICES?

I primarily work on entire homes, but I do work on single rooms when my schedule allows. I am very involved with the architects, builders, craftspeople, and landscape architects on my projects. The larger projects require a much broader thought process, and that is what I truly love. I travel with my clients on buying trips for things that make their individual homes unique. I basically become part of a few people's daily routines for a couple of years so I have things that are in start-up and high gear at all times.

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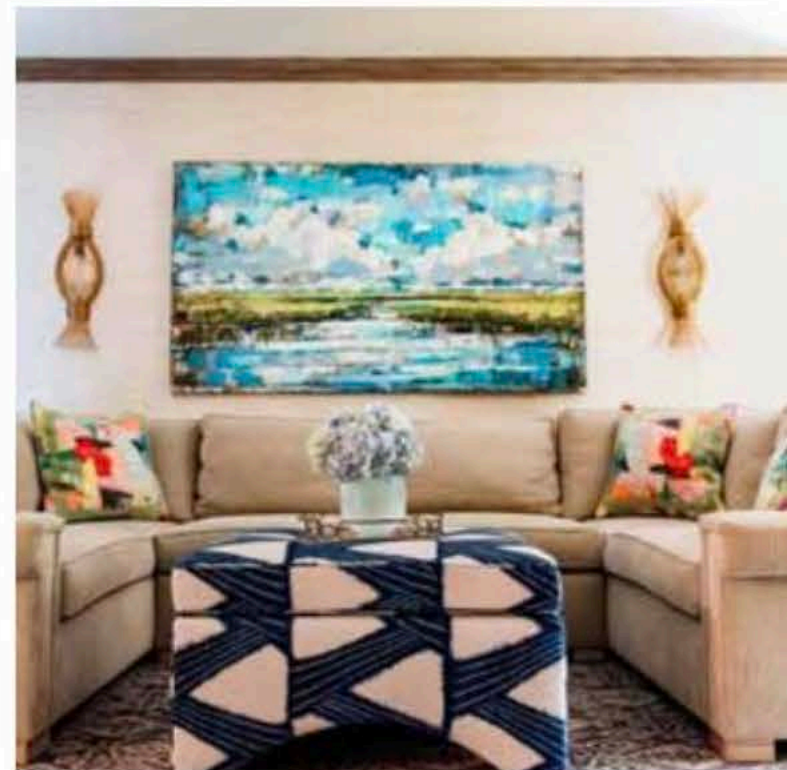
STYLING A HOME INCLUDES TELLING THE STORY OF WHO THE CLIENT IS, AS AN OWNER AND as a person. The interior embodies everything from where the client grew up, to who the family is, and what brought the person to where he/she is now.

Gray Walker embraces all of these questions (and more) when it comes to interior design, using techniques she's perfected over the course of a twenty-year business career. Her passion flows through all aspects of her life, and she brings her signature to each project by mixing cool modern and collected heritage in all her designs.

After her years of schooling (an Art History degree from the University of Georgia and an Interior Design degree from Winthrop University), good friends brought Gray to the bustling city of Charlotte, where she has remained since. Gray is the sole owner of her self-named Gray Walker Interiors, a role that's allowed her to become very familiar with all the rules of interior design... and with how and when to break them. We talked with Gray inside her own (very stylish) home to get the inside scoop on Gray Walker Interiors and her work throughout the Charlotte area.

WHAT TIPS DO YOU HAVE FOR INTEGRATING DIFFERENT PATTERNS AND ELEMENTS WITHOUT OVERWHELMING A SPACE?

Make pointed decisions. The fabrics, paintings, rugs, and styles of furniture in each space work together to create a whole. It's all about making strong decisions and selecting the pieces to create your tension. A simple way to look at it is placing a super modern painting over a Louis XVI chest and tossing a leopard rug beneath it all. Boom! That's juxtaposition using three moods.



WHICH ARTISTS INFLUENCE OR INSPIRE YOU AND YOUR WORK?

I must start with Elsie de Wolfe for her whimsical use of antiques and penchant for bringing in the outdoors. I marvel at the trailblazing eccentricity of Rose Cumming. She used lots of mirrors, metallic wallpapers, and animal prints that really bring serious glamour to rooms, and these are some of the pillars of my work. I can then bounce over to designers like Sister Parrish and Bunny Williams who I think are the masters of no-nonsense, comfortable chic. Billy Baldwin and David Hicks are also on my speed dial for inspiration.

YOU HAVE THE QUOTE, "I WEAVE IN MEMORIES AND STORIES FROM MY CLIENTS' LIVES" DISPLAYED ON YOUR WEBSITE. HOW DO YOU ACTUALLY DO THAT IN PRACTICE?

During the first meeting with a client, I wander through their home, listening to them talk to me about their belongings. My eye always gravitates to a few key pieces they own. By the end of that meeting, I know which pieces I want to be focal pieces, and usually I know where they will work best for the new design.

I believe you should surround your family with things that are personal to them. Weaving your story into your home means using pieces that you've collected or things that have been inherited... Family portraits, pieces of silver, a special painting, antique furniture, anything that is specific to you and your family because they tell the story of who you are.

HOW DOES CHARLOTTE, AND THE STYLE HERE, INFLUENCE YOUR DESIGN WORK?

I have been so lucky to work in the Charlotte community since I started the business way back in 1998. I am so thankful to live here; it's a city that has been very kind to me! I have worked with some of the best architects and landscape designers in the industry. Charlotte is a hotbed of talent with a market that is equally vibrant, and I can't wait to see what the next ten years bring because I am ready for anything.

info

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