

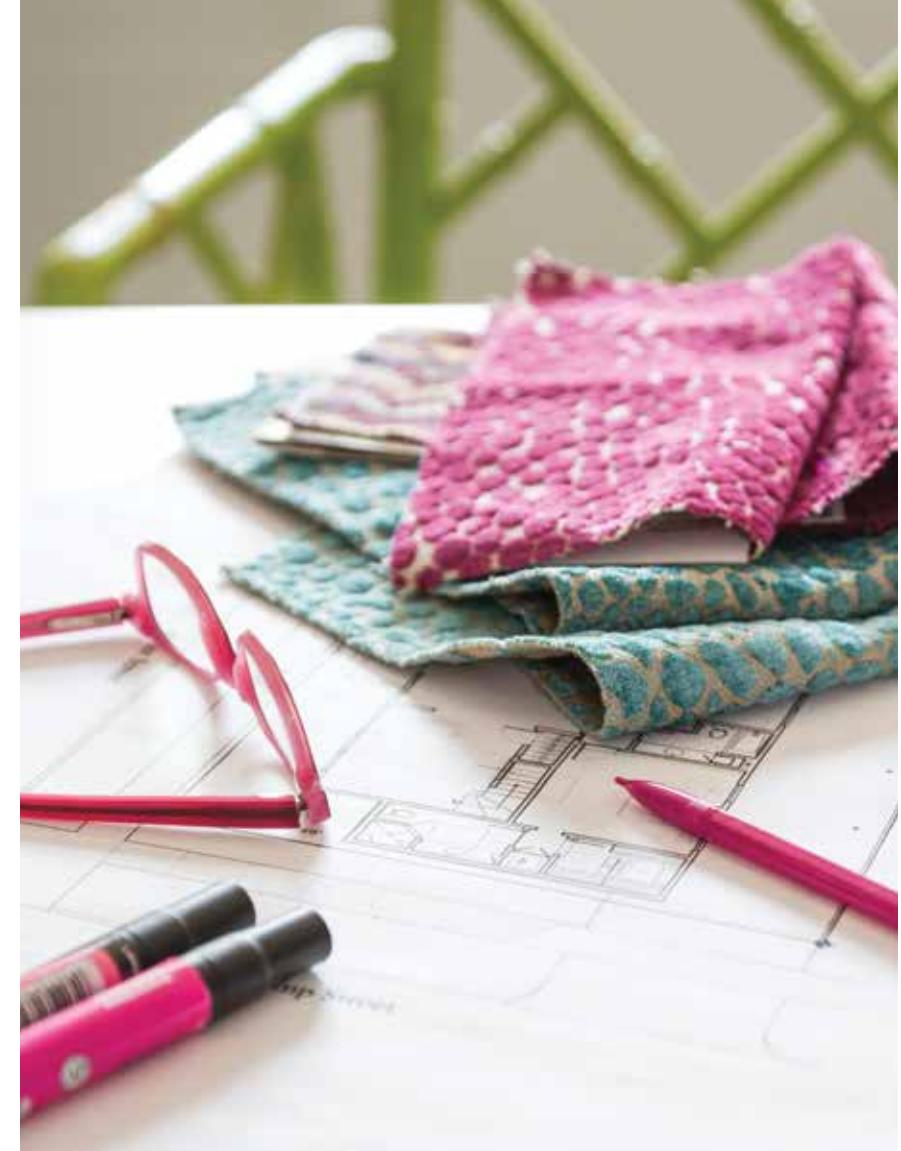


A Colorful CAREER

The playful interiors of Susan Currie embrace the beautiful New Orleans spirit of a bold, creative palette.

BY Mona Moore | PHOTOGRAPHY BY Sara Essex Bradley





Raised in Hattiesburg, Mississippi, designer Susan Currie developed an artistic eye at an early age. On visits to friends and family, she would absorb each home's distinctive style and imagine remodeling or redecorating it. "Whether it was an antebellum home on the outskirts of town or a mid-century rancher in a sleepy suburban enclave, having such architectural gems in my proverbial backyard afforded me an awareness and an appreciation for all kinds of design," she says.

Susan's imaginings found a release decorating the room she shared with her older sister in their childhood home. The pair selected the furnishings and worked together to create their stylish abode. "In anticipation of the furniture's arrival, I carefully planned my side of the room—from staging the bookshelves to selecting the bedding," she says. "Of course, it all had to be purple, my all-time favorite color."

Moving to New Orleans after college felt like coming home as Susan discovered the pulse of her favorite city and embraced cheerful hues of amethyst and aubergine once again. "Just like our jazz music, we march to a different beat

in New Orleans. Living there really got my creative juices flowing," she says. "I began to yearn to do something more colorful—more 'me.'" She ended a broadcasting career to return to school and study interior design.

Susan's lively color schemes have become a part of her signature style. Living rooms bloom in lilac and chartreuse, amber accents warm up home offices, and breakfast rooms shine with mustard walls and auburn Roman shades. Her approach to layering textures and finishes is heavily inspired by the unique architectural heritage that came from New Orleans' long-ago French, Spanish, African, and Creole inhabitants. Susan draws inspiration from the weathered wrought-iron balconies, heavy cypress beams, and cobblestone streets, then juxtaposes these elements with the sophisticated

modern art produced in the Crescent City. "Our city is a melting pot of cultures that gives it a style all its own—easily identifiable, yet hard to define," she says. "In many ways, I find that the mingling of cultures shapes the way I mix colors and styles into one harmonious design created with one client in mind."

Since its 2008 opening, Susan Currie Design has grown to a seven-person operation Susan affectionately calls her little family. She splits her time between Atlanta and New Orleans, leading projects that blend her playful designs with the unique lifestyles and personalities of her clients.

Susan describes her design as colorful, curated, artful, and personal—never cookie-cutter. She layers her spaces with varied textures and textiles, and resists monochromatic schemes to



achieve a sophisticated balance of new and old, beautiful and practical.

“I love the warmth of taupe, the moodiness of gray, and the crispness of white, but for me, neutral hues are better starting points than finishing touches,” she says. “A smart and stylish color palette is the backbone of every one of my designs.”

FROM HER HOME TO YOURS

Susan shares secrets to her signature style.

- Let color lead the way. Start with a neutral backdrop and pull dabs of color from your favorite artwork, textiles, and accessories to create a palette you'll love to live with.
- Mix textures. Soften hardwood or stone floors with plush, upholstered furnishings, and incorporate metal tables and consoles for structure and definition. Bring in lamps, trays, and other accessories in glass, rattan, or clay for even more dimension.
- Think inside the box. Consider how you will use the space you're remodeling or redecorating. A pretty space only goes so far; functionality is key to creating a room that is both livable and lovely.
- Less is more. If you are a collector, take the time to edit and curate your collection. You may need to display a little less in order to showcase your favorite pieces.
- Add an element of surprise. Consider hanging an original piece of art over a concealed cabinet in the powder room. Guests will see beauty, but you will see needed storage.
- Bring the outside in. Whether store-bought or garden-grown, fresh flowers and lush greens are an easy and inexpensive way to bring your house to life. Even a single palm frond can add so much vitality. Use other organic elements, like a teak log or a giant clam shell, as interesting containers for succulents or moss balls.

