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Style Icon

DESIGNER BETH WEBB

Designer Brian Patrick Flynn has a chat with his design hero, Atlanta-based designer Beth Webb, whom he admires for her way with "insanely amazing vintage, custom, and sculptural pieces; rich textures; and a strong use of black and white."

What does Southern style mean to you?

Southern style is gracious, comfortable, and, above all, about charm and hospitality.

How has being Southern influenced your style?

In the South, we have a tradition of honoring home and hearth. The most important elements in the houses I design are always comfort, hospitality, and livability.

How have you reinterpreted Southern traditions in your style and work?

So much of what I consider Southern tradition centers on hospitality and gracious living. In this fast-paced world of ours, the South we knew from our grandmothers' and mothers' generations, of bridge parties and leisurely luncheons at the club, has almost become extinct. But you can still make nods to the past by, for instance, using real linen cocktail napkins, daily setting your table with sterling silver, buying fresh flowers, and keeping a fully stocked bar. Oh, and don't forget the cheese straws!

What are your time-tested style tips?

Every room needs a little something black and a little something green. Good art, which is the icing on the cake, shouldn't match your sofa. Layers and layers of lighting are essential, and no woman likes a fluorescent bulb!

On what do you scrimp? On what do you splurge?

I dislike spending money on things I can't see, such as HVAC systems or electrical panels. I will, however, splurge on what I deem the true necessities of life—great bedding is of paramount importance. The art of making a luxurious bed is one I've spent many hours attempting to perfect.

How has your taste changed over time?

The older you get, the more you grow aesthetically. The more one travels, the more one sees, the greater one's appreciation of different style tendencies. I'm inherently a less-is-more person, but I'm developing an affinity for deeply layered, complex interiors.

Who most embodies "chic"?

There are a few: Audrey Hepburn, Katharine Hepburn,



Grace Kelly, Babe Paley, Inès de la Fressange, Catherine Deneuve, and Carolyn Bessette Kennedy. They are all timeless, classic, and elegant.

Who has most influenced your style?

So many, it's difficult to formulate an answer, but among them are certainly Stephen Sills, Darryl Carter, Giorgio Armani, Bill Blass, Victoria Hagan, Luis Bustamante, Michele Bönan, Nancy Braithwaite, and Steven Gambrel.

What's the best advice you've ever received?

"Everyone puts their pants on one leg at a time," from my amazing grandfather from Rochelle, Georgia. He set the bar when it came to character and integrity. God broke the mold when he made that man.