

LIFE *by* design™

LIFESTYLE | FAMILY | TRAVEL

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the
Interior
design
issue



Dear Subscriber

*with the crisp weather
of autumn surfacing*

and children carrying themselves off to school once again, we find ourselves gravitating toward the indoors of our homes. These fall months are an ideal time to focus on the interiors of our homes and designing the perfect spaces in which to live.

This issue of *Life By Design* showcases home design at its best and includes profiles on various designers and design styles, including Finley Design and Pineapple House Interior Design. You also will be able to explore a feature on designer and antique shop owner Lars Bolander.

Please enjoy this issue. Remember, it is sent to you as a way of showing appreciation for your repeat business and referrals. As always, you can be assured that your needs will be respected and approached with the utmost care and professionalism.

*Thank you, and if you know anyone
who is in need of assistance, please
do not hesitate to call.*

Kevin Kuwae

310.516.3900

kevin.kuwae.seet@statefarm.com



Designer Amy Finley doesn't let supply stop her; if she can't find a piece of furniture she wants, she designs and has it built.

Fitting *furnishings*

WRITTEN BY
KAREN BUSCEMI

PHOTOS PROVIDED BY
GLENN CORMIER

When furnishing a room, it never fails that at least one object, be it a chair, a buffet, or an end table, is impossible to locate in the right finish or fabric or size. Wouldn't it be nice if you could design that exact piece of furniture that fits into your vision?

Enter Amy Finley, a home designer who takes on large scale from-the-ground-up home projects that has her deciding everything from the location of the lot to the fabric used on a club chair in the library. When Finley can't find a specific piece of furniture, she designs it



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herself. In fact, about 50 percent of the furnishings in the homes she designs are her creations.

“I was looking for certain things and couldn’t find what I wanted so I decided, well hell, we’ll make it, I’ll design it. It’s really that simple,” Finley says. “I love a lot of classic things that are out there, but I like to do my own strange twists on it. Like take a classic chair and blow it out of proportion.”

She cites the Clift Hotel in San Francisco as a good example of putting modern twists on classic pieces of furniture.

“They do all these crazy iconic pieces and they screw up the proportion in a good kind of way,” she explains. “I like to do the same, such as take a camelback sofa and put it down really low to the ground and make it loungy and really long.”

No matter what she’s designing, Finley’s first concern is that the scale is right for the room. “A certain type of club chair might work in a New York apartment or a San Francisco loft, but it may not work in a big ranch home. The scale has to fit the project,” she says. After that, it’s all about the details. “If I’m working with mohair, it’s how the nap runs, but sometimes I’ll do something that you’re not supposed to do, for effect, like run a pattern in the opposite way. But how it all comes together is what I pride myself on.”

Finley’s creations start with a loose sketch, and if she’s designing for a whole-house project, she lays out the furniture in the floor plan for correct scale. Usually, she already has the fabric in mind. The next step is to give the drawing to one of her designers, who puts it into CAD. Then it goes to the manufacturer. Finley and her group look at the piece three or four times during the process, making sure that the proportions are correct, that the fabric works, and that it’s comfortable. “What looks right in a drawing may not feel right when you sit on it or at it,” she says.

A lover of fabrics (at the moment, she’s crazy for white silk), Finley finds her materials from vendors all over the world. “I won’t know if my fabric ideas even exist, so we send out e-mails to all my textile vendors, putting them to work for us.”

In the Malaga home in Rancho Santa Fe, California, Finley created many pieces with 90 degree angles, which she says reflect the space. “The house is really crisp in its architecture, and I wanted to keep the furniture really similar to that, with great lines that, at different times of the day, the sharp angles cast beautiful shadows.”

A blue armless breakfast room chair was inspired by a shorter chair in a Parisian restaurant. Finley says she loves to borrow ideas and manipulate them to become her own.

In the library at Malaga is an overscale chair with a white leather back mixed with unique silver fabric and a plush gold pillow to finish. “That was a crazy chair,” she reflects. “That scale happened because of the room and how I wanted to feel when I sat in the chair.”

Four silver Moroccan tables add intrigue to the salon—a look that Finley calls “simple and perfect apart or together.” A Moroccan window was the inspiration for the cutouts on the tables.

A tall, brown banquette with a snowflake pattern was used as a divider in the guest house kitchen. “I wanted to do something interesting to divide the room, and that banquette has such a great fabric,” she says.

Finley’s advice when choosing furniture is simple: “Have fun with it,” she says. “Break some rules. It’s OK to break rules and see how it turns out. That’s what we do, and we love the results.” ■