

WRITTEN BY
HEATHER J. PAPER

PHOTOGRAPHED BY
ERICA GEORGE DINES

PRODUCED BY
CLINTON SMITH

DESIGN DOSSIER

AMY MORRIS

In the first installment of our new series on local tastemakers, we catch up with a designer known for creating interiors that are beautiful, comfortable and well-edited

IT'S NOT SURPRISING, really, that Amy Morris is one of Atlanta's rising design stars. After all, she had expert tutelage even after graduating from the Art Institute of Atlanta, first interning with Gandy/Peace Inc. and then working with Barbara Westbrook. Make no mistake, however: her own firm—Amy D. Morris Interiors, which she opened in 2005—has a signature style all its own. It's perhaps best described as classic but not predictable, emphasizing a fresh, sophisticated look.

Morris knew early on that design was her calling. "I grew up in Brookhaven and, on the weekends, my dad and I used to walk through houses that were under construction for fun," she recalls. "I was only in grade school but I remember thinking 'Why did they do that?' I'd be thinking of ways that they could have been done better! By the time I got to high school, I was constantly looking through magazines and 'studying' every home I was in. I knew I wanted to be a designer."

That kind of clear direction is readily apparent in Morris' work. "I love making a statement in a room," she says, "creating rooms that will be remembered. But they must be livable!" To that end, the designer feels it's important to let the house "speak"—to respect the architecture while interpreting the client's wants and needs.

If Morris has one steadfast design rule it's to "let the house breathe; don't over-decorate!"

she says. And her decorating dictum couldn't be better-timed. "I think people have realized that it's time to simplify; we don't really need so much stuff. The days of decorating to simply fill a space are over."

EVERY HOME NEEDS... Good window treatments. They add so much to a room and it's important not to "skimp" on them. Plus, I believe every home needs a space for a large, fabulous, dramatic mirror.

MY MUST-HAVE HOME ACCESSORY IS... Great barware. I love being able to offer someone a cocktail in a nice glass.

MY FAVORITE ATLANTA SHOPPING SPOT IS... The Westside. It has something for everyone. There are great shops like Bungalow Classic and Sid Mashburn. There's great food at Abattoir, Bacchanalia and Star Provisions. It's the perfect place to meet up with friends, do some shopping and then grab a great lunch or dinner.

I GET MY BEST INSPIRATION FROM... Everything around me. Books, magazines, fashion, even my kids. I once did a nursery where the palette was influenced by a watercolor painting my 5-year-old brought home from school.

MY FAVORITE MUSEUM IS... The Rembrandt House Museum in Amsterdam. It was so incredible not only to see Rembrandt's art but to also see how an artist's home says a lot to me.



GREAT BARWARE IS AMONG MORRIS' MUST-HAVES, LIKE THESE EXAMPLES FROM RALPH LAUREN AND TIFFANY. "I LOVE BEING ABLE TO OFFER SOMEONE A COCKTAIL IN A NICE GLASS," SHE EXPLAINS. OPPOSITE: TYPICAL OF THE DESIGNER'S EXPECT-THE-UNEXPECTED STYLE, MORRIS' LIVING ROOM JUXTAPOSES HER OWN FAMILY PORTRAITS WITH SUPERCHIC PILLOWS FROM B.D. JEFFRIES. DECKED OUT IN A KELLY WEARSTLER FABRIC, THE PILLOWS' TRELIS PATTERN HAS BEEN ADORNED WITH HAND-PAINTED DOTS.



STYLE (profile)



WHEN I GET AN UNEXPECTED DAY TO MYSELF, I LIKE TO...Are you kidding? I have two kids. I am lucky to get an unexpected second to myself.

WHEN I WANT TO KICK BACK AND RELAX, I...Schedule a beach vacation. I love Rosemary Beach in Florida. Not only do I love the architecture, but once you arrive and park your car you don't have to get back in it until you leave; everything is right there at your fingertips.

WHAT MOST PEOPLE DON'T KNOW ABOUT ME IS...That I love tennis. It's such a great stress reliever for me. Where else can you get a great workout while enjoying friends and having fun?

THE ONE PIECE OF DESIGN ADVICE I'D GIVE ANYONE IS...Simplify, simplify, simplify!

MY FAVORITE WAY TO ENTERTAIN IS...A 12- to 14-person casual dinner party on our patio with great food and great wine. I love to entertain my friends. It's really an outlet for me!



A vignette in the home of one of Morris' clients makes you think twice about what defines art; the designer's own kitchen proves that even utilitarian spaces can have a sense of style; an essential in Morris' design palette is gray, her favorite being Benjamin Moore's Cumulus Cloud; a hooded chair in Morris' bedroom seems the perfect place to decide among Christian Louboutin or Jimmy Choo shoes; the Greek Klismos chair, like this one from Michael Taylor Designs (available through Jerry Pair), is "an elegant staple for any home because it works in both modern and traditional settings," she says.

THE ONE PLACE IN ATLANTA I ALWAYS TAKE GUESTS IS...For sight-seeing, the aquarium; it's always a hit with out-of-town visitors of any age. For a night out, the bar at the St. Regis. Even though it is a newer spot, it's what I imagine Atlanta's hit spot would have been like 60 or 70 years ago. Plus, you always see people you know!



THE PLACE I LOVE TO TRAVEL TO MOST IS...Santorini, Greece. To me, it's the most peaceful place on earth. With stunning views, gorgeous sunsets, great food and friendly locals, it really *is* magical!

THE DESIGNER I LOOK UP TO MOST IS...Victoria Hagan. Her designs are classic, fresh and timeless. Plus, she's a successful designer who juggles work *and* kids!

MY PROUDEST DESIGN MOMENT CAME WHEN...Kate Abney from *Atlanta Homes & Lifestyles* called me to tell me I was one of the winners of the magazine's 2009 bath of the year contest. I think I screamed!

MY SIGNATURE COLORS ARE...Gray and white. In my opinion, they are classic, simple and timeless. Then I like to add a "punch" with pops of color!

DESIGNER FAVORITES

FAVORITE BED LINENS: For me, Anichini or DEA. For my kids, Sferra or Matouk.

FAVORITE PIECE OF FURNITURE: Greek Klismos chair. It's such an elegant staple for any home because it works in both modern and traditional settings.

FAVORITE DINNERWARE: Formal, Hermès. Everyday, anything white, simple and substantial.

FAVORITE WALL COVERING: Donald Kaufman Paint.

FAVORITE PAINT COLOR: White; it's always so fresh and provides a clean palette to work from.

FAVORITE DESIGN BOOK: *Elements of Style* by Michael S. Smith.

FAVORITE WINE: Slingshot.

FAVORITE FABRIC LINE: A tie between Great Plains from Holly Hunt and Rogers and Goffigon.

AMY D. MORRIS INTERIORS
1401 DRESDEN DRIVE, SUITE 200
ATLANTA, GA 30319
(404) 389-0628; AMYDMORRIS.COM



QUEEN IRON TWIG BED Formations through Jerry Pair LINEN FABRICS USED FOR WINDOW PANELS AND BED PANELS Nobilis ANTIQUE LOUIS XIII CANAPE WITH 19TH-CENTURY NEEDLEPOINT France, circa 1850, through Jerry Pair BIEDERMEIER CHEST Jerry Pair 19TH-CENTURY CHARLES X FRUITWOOD DESK Parc Monceau



WARM RETREAT

Designer Amy Morris wanted to create a classic retreat that warmed the senses, too. “It needed to be a room that guests would want to come back to again and again,” she says. “The goal was to not make it overly masculine or feminine—just clean, soft and sophisticated.” Painted a warm gray, the room feels even cozier thanks to curtain panels draped from the iron bed; the lengths of linen warming up the gray with rich chocolate and camel hues, echoing the nearby window treatment. The sophisticated neutral scheme is the perfect backdrop for urns, Biedermeier pieces and architectural elements, all of which ground the room securely in the classics. **AMY MORRIS, AMY D. MORRIS INTERIORS**

