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# Amy Morris

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With her fresh, eclectic spin on classical design, Amy Morris



To make the 8-foot ceilings in her living room appear higher, designer Amy Morris painted the walls and trim the same color. A few large-scale furnishings add to the room's grandeur.

has become one of the hottest young designers in Atlanta.



**B**y the time Amy Morris enrolled in the Art Institute of Atlanta, it was already a given that she'd become an interior designer. In grade school, she often toured neighborhood houses under construction, taking notes on what she would have done differently. In high school, with decorating magazines as her guide, she started honing her eye for concepts such as scale, contrast, and texture.

"I just always knew that this is what I wanted to do," Morris says. Perhaps that's why she's now a rising star on the Atlanta design scene, renowned for her clean and youthful take on transitional style.

When asked about her personal aesthetic, Morris credits an internship at Gandy/Peace for piquing her interest in contemporary design, and a five-year stint with Barbara Westbrook for developing her appreciation of traditional style. But it's famed decorator Billy Baldwin—the master of balancing classical and modern—whom Morris calls her "all-time favorite" inspiration.

Like Baldwin, she strives to create rooms that are eclectic but well-edited, where natural materials and tailored furnishings from various eras meld stylishly to create a space that's both timeless and comfortable. Unlike Baldwin, she's more likely to use cool neutrals, such as gray and white, than bold jewel tones, but her design philosophy is otherwise very similar. "Classic and livable—

that's always my goal," she says. "There's nothing worse than an overdecorated room that looks dated in a year. It's pretty hard to go wrong with simplicity and quality, classic furniture."

For Morris, furniture is the starting point for every design project. Then she picks fabric, paint, and rugs—in that order. "I know some designers start with the rugs or the fabrics, but I like to have my core pieces first," she says. "I make sure the scale is right and then work on the juxtaposition. So if I have a simple sofa, I'll probably want to pair it with a funky chair. Then I'll hash out the other details."

Details such as window coverings, which Morris never goes without. "I think every room needs great window treatments," she says. "I don't do the real whomped-up, really over-the-top stuff. But classic Roman shades and side panels will never go out of style, and they really pull a room together."

When it comes to accessories, Morris is a fan of contemporary artwork and historical artifacts—especially old etchings—and she admits to shopping anywhere and everywhere for just the right item. "Junk shops, flea markets, antiques stores—I hit all of them," she says. "You never know where the perfect piece is waiting. And perfect doesn't have to mean expensive. If you're creative, beauty comes at all price points."

**This photo:** To find the perfect warm gray for this bedroom, Morris chose her drapery fabric and then tested similar shades of paint, hand-mixing on site. An antique French-style chair frame echoes the draperies' pale hue. **Opposite:** A starburst mirror and crystal lamp add glamorous sparkle to the room's peaceful palette of gray and white.

