

GIMME SHELTER

TASTE, STYLE AND DESIGN IN A SHIFTING CULTURE

By Kristen Conahan

When someone says they have naturally fallen into their craft, it usually means they are very successful at what they do. This is how Peggy Platner, principal and lead designer at Platner & Associates, describes her start in interior design, which proves the statement true. With a natural ability to make an average room come alive, a passion for finding one-of-a-kind antiques in the most unusual of places and working from

Immediately, my eyes zeroed in on a gorgeous Platner-designed chair — modern, cream linen, curved apron-front with vintage details — which, to my surprise, would be where I would dwell for the next few minutes.

After sitting with her, it was very apparent Platner had not been handed this company — she's worked for it. She spoke of Platner & Associates as a parent would of a child, with pride and contentment. Nine years of dedication, of nurturing, had laid the foundation for something really special.

"My focus has changed somewhat. Antiques and beautiful fabrics inspired me to create a line of beautifully designed and crafted furniture, made from sustainable materials and organic fabrics."

the principle that what you give out, you get back, Platner has created a recipe for a successful business that is built to last.

Platner & Associates recently moved to a beautiful new location in the Malibu Country Mart. The studio feels more like a quaint home, with a loving family of associates and a beautifully designed kitchen and bathroom, rather than a typical design firm.

The studio is tucked away in a corner on the second floor, right above a pleasant grass-lined courtyard. The day was beautiful, covered by the blue California sky; the sun beamed through the large open windows onto the clean white walls, and you could feel the ocean breeze as you walked into the studio. I was greeted with a warm smile as I was led to Platner's design studio.

Tell us about your recent works in Malibu?

We completely remodeled two homes within five months. We started with space planning: raising the ceilings, changing the flow and redesigning the kitchen cabinet layout. We also redesigned the tile, lighting and fireplace — every last detail. Right now, we are in the middle of some very large projects, including a Spanish Revival estate and modern Old World estate.

From your recent works, what trends are you seeing in the industry?

Design is always evolving, and that's why it's so interesting. Generally speaking, though, I tend to stay away from trends because I like to design with a timeless feel. When I am shopping, I am always looking for



P&A Design office located at the Malibu Country Mart



P&A sustainable chairs pictured



Staats Residence in Malibu



unusual pieces that I can make more modern by adding a new twist.

What are the common mistakes homeowners make while decorating?

I have been very blessed to have clients that have a wonderful sense of style and taste. I love to collaborate and develop their vision to create an enchanting home. One mistake I see frequently is that homeowners don't think about flow, color and design from room to room. This often results in a very disjointed feeling. I believe rooms

should look like they have evolved over the years.

What have been big influences for your work?

I draw inspiration from iconic 1920s Spanish Colonial Revival architecture, my travels throughout the world and, most of all, beautiful fabrics.

What's next for you in terms of your company and career?

My focus has changed somewhat. While I love antiques and beautiful fabrics, and will always use them,



I am creating a line of beautifully designed and crafted furniture made from sustainable materials and organic fabrics. People are becoming more and more environmentally conscious and yet are unwilling to compromise on style.

Other than the sustainable furniture line, what current involvement do you have in eco-design?

We are a member of Sustainable Furnishings Council and the U.S. Green Building Council, and are

currently working on attaining our LEED credentials. Along with the sustainable furniture line, I have recently established a relationship with an architectural firm whose focus is on sustainable architecture. They have been building responsibly for 30 years and introduced us to the next step: regenerative design. The philosophy emphasizes building in coordination with, and to enhance, the local ecosystems in a way that not only sustains [them], but allows the earth to regenerate itself and recover from the damage it's already incurred. This is done through passive solar systems, residential gray-water systems and things as easy as planting native species, which attract native birds and other wildlife, and adds to the overall health of the ecosystem. It's a very exciting time to be in design!

What do you love most about your craft?

I feel extremely fortunate to have the opportunity to work every day with things I love: antiques, furniture, beautiful fabrics, unique tile and stone. It's part of who I am. I love the freedom I have to create. It's always evolving. ■