

# Phyllis Taylor

## Perfecting the Classic Florida Style Home

Story by Josie Gulliksen | Photos by Deborah Whitlaw Llewellyn



In an ongoing series, Design District Magazine sits down with top creative designers to get a glimpse into their creative mindset. In this issue we spoke with interior designer Phyllis Taylor who owns Taylor & Taylor with her husband, architect William Taylor. She spoke about their "Classic Florida Style" architecture and interior design firm, their book that showcases their style and their plans for the future.

**Q:** DDM: Tell me about your history as a designer and what inspired this career for you

**PT:** I think that I am just a natural born designer; it's just in my genes. Although I studied Psychology at Hunter College, during my third year I changed my major to design because I just had to be true to myself. I attended the school of Architecture and Design at the University of Florida and have been happily designing for our clients ever since.

**Q:** DDM: Take us down the road of how you came to have your own firm Taylor & Taylor, your career as a designer.

**PT:** After moving to Florida from New York after graduation, I worked at a large architecture firm and gained some great experience. After a year I bravely ventured out on my own because I needed to feel as though I was in control of my own professional destiny. Soon after, my husband took the plunge and the Taylor & Taylor Partnership was born. I probably never would have stayed in Florida, but being married to a fifth generation Floridian has taught me to love the subtleties in our weather, our natural colorations, and the sound of the palm trees.

**Q:** DDM: What are a few of the most memorable projects you've worked on?

**PT:** Readapting a historic fire station in Tampa for my client's exotic car collection was just great fun! One of the most meaningful projects, was the opportunity to work with President Donna Shalala (University of Miami President 2001-2015) in the creation of the Ibis House, which was my first LEED project.

**Q:** DDM: How did your book come to be and where can people find it?



**PT:** Our book "Classic Florida Style" is more about Florida than it is about Taylor&Taylor. Monacelli Press was interested in our regional design. The sunshine state offers a very distinctive lifestyle and hence creative design that blurs the line between exterior and interior living. Our book is available at many bookstores across the country and of course it's sold on Amazon.

**Q:** DDM: What is ahead this year for Taylor & Taylor?

**PT:** Taylor & Taylor is looking forward to developing our own projects in the city and shaking things up a bit. We would like to create "Classic Florida Style" homes with the comfortable and elegant lifestyle that has become our signature. We have been designing beautiful one-of-a-kind environments for our clients and we'd like to transition that into branding our one of a kind Taylor & Taylor finished homes for purchase. We believe there is more to a home than just concrete, glass and square footage. We will be creating a lifestyle within the home that is truly a Florida experience that is yet to be discovered.

**Q:** DDM: Where do you find your inspiration as a designer and what influences your style?

**PT:** I once read that "creativity" is not revealing the source of your inspiration.... But here it goes; anything outside myself, at any given moment, when I am working for a client they are the source of my inspiration, when I am working on site the natural elements become the source of my inspiration, and when I am at a flea market a quirky piece of furniture just may do the trick. This instant inspiration holds true for every design element especially with color schemes. ♦