

Southern home™



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BEFORE + AFTER



"I PRIORITIZE WHICH ROOMS ARE MOST IMPORTANT AFTER HEARING HOW THE CLIENTS LIVE."
—JAN SHOWERS



Jan Showers

DALLAS DESIGN DOYENNE JAN SHOWERS SHARES HER SOURCES OF INSPIRATION, FAVORITE TRAVEL DESTINATIONS, AND A FEW PET PEEVES.

TEXT LYDIA SOMERVILLE
PHOTOGRAPHY STEPHEN KARLUSCH AND JEFF MCNAMARA

Southern Home (SH): Where do you find the inspiration for your work?

Jan Showers (JS): My travels inspire me more than anything, especially when I go on buying trips to Paris. The French are very into the decorative arts. Their museums, shops, and flea markets all stimulate my senses. I am also influenced by the chic style of the '60s and '70s. I loved seeing Babe Paley's

houses in *Vogue*. I also loved Diane von Furstenberg's New York apartment with its lacquered walls.

SH: You're known for your use of Murano glass. How did that come about?

JS: I fell in love with glass when I was a little girl. My maternal grandmother had wonderful glass pieces, and she used them for

serving Sunday lunch. Both she and my mother had amazing crystal. Later in life, I discovered pieces of Murano and Empoli glass and simply fell in love. I so admire glass for the way it brings a room to life.

SH: How has your style evolved over your career?

JS: When I look back at what we purchased for our first home, it is very much like what I have today. We had a velvet tuxedo sofa, comfortable bergères, and a really interesting round coffee table that I wish I still had in my home. In our original dining room, we had a Louis XVI dining table with Louis XV dining chairs. I did go through an English country house phase in the '80s. But when I started going to Paris to buy for my showroom, I fell in love with French furniture from the '40s and reverted to my original style.





SH: What color combinations seem particularly fresh to you right now?

JS: I have an odd crush on a deep aubergine with a French blue. I haven't used it yet, but it's on my radar for a library we are doing.

SH: Where do you advise clients to splurge?

JS: Coffee tables, chandeliers, character chairs, and art.

SH: Where can clients save?

JS: I think there are a lot of great, inexpensive fabrics around that can be used for drapery. Since they require so much yardage and expensive labor, that's a great place to save some money. We also recommend less expensive items for children's rooms and have found some great sources for those. I especially like Bungalow 5, Visual Comfort for lighting, and Made Goods.

SH: What element is essential in every room?

JS: Mirrors.

SH: Where do you like to travel? What places inspire you?

JS: Paris, Venice, Lake Como, and Switzerland are all high on my list.

SH: What are your favorite hotels in terms of design?

JS: I am eager to see the Ritz in Paris after a nearly four-year renovation. In London, I think that Jeremy and Lauren King did an amazing job with the Beaumont. I love the hotel's style and the service.

SH: How would you describe Texas style?

JS: I think it varies from city to city. Dallas tends to be a bit more formal, although that is changing to a degree. I find Houston and Austin to be much more casual. Fort Worth is a mix. There are so many wonderful art collections there, as there are in Dallas. I do think that Texas homes tend to be glamorous—just like Texas women!

SH: How do you like to set a table?

JS: I use beautiful linens and silver and crystal. I like to mix my crystal stemware and use different patterns for the wine glass, the water glass, and the flute. There are always flowers on my table, but they are low and simple.

SH: How do you address mantels?

JS: It depends on whether or not there is a great piece of art over it. If there is, I let the art speak for itself and don't add anything to distract from it. If there is a mirror, I will often use a mix of glass and pottery. Sometimes, I use beautiful books with interesting bookends. Or there could be a pair of magnificent vases—just make sure to always keep them filled with fresh flowers.



SH: When a client comes to you with a whole-house project, where do you start?

JS: I believe in doing the public rooms first, and I prioritize which rooms are most important after hearing how the clients live. So much depends on my initial interview with my clients. I love to see images of what they like from magazines and Pinterest. I ask them about their family life, whether it is casual or more formal, whether they entertain, and if they are art collectors.

SH: What's a decorating pet peeve of yours?

JS: I get bored with a room that has only upholstered furniture and no chairs to add character. A room needs layers. Decorating should be personal. It shouldn't look like me. It should look like the owner. I love adding magazine racks, interesting antiques, and, of course, glass accents.