



AsterHouse Design

Eryn Smith and Amanda Purdom, of AsterHouse Design, are making interior decorating an attainable luxury.

Friendship blossoms into a savvy business partnership

Eryn Smith and Amanda Purdom often find themselves turning to each other and saying, “We’re living the dream.”

They are referring to their chance of helping homeowners explore many facets of the interior design world through their business, AsterHouse Design.

Smith and Purdom began AsterHouse Design less than a year ago to give their clients a process of design that is simple, easy and approachable. Their business specializes in evaluating commercial and residential spaces, then helping clients with staging, color assessment, redesign or art and accessories.

“We are very big on being client-centric. Our goal at AsterHouse is that their house is that person. It is exactly how she would want it to be,” says Smith. “We don’t want AsterHouse to be a certain design style. We want the house to be a reflection of that person.”

Not only are Smith and Purdom living their dream as interior designers—they also are living their dream by having close-knit families while successfully running their business. Smith and her husband, Jeff, have

three children; Amanda and her husband, Eric, have two daughters.

"We both have very strong, creative minds, so this gives us the opportunity to do that and still be true to the things that are a priority in our lives," says Smith. "It sounds crazy because you really can't have everything all at the same time, but it sure feels like we are really close at this point in time."

Before becoming business partners, Smith and Purdom became good friends while living in the same neighborhood in Manhattan. They now joke that their neighborhood is like *Pleasantville* because everybody knows everybody.

"We just really hit it off. We had a lot of similar things in common," says Purdom. "We would decorate each other's homes for Christmas."

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— Eryn Smith

Purdom goes on to explain her ruts of placing the same décor in the same place every year. "Eryn came over and decorated my house. It was amazing how it was the same stuff but just arranged differently, so the next week I went over to her house and decorated her home," she says.

Purdom, who has an art degree and was a former co-owner of The Palace in Aggieville, and Smith, who was a registered nurse but was doing interior design work as a hobby while staying home with her small children, seemed to jibe. Five years later the pair decided to collaborate their efforts by starting AsterHouse Design, which they named in honor of their Kansas roots.

"We love being from the Midwest and wanted something that boasted our love for Kansas, but we didn't want something expected," says Smith. "Aster is a main flower from Kansas, and the word astra is in the Kansas state motto."

TOP Eryn Smith, left, and Amanda Purdom are the creative forces behind AsterHouse Design.

BOTTOM One of their first projects was a home renovation in an old school house. The slate tile in the kitchen is actually an original chalkboard.

OPPOSITE The floors throughout are original and refinished, highlighting AsterHouse Design's ability to recreate.

OPPOSITE INSET The pair even worked around the original trophy case and water fountain.



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Smith and Purdom both agree they get their design inspiration and ideas from everywhere. Sometimes they will find ideas in little things such as a napkin in a party store and will translate that color scheme into an actual room.

"We love to travel for pleasure or as a family or for business," says Purdom. "We find ourselves in some really fantastic cities, where we take pictures and tuck those ideas away, or we'll find ideas in magazines and circle them and file those away as a resource, too."

The duo love how closely knit and tightly networked the community of Manhattan is and what great resources other businesses are to them. "I love the fact that if I need an opinion or I need to ask a question, I can send a text, shoot an email or make a phone call, and I have my answer or I know where to go," says Purdom. "I think that is another reason we are successful. We are a part of a community that is trying to make a difference."

AsterHouse Design wants their clients to be confident in pursuing the items they love, then surrounding themselves with those items. They often come up with design ideas for their clients by simply asking them what their favorite pieces are in their home.

"Don't let the magazine or whatever is currently on trend dictate how you decorate your house. We don't all have to have Pottery Barn houses," says Smith. "Find the things that you really love and surround yourself with them because it is going to reflect you and your family, and it is going to be what is the most comfortable for you."

Not only do the designers help homeowners with their residential challenges, they also specialize in commercial spaces. They are currently working on the redesign of the Varney's in Aggieville and a gift shop for Varney's in the new Hilton. They were responsible for the overall design of the new Varney's in the mall in Salina.

"They really listened to our needs and gave us good guidance to what we wanted," says Steve Levin, general manager of Varney's. "Everything they have done so far has been spectacular. They really have captured the essence of Varney's." *m*

TOP Beautiful cabinetry shines in the kitchen.

BOTTOM LEFT Natural light shines on a cool blend of colors and furniture.

BOTTOM RIGHT Smith and Purdom like to create rooms that are stylish and functional.

Splurge-worthy design

ONE A high-quality wool rug. This could easily become a family heirloom as well as the perfect way to ground a fabulous room.

TWO Lighting is critical to a space. Put in a window to add natural light or call an electrician to add some overhead lighting on a dimmer switch, and of course fixtures and lamps make a huge difference.

THREE High-grade fabric. Choose not only a beautiful piece but also quality fabric that is more durable.

FOUR One show-stopper piece per space. The whole room can look overdone if every surface is high-end. One dramatic or splurge-worthy piece per space makes for an interesting and budget-friendly inspiring room.

FIVE High-thread-count sheets. When one spends six to eight hours a day in bed, it makes sense to spend a little more on quality bedding, especially sheets.

Manhattan design gurus Eryn Smith and Amanda Purdom list a few of their favorite splurge-worthy items to turn a blah area into an extraordinary space.