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At Home With: Cynthia Masters

THE DESIGNER AND OWNER OF PANAGERIES SPECIALIZES IN CREATING UNIQUE-YET-TIMELESS LOOKS

LHQ: How did you come up with the name – the word – for your company, Panageries?

CM: Panageries is a word I created when I opened my firm in 1993, because it completely encompasses my design aesthetic. It combines “panache” and “menagerie.” Panache is style with sophistication, and menagerie is a collection of unusual animals. No matter the project or interior, I always marry design styles and time periods to create a cohesive collection. So it means a collection of styles and design elements done with flair and sophistication.

LHQ: What is your process for creating a design?

CM: I think it’s really important to respect the architecture and location of a project. So that’s where I always begin. Then I let the client’s personal preferences, their collections, lifestyle, heritage, etc. inform the design. I choose the balance of my selections based on what pulls the interior into a cohesive whole.

LHQ: What type of project do you find the most enjoyable to work on?

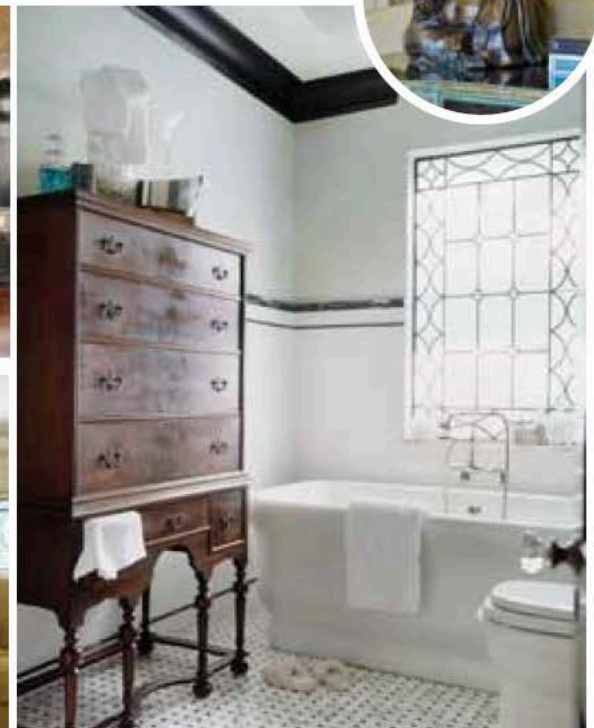
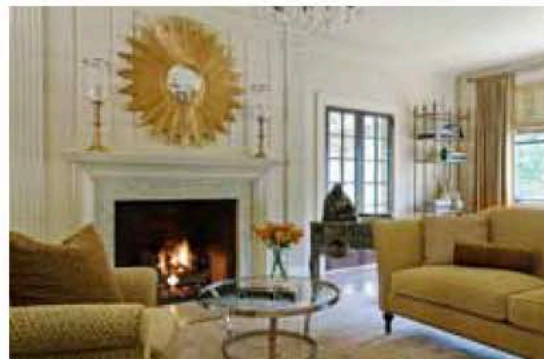
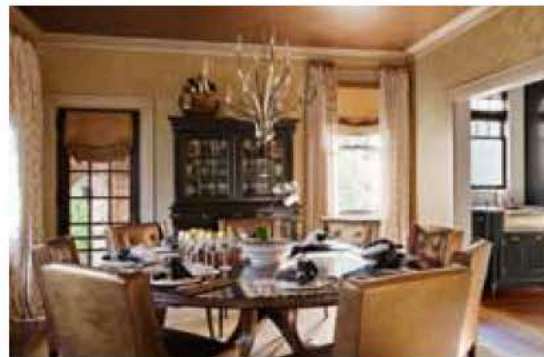
CM: The one where the client gets it. We’ve just begun a great new project for a sophisticated, well-traveled couple. The exterior architecture has a great European flavor, but the interior architecture is lackluster. They want a Parisian-salon look, so we’re completely reworking the interior appointments to achieve that. But, the husband travels to Africa often to hunt and wants to incorporate his “heads” into the design as well. So again, there’s that melding of styles.

LHQ: How do you express yourself through the design and decor of your home?

CM: My home is a 100-year-old brick tudor. I’ve stayed true to that style in the interior architectural elements like moldings and cabinetry. I’ve used 19th-century French and English antiques blended with new and mid-century pieces. Most of my artwork is contemporary, and there are a few Asian items as well. I love my bronze Buddha! The palette



view more of Cynthia's work at panageries.com



is a tonal mix of muddied colors, layered with loads of texture and reflective elements like metallics, glass and antique mirror. I want a look to last, and not walk into a room and know when it was created. By blending styles and time periods, I can create a look for my own home or a client’s home that is elegant, timeless and individual.

LHQ: What do you hope that your home ‘says’ about you?

CM: That I have an open mind. I have a globally inspired view of design. For me, inspiration can come from anything, whether it’s a Dogon door from Mali or an original Picasso.

LHQ: As a native of South Carolina, how has that shaped your style or how you interact with clients?

CM: My mother was very Southern and a stickler for proper etiquette and Southern hospitality. When I begin working with a new client, I often invite them over for coffee or cocktails and a tour of my home. I think it’s important to slow down and get to know a client on a personal level before I make a single selection. I spend a lot of time understanding them and listening to their requests. Ultimately, many of my clients end up becoming my friends. ■

INTERVIEW BY AMY HOWELL HIRT