

# Southern Accents

The magazine of fine Southern interiors and gardens

November-December 2002

CELEBRATING 25 YEARS  
*of Comfort  
& Joy*

*Festive Ideas  
for Holiday  
Decorating*

*Our Annual  
Design Contest Winners*

*What defines Southern Style*



# what is Southern Style?

We asked 25 Southern designers and architects to define what makes our region unique. Whether their answers amused, surprised, or inspired us, a common thread emerged: an appreciation for beauty, history, and romance.

## What do you think are the attributes that define Southern style?

Southern style tends to be fiercely personal.

Dan Carithers

Invitation defines Southern style. A porch or pergola covered in fragrant wisteria. The grace with which you are greeted by both your host and his or her environment.

Darryl Carter

A guest is greeted as a friend, a friend is greeted as family, and family is embraced.

Jackye Lanham

Gracious eccentricity.

Suzanne Rheinstein

Southern style is about gracious entertaining and understated beauty. True Southern style appreciates drama and grandeur without pretensions.

José Solís Betancourt

Our climate and our location, in the center of the Americas and in the center of the East and West Coasts, affords us many different influences. Our climate influences us to use a cool, tropical palette in paint colors and fabrics.

Gerrie Bremermann

Southern design is soft and comfortable—some elements dictated by climate may distinguish certain things as 'Southern.' But, by and large, Southern design is more the reflection of a relaxed way of life.

Jimmy Graham

## What piece of furniture or accessory should no Southern house be without?

A rocking chair? Fine linens? A sterling silver tea service? Perhaps. But as it happens, no Southern house should

be without a sleepy dog that has been in the family for years.

Betty Lou Phillips

An Aiken sofa on the porch, piled with pillows for reading the Sunday papers with iced coffee ... three generations of monogrammed linens ... old Sheffield silver with the copper bleeding through.

Suzanne Rheinstein

A book to read, a couch to faint on, a fancy tumbler to drink out of, and a solid silver spoon to feed oneself and those dear.

Patrick J. Dunne

A chaise longue.

Celerie Kemble

Vintage family silver. English 18th-century sideboards and a secretary.

Cindy Smith

Bourbon and a porch.

J.R. Miller

## What elements do all great Southern houses have in common?

Good design incorporates original moldings, hardware, chandeliers, and other details. The majority of homes in the South have integrated their gardens, terraces, and verandas into the main entertaining space. Given the temperate climate, these serve as additional and important design elements.

Ann Dupuy

Elements that Southern houses have in common are an 'openness' ... an embracing spirit that makes one feel comfortable ... a softness that welcomes and says 'come in and stay awhile!'

Charles Gandy

Great houses possess something far greater than mere material objects like porches, columns, or shutters. They



“Is a magnolia tree an accessory? It’s a must!” Ken Tate

all possess the underlying spirit and vision of their builders and the necessary knowledge and craft of hundreds of years of architecture. Ken Tate

Being Southern is about being connected with the land. José Solís Betancourt

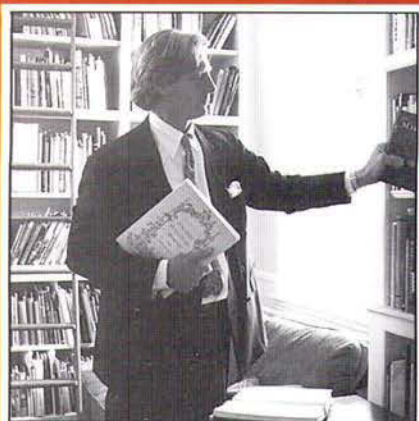
Great architectural detail. High ceilings for heat to rise. Symmetry. Large windows, typically raised, for breezes to flow. Front and rear porches. Wood screens for windows and wood screen doors. A center hall. Great attention to the main entry door. Fans. Jim Strickland

Southerners are sentimental, and the past is as alive to us as is today. It’s not about ghosts. It’s about the Southern bond and love of one’s family, even if it is only symbolized by a few remaining treasures or faded photos from our past. David Feld

*Are there elements in your own work that are uniquely Southern?*

Focusing on the entertaining aspect of homes—keeping it flexible for family or groups of friends. I encourage clients to use porcelains in the decoration of their homes





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## decorating

and to include these collections for use in their entertaining. **Cathy Kincaid**

A sense that nothing should be really taken too seriously in any room except bad manners or a bad drink. **Patrick J. Dunne**

I tend to use beautiful silk fabrics, along with cottons and linens. I still like a serene palette with a surprise here and there of vibrant color.

**Gerrie Bremermann**

Painting the porch ceilings sky blue. Using fine things in a relaxed way, say silver julep cups for water every night at supper. **Suzanne Rheinstein**

To marry the past with the future. Also, window coverings only when necessary. **John Chrestia**

Softening hard edges without diluting inherent strength—a 'steel magnolia' approach balancing pattern, form, color, medium, and texture. **Barry Dixon**

We published our first issue in 1977. How has **"Southern style"** changed in the past 25 years? How has it changed since *Gone With the Wind*?

People are editing more in the South. It had been the old 'more is more' for years, whereas now you see lovely rooms by a new breed of designers that still create the traditional spaces while being less fussy, less 'glop' everywhere, which were statutes for 'old elegance.'

**Joseph Paul Davis**

Now we have a unique appreciation for patina. Many years of lightly tarnished, but hospitable, style have given us the casual elegance that we enjoy today.

**José Solís Betancourt**

Curtains and furnishings have become sophisticated, elegant, and pared down, but if an emergency required ripping down the curtains ... we are still in good shape. ... A silk ball gown, an ethereal cotton batiste dress, or a tailored linen outfit could be whipped up!

**Amelia Handegan**

It reflects the changes that have occurred in the world, otherwise all the core elements have remained the same—honesty, hospitality, warmth.

**Charlotte Moss**

Southern Style never really changes—timeless, classic, always charming—so gracious and yet so comfortable.

**Josie McCarthy**

You don't have to do what grandmother did! There is no longer any precedent that one must carry forward.

**Dan Carithers**

Since [the mid-19th century] every aspect of our lives has changed. We have survived Victorian eclecticism, the Great Depression, Frank Lloyd Wright, two world wars, and Modernism, but classicism and big white columns are very much alive and well.

**Norman Askins ♦**

*For details, see Sourcebook, page 246.*

For more designers on Southern Style: [southernaccents.com](http://southernaccents.com)