



AMY LAU
AMY LAU DESIGN
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What influenced my professional style the most: Growing up in Arizona, I spent a lot of time in both Taos and Santa Fe, so I've developed a respect for the desert and, moreover, the beauty in minimalism. You can skim the surface and interpret a space based on what it lacks, or you can appreciate the honest subtleties that are imaginative and profound; this is what I try to implement in my designs. Georgia O'Keeffe and Paolo Soleri have been remarkable influences because I feel that they too have a sense of endless imagery.

When I need inspiration: I turn to nature. I'll take a deep breath, look up and around, and become enchanted with the endless possibilities that nature provides.

What motivates me: The beauty within everyday life and striving for good design motivate me—I find stunning color palettes by observing the subtle change from blue to green on a bird's wing, or the detailed pattern on a butterfly's wing. I love to scuba dive, so the unexpected color combinations in the schools of fish, coral reefs and sandy beach towns make my heart sing. There's nothing quite like taking disparate elements and mixing them in a particular way to create a space that gives someone joy.

My motto in life: If I can dream it, I can make it happen.

Favorite guilty pleasure: Tequila, dancing and historic documentaries.

My biggest role model: My grandmother has played a huge role in my creative outlook on life, bestowing upon me a keen eye for natural wonders. She taught me to open my eyes wider, to see what isn't there at first glance, and then to change the angle and focus in a different way.

What I always splurge on: Time with friends and family. This year I'm celebrating my birthday in Mérida, Mexico, and inviting friends and family on a trip of a lifetime. We're going to celebrate the Feast of the Virgin of Guadalupe, one of Mexico's most holy days of the year, and visit the ancient Mayan ruins of Uxmal, the stunning cenotes and Mérida's local artists and designers.

I collect: Many things, particularly furniture and art from artists and artisans whose work I revere. However, I think the most unusual items I collect are naughty tea towels from the 1940s and '50s. They're hand-embroidered with images of pin-up gals.

A career highlight to date: I've been so fortunate over the years—the culmination of bringing together a number of my passions in debuting The New Nouveau gallery space at New York's Salon Art + Design late last year was certainly an incredible moment. And being honored by *Architectural Digest* this year as a woman at the forefront of interior design was also particularly special.

Close friends describe me as: Having a zest for life, vibrant, fun-loving, a bit of a nerd about research, and smart.

What's next: I'm always striving to move in a different direction in tandem with my work in interior design. Soon I hope to utilize my love of color, shape and texture of natural crystals to create a small collection of very special decorative pieces.



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Currently on my radar: We're completing a fourteen-bedroom complex of integrated pavilions on an island in the British West Indies. It's totally an exciting project, but a logistical challenge BIG time.

Who has influenced my professional style the most: My paternal grandmother. The word "chic" was coined to describe her. She had the detailed eye of Diana Vreeland and was as elegant as the Standard Oil heiress Millicent Rogers. And when it came to interior design, she was always ahead of the curve, mixing real-time midcentury modern with eighteenth-century French and English pieces.

When I need inspiration: I take a walk in a high meadow and watch the clouds floating by.

What motivates me: A sense of self competition. I'm continually challenging myself to reach higher.

My motto in life: Keep a grasp on one's moral compass and never compromise.

Favorite guilty pleasure: Chocolate sorbet.

My biggest role model: My brother, Matt, is and will always be my role model.

What I always splurge on: Art. Always art. My last transgression was a Tim Walker photo.

Travel essential: Evian spray mist, as I fly at least four times a month. This helps my skin stay hydrated at 35,000 feet.

Close friends describe me as: Generous of spirit.

It may be heresy, but I think...bold color is overrated. It steals the show and doesn't let the design breathe.

I could talk for hours about: Art. It fuels my soul.

I collect: A better question is, What *don't* I collect? I'm a self-admitted obsessive hoarder of thousands of books, hundreds of works of art and dozens and dozens of chairs (yes, chairs). It's gotten to the point of absurdity, and I need to have a (rarefied) yard sale.

A career highlight to date: Having my Lee Jofa 'Tyler Crewel' selected to hang in the Obama family dining room.

What's next: I'm currently working on my second book, *Cohler on Art*, as a follow up to *Cohler on Design*. Look for it in late 2019.