

BEYOND STEPHENS



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design

Amy Lau '91, who studied fashion at Stephens for two years, fittingly founded her own design firm in 2001 with the motto: "Curate, Don't Decorate." As a design expert, she regularly takes her clients to a gallery or auction to advise them on purchases. She functions as a connoisseur who's known for using specially commissioned artisanal pieces, which become heirlooms for her clients.

"It's all about authenticity, that what you're purchasing or creating has intrinsic value," Lau says. "That you're not just going into a store and buying something but making it your own."

The in-demand interior designer for many high-profile, celebrity clients is regularly featured in *Elle Décor*, *House Beautiful* and *The New York Times*. Earlier this fall, she published her first book, "Expressive Modern: The Interiors of Amy Lau." Co-written by Linda O'Keeffe, director of design and architecture at *Metropolitan Home Magazine*, the book features 13 residential interiors from New York to Miami and also showcases Lau's commissions for the *Dexter* dining room of the *Metropolitan Home Showtime House*.

One of Lau's favorite chapters is "Muses and Mentors" in which she singles out

“My approach is to design interiors that have personality, that are head turners in the use of color and shape but always speak to the individual's lifestyle, tastes and personality.”



Amy Lau's book is now available in stores.

destiny

In-demand interior designer Amy Lau '91 is known for choosing heirloom pieces for clientele.

the people and places that have inspired her designs, including artist Marc Rothko and Oia, a village on the Greek island of Santorini; both served as influences on her line of tile for Kohler. The ancient art of tie-dye was featured in the patterns she designed to commemorate Maya Romanoff's 40th anniversary that were exhibited at Bergdorf Goodman.

"The book is really a window into my world," Lau says. "My approach is to design interiors that have personality, that are head turners in the use of color and shape but always speak to the individual's lifestyle, tastes and personality. If it's a picture frame or a chair, I try to look for something designed in the '40s or that has a sense of history."

Her own history began in Paradise Valley, Ariz., where as a nature lover she rode her horse in the hills and savored her desert surroundings and its red-clay mountains. She was captivated, too,

with its palette of "dusty olive, sienna and rusted browns." Eventually though, she came to the Midwest and Stephens College in the early '90s.

"I fell in love with Stephens and am still close friends with women I met there," Lau says. "I was there at the same time as **Mary Gelhhar '90**, who went on to write 'The Fashion Designer Survival Guide'."

Today, Lau's company is thriving in the Starrett-Lehigh building in the West Chelsea art district, which is also home to Martha Stewart and Hugo Boss. She has developed her own lines of furnishings, fabrics, rugs, tile and lighting under the Amy Lau Studio brand. She works as a Benjamin Moore design expert. She has designed a sectional sofa, chairs and other pieces for Roche-Bobois in Paris. And she serves as co-director of the design council for New York's Museum of Arts and Design, where she works with up-and-coming designers. To top the list off, she is the co-founder of

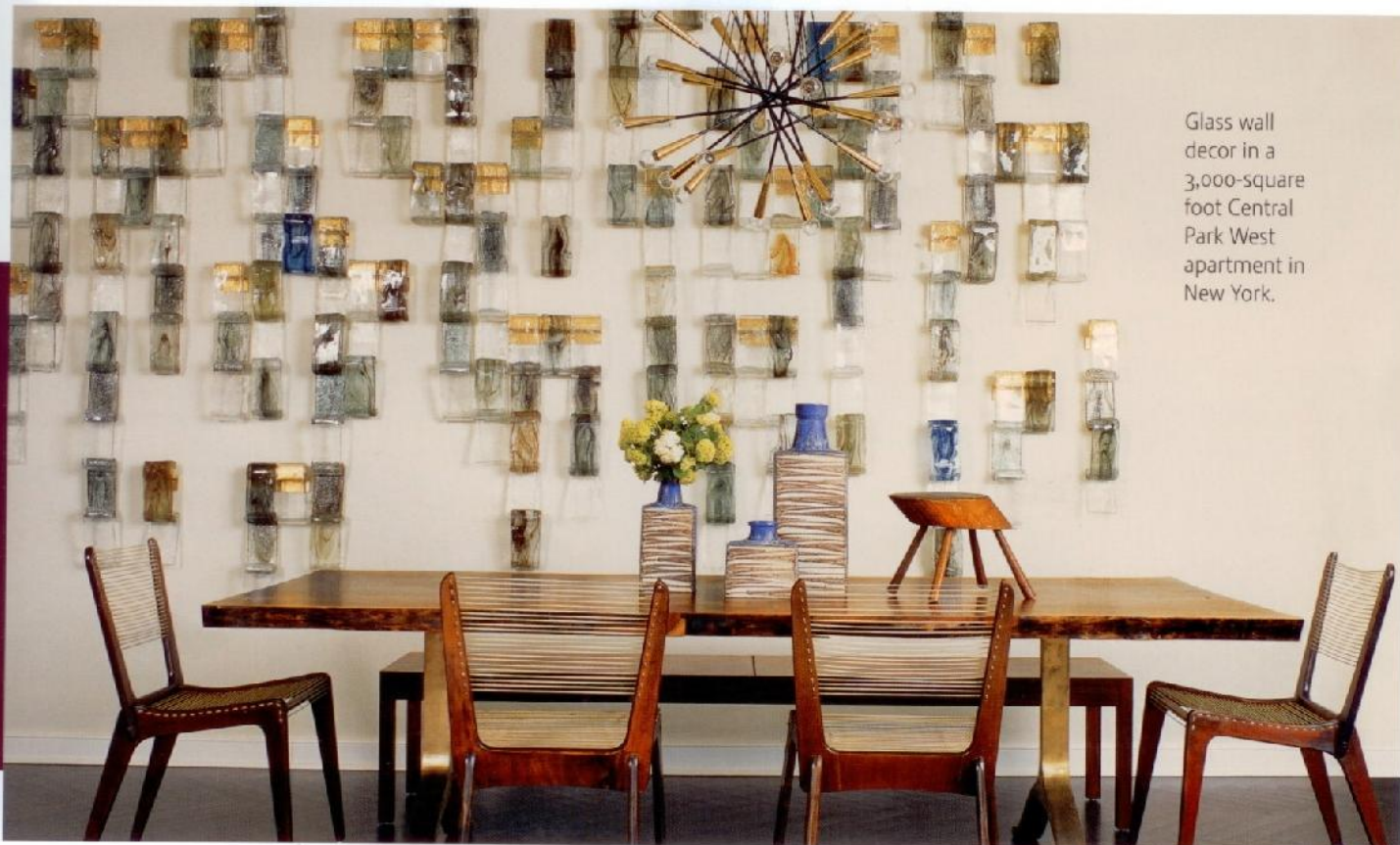
Design Exchange, a support organization for novice interior designers.

Yet no matter how vast her design empire, Lau continues to operate from the same philosophy and stays true to her roots.

"It's about looking at what you have and using it to make a statement that's also very much a part of you," she says. "If you're going to decorate your Christmas tree with ornaments, why not collect vintage mercury bulb ornaments, which often are the same price as buying them in Kmart or some other store.

"If you're on a budget, buy regular curtains and add some vintage fabric to the top or bottom or buy a vintage dress and have it made into pillows or use an old fur jacket to cover a pillow. All of these items can then be passed on to someone later on.

"I'm still passionate about design and happiest when I can be super creative and work with artists and artisans."



Glass wall decor in a 3,000-square foot Central Park West apartment in New York.