35 *Masters of* DESIGN

One thing that hasn't changed since this magazine's inception in 1983: the influence of designers with unparalleled perspectives. Here, we honor 35 whose mark is indelible

SUPERB STYLE! When we first published in 1983, a select few purveyors of taste and thoughtful design reigned supreme: **EDITH MANSFIELD HILLS**, at the height of her career, would soon be inducted into the *Interior Design* hall of fame. The grand dame's legacy can't be understated; she also influenced the career of protégé **CAROL KLOTZ** of Regalo Antiques, who, like fellow female pioneers **JANE MARSDEN** and **DOTTY TRAVIS**, were as renowned for their design prowess as for their style-setting showrooms filled with fine antiques, imported furniture and fabrics.

Also at the pinnacle of their career in the early '80s was decorator **T. GORDON LITTLE**, who was celebrated for his imaginative interiors. A gentleman of similar dynamism and respect was **DAVID BYERS**, a decorative arts lover who furnished many a house on West Paces Ferry, including the iconic Rhodes residence (Pink Palace), the Governor's Mansion and the Philip T. Shutze collection at the Atlanta History Center.

Client education has always been a focus for Billy Baldwin protégé **STAN TOPOL**, whose attention to perfect proportions, fine

(THIS PAGE) AMY MORRIS AND JACKYE LANHAM PHOTOS BY ERICA GEORGE DINES; BETH WEBB BY EMILY FOLLOWILL (OPPOSITE PAGE) SUZANNE KASLER, ROBERT BROWN AND ESSARY & MURPHY PHOTOS BY ERICA GEORGE DINES; DAN CARTHERS PHOTO BY PIETER ESTERSOHN

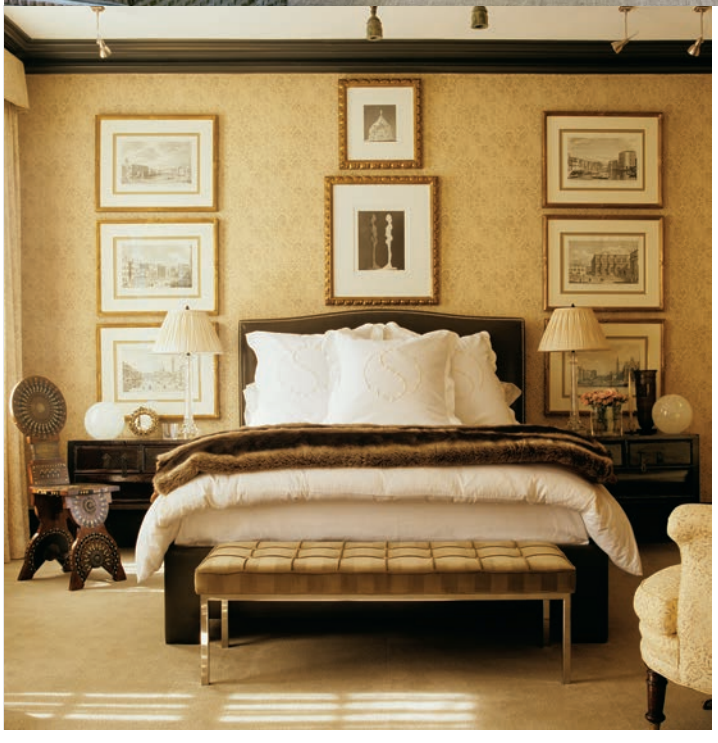
art and comfortable but exquisitely made furniture—are perhaps a lost art. Similarly, **JOHN CRAFT** is known for his unerring eye for elegance, while the late Jim Essary and Bill Cook of **ESSARY & MURPHY**, remain celebrated for their reverence for tradition.

Few decorators will ever achieve the level of admiration of **DAN CARITHERS**, and in the '90s (and beyond), his discriminating point of view set the scene for our city's toniest traditional residences. The designs of design duo **TOM HAYES** and **TOBY WEST** are similarly synonymous with gracious Southern hospitality, with a little swagger.

A master at achieving that inviting residential feel in commercial design (long before "resimercial" was a buzzword), **HUGH LATTA**'s insistence on infusing refined comfort into hospitality design is inspiring the next generation. Speaking of the next generation, in the '80s, **CHARLES GANDY** and **WILLIAM PEACE**, with their firm, Gandy/Peace, made waves in what was then a city defined by tradition by ushering in an era of cosmopolitan style for a rapidly changing Atlanta. Their edited, contemporary influence soon multiplied, inspiring then-budding designers such as **BARBARA WESTBROOK** and **AMY MORRIS** to carry their torch, each with their own tailored, streamlined, but always inviting, approach.

If taste is innate, then these women—who march to the beat of their own drummer—possess singular style: **NANCY BRAITHWAITE**, **JACKYE LANHAM**, **CAROLYN MALONE** and **RITA CARSON GUEST**. While Braithwaite's signature style is as minimalist as Lanham's is layered, their commonality lies in striking powerful notes through collected, thoughtful and stately selections. Malone's penchant for softness, and reverence for authentic materials, result in seriously serene spaces, while Guest's interiors possess a nearly scientific balance of form, function and unadulterated beauty.

Design brilliance, of course, reveals itself in many forms, and those who carry a unique purview might also be said to have the most fun. An artist himself, **JOHN OETGEN**'s interiors are showstopping with a dash of whimsy, but, it's his particular



clockwise from top left A snapshot into Suzanne Kasler's personal home reveals her penchant for soft, sophisticated interiors. A showstopping master bedroom by Robert Brown for a former Decorators' Showhouse is clean-lined and comfortable. A grand living room by Jim Essary and Bill Murphy of Essary & Murphy is just as timeless today. This lusciously layered bedroom was conceived by decorator Dan Carithers. *opposite* A contemporary but classically informed dining room by Amy Morris. A room with a view at a Buckhead high-rise by Beth Webb. Jackye Lanham's tailored style meets Norman Askins' architectural brilliance.

left Designer Carole Weaks breathes comfortable, layered and collected elegance into her client's homes. *right* An artist in his own right, designer John Oetgen's interiors are colorful, whimsical and downright fun. *below, left to right* For a Residence the St. Regis Atlanta, the impeccable eye of Stan Topol for perfecting proportion and introducing fine art is on full display. Carolyn Malone's fresh take on this dining room in Cashiers, North Carolina, puts a unique spin on mountain style.

(THIS PAGE) CAROLE WEAKS PHOTO BY EMILY FOLLOWILL; JOHN OETGEN PHOTO BY MALI AZIMA; STAN TOPOL PHOTO BY ERICA GEORGE DINES; CAROLYN MALONE PHOTO BY GIL STOSE (OPPOSITE PAGE) MIMI WILLIAMS PHOTO BY ERICA GEORGE DINES; KAY DOUGLASS PHOTO BY MALI AZIMA

above The pièce de résistance in Mimi Williams' former townhouse is a 1960s desk made for none other than F. W. Woolworth. Made of Fiddleback Pacific Maple, its shiny French-lacquered surface is set on a Lucite base that creates a floating effect. *below* An evocative, contemporary interior by Kay Douglass.

sleight of hand that creates exceptional style for his clients. The equally expressive **MIMI WILLIAMS** composes visual drama in her projects; daring, clever and confident, her interiors skew sculptural and chic.

Speaking of sculptural, **SUSAN FERRIER** and **MARK WILLIAMS**, who both cut their teeth at Brooks-Burr, learned a thing or two about the relationship between architectural design and interiors. Ferrier, who recently opened an eponymous practice, is celebrated for establishing an atmosphere that borders on visual alchemy. Williams' marriage of the two disciplines has earned his firm a seat at Atlanta's high-end multi-family residential table, with Mark Williams Design Associates putting its mark on high-profile projects including One Museum Place and the now-shelved Emerson.

Three wonder women who consistently keep the Southeast on the national design stage: **SUZANNE KASLER**, **BETH WEBB**, and **MELANIE TURNER**. From coffee-table tomes and product development to participation in high-profile showhouses, Kasler's casual elegance resonates with clients (and consumers) from coast to coast. It's Turner's penchant for creating understated yet glamorous interiors that strikes a chord with discerning clients (from the young to young at heart), but it's her remarkable design savvy that's resulted in turn-key commissions in tony developments along the Florida panhandle. Fresh from her debut coffee-table book, and a shelter-magazine darling, Webb's tailored, curatorial approach to decorating has resulted in dream commissions in the Southeast and well beyond.

The first female designer to earn ADAC's Southeastern Designer of the Year award in 2002, **CAROLE WEAKS**' classic style is a perennial favorite of traditionally minded clients (and in Highlands, North Carolina, and beyond) seeking her distinguishing effortless elegance, flair for fine fabrics and cool but confident eye.

The 2018 winner of ADAC's Southeastern Designer of the Year award **ROBERT BROWN** combines clean lines with fashion-forward art and accessories for a look that's as cosmopolitan as it is comfortable. That the local interior design trade looks to his atelier, Townhouse by Robert Brown, to shop for one-of-a-kind accessories for their clients speaks volumes to the dapper designer's discerning eye (and affability).

We never tire of minimalist and master colorist **KAY DOUGLASS**' clean-lined, but comfortable interiors. After recently downsizing her South of Market showroom, we're eagerly anticipating her heightened focus on residential design.

WILL HUFF and **HEATHER DEWBERRY**, business partners and former disciples of Dan Carithers, breathe an unmistakable freshness into traditional style through their firm, Huff Dewberry. The dynamic duo's desire for infusing gentility into every corner of the home has more recently resulted in the creation of their own comfortable-chic outdoor upholstery line.

Peaceful and purposeful design has earned designer **TISH MILLS** accolades from both the American Society of Interior Design (ASID) Georgia chapter, as well as attention from national design publications, but for the amiable Mills, ultimately, it's the client who wins.

Through a stable of talented associates, recently retired Pineapple House founder **STEPHEN PARARO** for 35 years provided full-service interior design services to the metro Atlanta market, with many accolades.

35!

From wallpaper borders to quartz countertops, *Atlanta Homes & Lifestyles* has showcased the best in design since 1983

WRITTEN BY ***Suzanna Hamilton***

ELEGANCE, WHETHER FORMAL OR CASUAL, is the design epitome to which we all aspire. When this magazine was founded in 1983, elegant Southern homes were defined by our tolerance for maple cabinetry, wallpaper borders, and practical upholstery fabrics—preferably on something that reclined or swiveled.

At that time, "winter elegance" included a brick wood-burning fireplace topped by a pine mantel while plaid throws dotted upholstery covered in various shades of brown. The red dining room was essential because it worked superbly with the ubiquitous reproduction Tabriz rugs that lined Atlanta's floors. Suites of furniture were purchased as readily as men purchased the implied swagger that came with shoulder pads in suits like those worn by Richard Gere and Don Johnson. Big waves, mullets, mohawks and scrunchies were our hair statements. It was a visually scary time.

But that changed for Atlanta in 1983 when this publication launched. Suddenly we saw images of beautiful homes that made those wallpaper borders and velour-covered swivel chairs look dreary and drab. Decorators went to school to become interior designers. Words such as "flow," "space planning" and "proportion" invaded our lexicon. With the invention of the extractor hood, kitchens were opened to breakfast rooms and the requisite kitchen island was born.

Today, "winter elegance" is defined by a lightness that points to preferences towards simplicity with substance—even as we clutter those spaces with holiday decorations. Our fireplaces may be sleek and see-through, but our upholstery is plush. Alexa manages our music, television and shopping preferences. Our favorite places for red are our wine glasses, lips, socks and shoes, but rarely our rugs. Our interiors are as polished as our blowouts at Drybar.

Thank you *Atlanta Homes & Lifestyles*—we've come so far! You've been a connoisseur of good taste while inspiring us with images of stunning rooms and gorgeous gardens created by Atlanta's roster of talented design professionals. From formal to casual, urban to coastal, this magazine has defined elegance for 35 fabulous years.

PHOTOGRAPH BY ERICA GEORGE DINES; INTERIOR BY PEACE DESIGN