

Keeping It Simple with Interior Designer Nancy Braithwaite

WORDS KIMBERLY ALLEN

MANY OF US UNCONSCIOUSLY TEND TO COMPLICATE THINGS IN life, and find the concept of “keeping it simple” daunting. But once we let go and give in to the notion, whatever we are trying to accomplish quickly becomes more manageable. Working with renowned Interior Designer Nancy Braithwaite taught me that this theory applies to design and fashion as well, while giving renewed meaning to the expression “less is more.”

Aptly titled *Simplicity*, Nancy uses the pages of her first book to showcase the design elements she deems essential to create unique country, classic, and contemporary room settings. As a result, the reader is treated to full-color photographs featuring homes she has designed from around the country, including her family’s country house in Atlanta and a stunning contemporary seaside retreat on Kiawah Island, South Carolina; as well as classic residential spaces in New York City, Chicago, and Atlanta, among others.

“I never was a great student because I was more interested in the hands-on design and creation of things. So at the age of seven I started making homemade nail head dolls, which consisted of nails for the bodies, buttons for the heads, pipe cleaners for arms and legs, and faces painted on with my mom’s bright red nail polish,” she recalls. “When I was growing up the emphasis was always put on learning your ABCs and not creativity. These days emphasis is put on both, but back then no one pushed my creative buttons or even acknowledged that I had one.” Determined to continue nurturing that creative side, Nancy also began making her own clothes and sewing; a trend that has continued into the present with Baby Braithwaite, a fashion-forward baby boutique



she owns and operates with her daughter.

Years later when Nancy started primarily designing rooms, her talent led *Town & Country* magazine to deem her as the “newcomer to watch.” She then moved on to designing homes, executive offices, and interior offices, as well as being featured at many famous antique shows, such as the Winter Antique Show in New York and the Philadelphia Antique Show.

Throughout her thirty-year career, Nancy has earned nothing but accolades for her design style. Atlanta magazine credits her as being “essential to putting Atlanta on the interior design map,” she is a regular on House Beautiful’s list of America’s Top Interior Designers, and her work has also been featured in several publications such as *Venanda*, *Elle Décor*, and *The New York Times* just to name a few.

The elements of design that Nancy lives by are: architecture, scale, color, texture, pattern, and composition. But one of the most important features is her ability to eliminate excess, which contributes to the powerful yet comfortable spaces she creates. “Things cost money, and a lot of things cost more

money than a few things do. I prefer spaces that are spare, yet luxurious and unique with forceful identifies. I believe that my role as an interior designer is to command and fulfill the eye. Not provide it with endless distractions,” she attests.

And when asked what advice she would give to someone looking to design their own space, Nancy shares that one should, “Do your research and buy the best that you can possibly afford, but most importantly, just keep it simple. For me, simplicity rules the world.”



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