

Stylemaker Spotlight

Warren Sheets' design is rooted in the classics

Anh-Minh Le
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Stylemaker Spotlight: Warren Sheets
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Founded in Los Angeles about three decades ago and based in San Francisco since 1995, Warren Sheets Design Inc. (www.warrensheetsdesign.com) has designed residential and hospitality projects throughout the country, as well as in Europe and Asia. "I believe that any design aesthetic - whether traditional, contemporary or transitional - should have classically inspired roots," says Sheets. "While I am an interior designer, I also consider myself to be an interior design historian."

Sheets spent his early career in theatrical scenic design, which he studied at UCLA. He started a community theater group, which offered him the opportunity to produce and direct musicals, as well as create scenery. "The process of mounting a musical theater production, one after another, really helped how I approach my design business," he says. "Still today, we approach each project with a beginning, middle and end - with a final unveiling to the client, similar to an opening night."

Before starting his own firm, Sheets worked in display and styling at a high-end showroom and design studio. A store client asked for his help in designing her water-view home; that one client led to many more. Today, Sheets continues to create exquisite interiors with a keen attention to the details, and he also specializes in historic renovations. "Designing interiors is experiential for both me and my clients," he says. "We work hard at making things simple and enjoyable. Ultimately, the design process should be an enriching experience that evolves into a beautiful and comfortable space."

A few favorites

Artist etceteras: "Items that have not been mass-produced and are one of a kind have always been a favorite. For example, this corner table I designed when redoing the Eldorado Country Club in Indian Wells. To reflect the simple, international style of the interiors, I created a distinctive labyrinth design on the face of a corner table and topped it with fossil stone imported from Greece."

Little luxuries: "Fine linens, bedding and tableware are what I live for, and I especially adore the luxury boutique that Sue Fisher King has maintained for more than a quarter of a century. She has a wonderful line of high-end items for the home, which are showcased in this bedroom we designed. I believe in buying quality over quantity - even just a few items from Sue's collection will add sophisticated charm to any space." (www.suefisherking.com)

Architectural jewelry: "Often referred to as 'accessories and architectural detailing,' these add color, depth and interest to any room and can range from a special table clock to a hand-blown vase. In the recently completed lobby that we designed for the Grande Colonial Hotel, we added a mix of colorful moldings with modern and contemporary accessories."

The Sheets cheat sheet

Bargain buy: "While I believe in purchasing the finest products, I do make concessions. For example, when replacing or purchasing new inserts for down pillows - either sleeping or decorative - look to Ikea for the most variety and best cost. This is one item where you don't need to overspend. However, never cut costs on fabric for decorative pillows." (www.ikea.com)

Looking up: "I believe ceiling details add depth and drama to any room, and a decorative border at the ceiling can completely alter the look of a space - in particular when a whimsical and creative color palette is incorporated. You don't have to be a fine artist to create one. Try using predefined stencil patterns from Modello Designs for a custom, hand-painted effect." (www.modellodeesigns.com)

Bright idea: "Locate an art object that you really cherish - such as a large seashell, vase, sculpture or decorative box - and have it made into a table lamp. For example, we fashioned a red leather boot into a table lamp for a rustic log home. The key is to use something that has real personal meaning, strikes interest and complements the room's overall decor."

Petal pusher: "When buying floral arrangements for special occasions, try Urban Flowers on 18th Street, just south of Castro. Their flowers are fresh, their prices are excellent (sometimes better than the Flower Mart), and the variety is simply amazing. And they will arrange at no charge!" (www.urbanflowerssanfrancisco.com)

Naming names: "When entertaining, I like to use place-setting name tags. Old-fashioned white or calligraphy place cards can seem pretentious. So for more casual events, I use black or dark-green poster board, cut out the name cards and write guests' names using white or colored chalk for a fun, chalkboard effect."