



Designer Destiny

*A longtime design enthusiast
builds a decorating business from
a childhood dream.*

BY K. Faith Morgan



SUNNY SANCTUARY

Abundant windows give this space a light and airy feel, while curtains hung well above the window frame add to the lofty look of the room. A furniture arrangement, grounded by neutral upholstered chairs and a rug, gets a touch of texture from woven end tables.



For decorator Sandra Eriksen, the road to interior design was a circuitous one. Previous careers included stints in advertising, insurance, and banking. “I learned from them all, but I loved none,” she says.

Sandra first remembers expressing an interest in home décor as a child living in government-provided housing on military bases around the country. “If you lived in base

housing, you could not paint the walls of the homes,” she says. But she adds, “Like most little girls, I envisioned lots of color in my personal space.” Out of her frustration, Sandra discovered a passion. “I would voice my desire to be a decorator, but it was not encouraged,” she says. “It wasn’t a ‘real job.’”

Not long after their son was born, Sandra and her husband moved to Massachusetts.



“I was in a strange place with a young baby where the winter’s darkness crept in around 4 o’clock each day,” she says. In an effort to keep her spirits up, she started looking for ways to occupy her time. “When I realized that we were only 45 minutes from the Rhode Island School of Design, I took the opportunity to enroll in its evening interior design certification program.” Though she wasn’t able to finish the program because of another family move, Sandra did learn what she needed to do to get started. “I had enough exposure to know what I wanted to do when I grew up,” she explains.

In 2002, Sandra finally realized her dream of working in the design industry. “I was 40 years old when I came back to Charleston and hung out my shingle as sole proprietor of Sandra Ericksen Design, and I have never second-guessed that life decision,” she says. Over those years, ever-resourceful Sandra found ways to stay relevant in a changing market. “I have weathered the recession, and my business has transitioned from a focus on new residential construction to remodeling and furnishing updates.” Sandra always endeavors to keep her projects fresh, too. “I make every effort not to be repetitive,” she says. “No two projects are alike, and I love that.”

After 11 years in the business, the thing that

constantly energizes Sandra is the opportunity to collaborate with clients to turn their design vision into a reality. “The ultimate enjoyment is still helping people who appreciate a well-appointed home realize their vision.” ❖

For information, contact Sandra Ericksen at 843-324-5914, or visit sandraericksen.com.

FROM HER HOME TO YOURS

- “Personally, I lean toward a more traditional style and love the Regency period. However, I believe most projects benefit from a blending of old and new ideas. That way the rooms are more visually interesting and look collected versus decorated,” says Sandra.
- Sandra often incorporates a laid-back coastal style that is indicative of Charleston’s surroundings. Calm neutrals punctuated by hues of blue and green and touches of shine and sparkle mimic the colors and the radiance of the ocean. Other hints of the coastal setting may come into play with shell-encrusted accessories or a nautical pattern.

