



schuyler samperton

This Los Angeles designer is passionate about creating exuberant, textile-filled interiors and collaborating on the loose, uncontrived flower arrangements that enhance them

By COURTNEY BARNES

flower: Schuyler, your dad, Jack Samperton, was a respected architect, but photos that you've shared on Instagram [[@schuylersamperton](#)] suggest that your glamorous mother, Novella—a Halston devotee named alongside Deeda Blair and Evangeline Bruce as one of Washington, D.C.'s best dressed in the '70s—was seriously design savvy, too. How did she influence the work you do today?

SCHUYLER SAMPERTON: She never did what everyone else was doing, and she instilled that importance of originality in me as well. When I was growing up, all of my friends thought

Flowers—both the fresh variety and artistic interpretations—abound in designer Schuyler Samperton's living room. The floral painting on wood was inherited from her parents; botanical motifs dominate her global assortment of vintage pillows; and floral designer Louesa Roebuck's wild gathering of ruffly blooms fills a ceramic pitcher.





she was a movie star because she would pick me up at school in her Mercedes convertible wearing giant sunglasses, Indian-print headscarves, and a fur coat. Dad designed our house, but it was Mom who decorated it with gray flannel-covered sofas, fur rugs, and a not-entirely-practical-but-nonetheless-great-looking Don Drumm coffee table. The aesthetic was amazing and didn't look like anyone else's house—that's for sure. Today, I personally gravitate to antiques, color, and pattern, but what Mom gave me was a willingness to take chances with how I mix and layer more traditional things. And we always had flowers in the house—she spent a lot of time on that detail.

Could you tell us how you got into the decorating business? Before I opened my own firm in 2003, I worked for designer Michael S. Smith (who has since gone on to decorate the White House), managing projects and styling his clients' rooms with fresh flowers for photo shoots. I loved accessorizing and working with floral designers to figure out how to make a room look its most beautiful. Michael had very specific

ideas in terms of the varieties of flowers he wanted, the color, height, and what sort of container should be used.

But now on your own it seems you get to indulge your wilder impulses, and often collaborate with floral designer Louesa Roebuck to augment the relaxed, vintage textile-filled houses you design. How did that come about? I met Louesa several

years ago and knew right away that we would be a good fit. She does what she calls wild harvesting, where she goes to fields and abandoned lots to gather branches, wildflowers, garden roses, and such. Not only does she collect from wild places, but her arrangements also reflect that natural feel with, for example, magnolia branches that retain the curve they had on the tree. She doesn't force shapes. We first collaborated when I was photographing the work I did on Carolyn Murphy's Brentwood house.

Model Carolyn Murphy's airy bathroom opens to a vined terrace, and an arrangement of untamed pink and cream roses above the sink complements the room's reclaimed fixtures and antique botanical prints.

For actor Yeardley Smith's dining room, Samperton chose a de Gournay chinoiserie wallpaper to reflect the homeowner's love of nature. Pink suzani pillows and a linen fabric by Carleton V enliven the breakfast room with the soft colors Smith also favors.



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Unconstrained arrangements also seem to echo the overall design impression we get from looking at your rooms. Exactly. How I treat flowers is related completely to the work that I do. I never want anything I decorate to feel unapproachable or precious. Carolyn, for instance, happens to have an inherent bohemian streak, so for her we sourced vintage floral fabrics to lend a cozy, sort of country feel that complements her antiques and all of the reclaimed materials in the house.

What do you consider to be common threads found throughout your work, no matter whether the client has a bohemian, traditional, or modern sensibility? There's something really romantic about finding a great antique

textile that you know no one else can have. I love the idea that these fragments had a different life at one time. Beyond that, it's important to me that every room I decorate enhances the owner's experience, and creates a comfortable environment that feels like home. That may happen by using color and pattern to inspire, invigorate, or soothe, or perhaps by creating a different furniture arrangement that helps the owner use the room in a new and more useful way.

Speaking of cozy environments, we understand you're a big fan of the Bloomsbury Group and the look of their historic English country hangout, Charleston house. My brother, a photographer, sparked my interest while I was studying art history in college. Then, two years ago, I had



L.A. artist Katie Golden paint my own dining room walls, as well as some flower boxes, with Bloomsbury motifs. Those boxes make me happy every single day.

And in your West Hollywood living room we spy hand-stitched pillows and decoupaged lamps—those are crafty Bloomsbury-esque touches, no? I made the lamps myself, so yes, they are very crafty! When my apartment was photographed for *Novel Interiors* [Potter Style, 2014], Louesa brought in sweeping branches and flowers to play up the Bloomsbury-influenced, devil-may-care, let's-throw-caution-to-the-wind feeling. Apart from loose, dripping branches I tend to select natural, slouchy peonies, lilacs, and big roses. But whether it's a chinoiserie wallpaper, vintage textile, or fresh arrangement, I will always love designing with flowers. 🌸

Samperton's passion for flowers comes through in photos tacked scrapbook style to her bathroom wall and is further evidenced by a pair of embroidered hand towels.



Flowers on my bedside table . . . A floating gardenia, garden roses, sweet peas—anything that has a lovely scent.

Film set I wish I'd designed . . . *Women in Love*, and *McCabe & Mrs. Miller*—Leonard Cohen did the soundtrack!

Favorite floral-related art . . . Oberto Gili's huge bloom photos, and Alma-Tadema's paintings of glorious swags, potted oleander, and orchids.

L.A. Confidential

Things I've checked off my bucket list . . . I've danced with Mick Jagger at a friend's house party, ridden an elephant, DJ'd on my favorite radio station, spent the night at Cecil Beaton's house, Ashcombe, and visited the Parthenon and the Forum in Rome.

What's still left on my bucket list . . . The Grand Canyon, Charleston, Marrakesh, Jaipur, and Villa Nellcôte on the Côte d'Azur.

Signature fashion moves I've embraced from my mom . . . The way she combined things—leather, suede, feathers, fur, velvet, tall boots, huge wide-brimmed hats, scarves, and jeweled belts. More has always been more for us.

