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CHASING THE SUN



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MOTHER-DAUGHTER INTERIOR STUDIO SHAND DESIGN
INVIGORATES SPACES WITH SOUL

BY *Nicole Johnson*
PHOTOGRAPHY *Jackie Beran*

Susan Shand and her daughter Ryan are cut from the same creative cloth—and we all want a piece. The mother-daughter duo call upon a lineage of artistry and industry leadership in helming Shand Design, their full-service interior design firm radiating sophisticated, lived-in luxury.

The sun-soaked atelier in Susan's home displays their design objective in plain sight: cultivating coziness that's well-traveled, and wholeheartedly classic. A soulful warmth coats the space in a honey-tinted glaze, courtesy of worn woods, washed linens, and neutrals that couldn't be further from monotonous. Plush, nuanced textures meet clean lines on sumptuous couches, while flat-brim rancher hats and acoustic guitars adorn the walls with a Spanish-style dimension. A feeling of eternal summer sways somewhere between sunflowers, Moroccan rugs, and recessed alcoves glowing with candlelight.

For a home rich with fur accents, the Shand residence doesn't take things too seriously—with the exception of R & R. As we spill through French doors to the resort-like pool terrace, an audible (and mildly embarrassing) exhale escapes my lips. It's an appropriate reaction to the view: a lush lawn, lounging spread, and bocce court skirting the yard's pristine panorama of the Pacific. The Shands got granular while furnishing this elevated enclave. It took,

Ryan admits, six months of scouting just to select the pool's tile tint (a glistening turquoise emulating Amalfi Coast grottos, by the way). Easygoing exuberance entails hard work—but with Shand Design, you could never tell.

The family's bungalow plays a stunning game of balance, where contemporary and classic commingle—really, where they play, sprawl out, and snuggle up together. Sinking into a couch back inside, I watch as Susan and Ryan do just that. I ask them what they think makes their studio stand out, though the answer, to me, is all in the details.

“Shand Design is timeless, in a way where we're really good at finding unique pieces that last forever, versus all the cookie cutter that's out there right now,” Ryan shares. “Stemming from the bond of our family, we take legacy and history and storytelling very seriously at the root of what we do.”

The story of the design duo, as it happens, is incredibly interesting in itself. Though just a year ago Ryan joined what had been Susan's solo studio since 1991, their equally illustrious careers clearly prepared them for this. Both boss women with entrepreneurial roots, Susan and Ryan are true twin flames in their forceful leadership of their past fields—neither of which involved design school.



For starters, Susan is the former Marketing Editor of the iconic *Teen* magazine, the vibrant periodical that delivered the latest in beauty, fashion, and lifestyle—with a side of gossipy advice—to adolescents until 2009. Continuing to mold the media vanguard, Susan later joined forces with her husband Bobby as co-founder and creative director of The Shand Group: a marketing and advertising agency strategizing publicity for international powerhouses like Adidas, Absolut Vodka, and Evian.

While shooting an product spread to be featured in *Architectural Digest*, her artistic pulse found a new pathway in interiors—providing just the permanence she craved. “Fashion felt so fleeting to me: it was changing constantly. A home is your roots: anybody who is fortunate enough to have one knows it’s where you rest your weary head at the end of a hard day of work, so I felt passionate about the fact that it had more meaning,” Susan smiles. “The other day, someone told me that the job we do—which made me feel so much better—is honorable because we’re making people happy in the most important place in their lives.”

Ryan inherited her mother’s luminary spirit, instead shooting to the upper echelons of the music and tech domain. Yet while spending her early twenties as an executive managing a team of 40 at web platform Honey, the high-strung digital realm took its toll. “Part of the reason I hit burnout was because I always invested in the [artist] in me, but on the side: I never sacrificed it,” Ryan reflects. “But it was on top of being a [new] mother, on top of working a full time job in a startup, on top of answering to investors and going through acquisitions.”

Susan’s path to design was, in part, an incidental stumble into a space where she felt most at home. Ryan’s shift, alternatively, was a necessary investment in her creative intuition, prompted by the arrival of a new family member—her daughter, Roen.

“It’s a bit deeper than just design: there’s a legacy element [to Shand]. It’s showing women, and my daughter, that it’s not only okay to follow your heart and to trust that you know what’s best for your life, but it’s actually fundamental for your health and vitality and well-being,” Ryan says. “If I didn’t have Roen, I don’t know that I would have left to come work here...I realized she’s here to teach me a lesson: that I need to start leaning back into myself, getting to know and trust myself.”

The evolution of Shand Design is ever-dynamic, and Ryan and Susan’s diverse project range has much to show for it. You may be familiar with the rustic smokehouse interiors of Barbareño, downtown’s Michelin-guide restaurant and the duo’s first major commercial project.

The Shands’ portfolio of contemporary residential projects—complete with breathtaking ground-up builds in Montecito and heavenly renovations of Ojai haciendas—confirm the duo’s command at the cutting edge of design. To state the obvious: Shand Design is neither formulaic nor fairly categorized. Like Susan and Ryan’s impressive resumes, it’s many good things, put together.

I’m resisting the urge to blurt out, “How are you so good at everything you do?” Yet flattery may not fulfill the Shands as much as the enduring, family-like relationships they cultivate among clients (myself included). Exhibit A: the honey-infused cappuccino in my right hand, which Susan brewed (and topped with superb foam, might I add) right as I greeted the foyer. Exhibit B: the light piano floating in the background, tickling our conversation with the nostalgic class redolent of the holiday season. The home resembles a loving embrace, and whether you enter a stranger or a Shand, you’ll (reluctantly) depart as a dear friend.

Some spaces are solely built on the inexplicable feelings evoked by found items, and the Shands curate exactly these kinds of sentimental collectives. Just within one recessed shelf is a selection of trinkets from Susan’s once-in-a-lifetime artist’s escape to Cuba, blended seamlessly with sculptures from European and African tours. Equally inimitable are their pieces sourced from well-kept secrets of Santa Barbara, speaking to Susan’s long-standing loyalties across town.

As Ryan graciously guides me out through the foyer, I compliment her sharp ensemble, perfected with a killer fringe-lined jacket and pointed heels. Both belong to Susan, who buys many of her shoes a half size bigger expressly so her daughter can wear them.

This thoughtful foresight bleeds from the Shands’ mother-daughter bond into their business. It’s an intentionality central to their careful curations: as Susan aptly summarizes, “Life is in the details.” Be it familial instinct or an evidently shared thoughtfulness, the Shands are meticulous about leading with love, forging a legacy between their innate artistry and the stories of their clients.*

