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photo courtesy of Christopher Stark

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Melinda Mandell Interior Design,
photo courtesy of Christopher Stark

Melinda Mandell

Modern Traditionalist



Melinda Mandell Interior Design,
photos courtesy of Michelle Drewes

Melinda Mandell

by Trevor Gray



Melinda Mandell is a modern interior designer whose influential sensibilities are firmly rooted in historic and traditional stripes that give her a broad range of tonal discernment when she is working on a project. Inspired towards design when she was a student in high school, Mandell was soon taken under the wing of her teacher as she quickly displayed her natural talents. It was by assigning Mandell small design projects that the teacher nurtured what was to become a complete interior design professional.

**Melinda Mandell Interior Design,
photo courtesy of Michelle Drewes**

Melinda Mandell

Individual ingredients pertaining to art selections for a project are clearly important to any designer, but Mandell is deeply mindful that the superficial ones cannot exist alone, telling us, “When selecting artwork, the essential ingredients are scale, movement, and color, but the most important ingredient is emotional connection. This component can come through my client’s response when viewing a piece, or through the story behind a piece. Either way, personal connection is crucial. My favorite pieces of art are ones that have been passed down through my family, painted by my great-grandmothers, as well as large-scale pieces by living artists that evoke a visceral reaction.”

Mandell is also considerate of locational and cultural infusion into her designs; however, the paramount consideration is that the client is completely satisfied. “The most important thing in my work is that we accomplish my clients’ goals, whether that’s more time with family, the ability for multiple cooks to work simultaneously in the kitchen, or beautiful bathrooms to make numerous out of town guests comfortable. Here in Silicon Valley, many people are early adopters for things that might take longer to catch on in other parts of the US (for example, the Nest thermostat). My clients come from many different cultures and backgrounds, all of which influence our design choices: patterns, colors, art, objects, and how their homes should function,” Mandell said.

Being a successful designer can often times present great challenges, both in project design as well as the imponderables that appear in the implementation of a project. Mandell is constantly grateful to the many specialists that help her on each job. As she told us, “Thank goodness for skilled craftsman that are able to make custom pieces because sometimes what we need just doesn’t exist! Honestly, the biggest challenge as an interior designer is the business side. I was trained in the artistic, and technical essentials for design; two disciplines for which I have a great deal of affection. Paperwork isn’t as fun as being creative and solving problems for my clients. However, I take pride in running my business honestly, openly, and with integrity.”

Melinda Mandell Interior Design, photo courtesy of Michelle Drewes



Melinda Mandell



“Influenced by Ashley Hicks, Florence Broadhurst, Vera Neumann, Grant K. Gibson, Steven Gambrel, and my Scandinavian heritage.”

Melinda Mandell Interior Design, photos courtesy of Michelle Drewes

Melinda Mandell

Mandell also has a second passion, “A Family for Every Orphan.” She is the co-founder of a charitable organization that is dedicated to support and enrichment in the lives of orphans and the families that adopt them. “A Family for Every Orphan” is very unique. As she mentioned, “We work to enable and support local family-based orphan care in developing communities. We first started working in Russia and Ukraine, but now have expanded to include Nepal, Uganda, and India! The idea is that local families should adopt and foster local children (i.e. Ukrainian families caring for Ukrainian orphans), instead of orphanages being responsible for children, where they grow up without love, attachment, or life skills. We believe that all children should have the chance to grow up in a family. You can find out more about the children and foster/adopt families that need support at www.afamilyforeveryorphan.org.”

Finally, we asked Mandell about her personal projects, and she excitedly told us that she, along with her husband, are in the process of restoring a 1960 Ford Country Sedan. Mandell elaborated to explain that she helps with decisions for the body and interior as well as and keep the project on track with the design concept. Her husband, on the other hand, “does all the hard labor and engineering; truly designing and building

the engine and car from scratch. Our vision for the car is a fusion of a 1960’s era drag racer and a family hauler. It has a classic old school vibe, with a high performance 406 FE engine making 530 horsepower. The body style was only produced that one year, and we think it’s Ford’s best looking wagon, complete with big chrome tipped wings. It’s a huge wagon that doesn’t fit in most garages, so you can imagine it makes house-hunting a challenge!”

Another personal passion for Mandell is her interest on vintage glass and ceramics. Over the years this designer has been collecting many such examples. “I love that these vintage pieces, with their beautiful designs continue to last and feel relevant, while so much of what is mass-produced today is bland and meant to be disposable. My favorite pieces right now are a jade green scalloped glass bowl I picked up on vacation in Healdsburg, and an original Fornasetti plate that a dear friend gave to me as a gift,” she excitedly told us.

To discuss your next project with Melinda Mandell, please contact her at (714) 883-3975 or visit www.melindamandell.com.



Melinda Mandell Interior Design, photo courtesy of Michelle Drewes