

The signature style of

Janie Molster

Fresh, functional and fun can live with the serious, old and beautiful

Meet Richmond interior designer Janie Molster in the fifth of an occasional Home & Garden Q&A series featuring local décor experts.

BY JULIE YOUNG
TIMES-DISPATCH STAFF WRITER

What's the trademark of a Janie Molster room?
Fresh and functional are the first words that come to mind. I love antiques with aged patinas mixed with unexpected fabrics and edgy contemporary lighting. Most important is form following function. Rooms should have adequate and inviting seating with good light and surfaces for books or a cup of coffee.

What would you never see in a Janie Molster room?
New reproduction Oriental rugs and spec-house-quality brass chandeliers.

How did you land the cover of the March/April Southern Accents?

The Gloucester home project was scouted by local writer Neely Barnwell Dykshorn. I trusted her judgment about where [in what magazine] the story would be a good fit. I credit my client, Marian Fitzgerald, for landing the story. She took the plunge and went for the bold lime-green wallpaper in the entrance hall. It's fabulous and definitely cover-worthy.

Tell us about the Gloucester home, which will be open to visitors for Historic Garden Week on April 22.

The Fitzgeralds are longtime friends and clients. I worked with a great team of people on the project, including designer Deborah Valentine and our design assistants, Barrie Edlich and Ruth Tucker, as well as Richmond decorative artist Sunny Goode. The Fitzgerald family's enthusiasm about Wilson Creek Farm was contagious for all of us. I knew that this house would be loved and really used by a busy, active family. Mixing beautiful and practical into a décor can be tricky, but I think we succeeded.

Where do you get your design ideas?

I go to many markets for home furnishings. It keeps me tuned in to what not to buy as much as what is new. If I see something everywhere at the trade markets, I know I'm already tired of it. I regularly travel to antique markets to shop



SOUTHERN ACCENTS

Monogrammed bedding adds a personal touch to the 1870s cypress-sided home of Herbert and Marian Fitzgerald, which will be open for Historic Garden Week.

for clients and for inspiration. And of course, I read design magazines. The European ones are best. Their approach is a bit less studied.

What inspires you?

My wonderful and chaotic family. For me, design inspiration is everywhere and always changing. At this moment, I'm inspired by a clever piece of artwork my daughter made from old fabric scraps. I'm also inspired by Target's housewares section and their commercials — they're hip and fun and make me want to go shopping. And Jonathan Adler's new book on design, "My Prescription for Anti-Depressive Living." I love his message: Have fun with design; don't be so serious.

What are your favorite colors? Your least favorite?

Right now, everything in the café au lait-to-chocolate family and aqua. There's also a certain apricot velvet sample that I can't keep off of my desk. My least favorite is dark blue — only good in a man's suit — and forest green, only good in the forest.

What design trends do you see coming down the pike?

I see a movement away from combining many different prints in a room and more about accentuating a play of textures as opposed to patterns. The mix of old and new — an elegant antique Swedish bench



DEAN HOFFMEYER/TIMES-DISPATCH

The living room in Janie Molster's York Road home reflects one of her guiding design principles — the importance of an inviting, well-lit conversation area.

sitting on a contemporary geometric rug or chrome-and-leather dining chairs pulled up to a rustic farm table. Televisions everywhere and why not . . . they're sleek and stylish now.

Any other projects/national press?

Last year, we finished the renovation of the historic Clifton Inn in Charlottesville, Virginia. Our projects have been published in Southern Accents, Southern Living, Renovation Style and Traditional Home.

Janie Molster is a Plymouth, N.C., native and graduate of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She and her husband, John, have five children: sons John, 20, Robert, 19, Pierre, 16, and Swain, 11,

and daughter Isabel, 5. She owns Janie Molster Designs, 3600 Douglasdale Road in Richmond. Reach her at (804) 282-0938 or janiemolsterdesigns@hotmail.com.



SOUTHERN ACCENTS

Richmond decorative artist Sunny Goode painted a parquet pattern on the living room floor of the Fitzgeralds' Wilson Creek Farm in Gloucester. Then Molster dressed the room in Marian's favorite palette — pink and green.



SOUTHERN ACCENTS

Molster designed armless slipcovered chairs for the sapphire-blue master bedroom.



SOUTHERN ACCENTS

Lime green brightens the foyer and other rooms in the waterfront home. Molster was on the design team for the dwelling, featured in the March/April issue of Southern Accents.