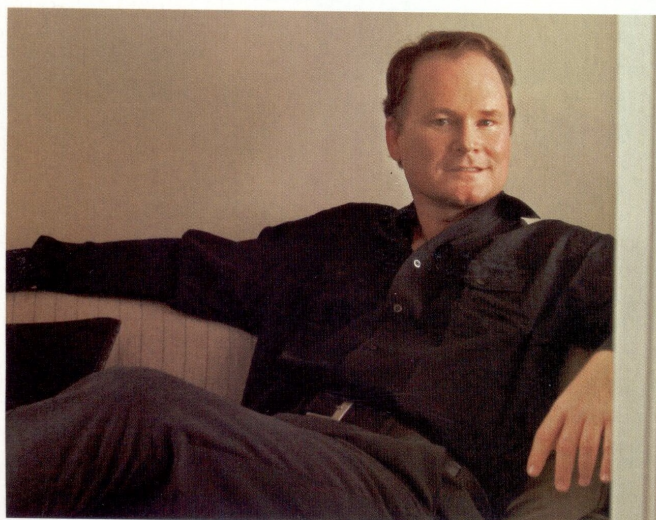


Couturier for the home

For Matthew Patrick Smyth, design comes down to the details



What did you learn while working for design giant David Easton?

My six years with David were the equivalent of going to graduate school. He is a design genius who taught me the importance of detailing. He would sketch everything from the crown moldings to the tassels on curtains. I think every young designer should work first for an established firm that he or she admires. The experience is priceless.

Finish this sentence: "Matthew Patrick Smyth is all about ____."

Making the client feel at home. My goal is to create spaces that fit individuals. What are their needs? How do they see themselves in their own home? It's not about me!

How do you incorporate your passion for fashion into your projects?

It's all about dressing up, whether it's a person or a room. There are a

lot of perfectly fine off-the-rack products at retail stores, but designers should offer couture to their clients. Expert detailing, custom products and exquisite styling distinguish professionally designed spaces from a mass-produced look.

What is the inspiration for the carpet line you design for Patterson Flynn & Martin?

Traveling. In fact, a recent collection was based on the ironwork on fences, gates and railings I saw in the countryside around Dublin. When I travel, I always carry a sketchbook to jot down ideas.

What was the latest design idea that really excited you?

The use of thick glass for countertops in kitchens. I'm considering it for an Aspen home because it opens the door to unique patterns and colors, making it a great alternative to stone.

What are some of your favorite New York City resources?

Anthony Lawrence and Jonas for custom upholstery. Alpha Workshop for handmade wall coverings. Einstein Moomjy and Patterson Flynn & Martin for rugs. Rogers & Goffigon, Brunswick & Fils, Lee Jofa and F. Schumacher & Co. for fabric. [See shopping guide.]

If you didn't become an interior designer, what do you think you'd be doing instead?

I'd be a photographer. Both vocations require a good sense of composition and depth. I had to make a quick decision when it came to my major at the Fashion Institute of Technology. I chose interior design, and I have no regrets!

Given a tight budget, what's the one thing you splurge on?

A quality paint job: It can make or break a room. You can only hide so much.

What was your most recent purchase for your own home?

On eBay, I found a postcard of my Sharon, Connecticut, weekend home when it was an inn during the 19th century. The back reads, "Dear Mom, I stayed here last night and it was very nice." I have to say I agree!

What's the one thing in your home you can't live without?

I adore an 18th-century Anglo Indian ivory box that I received as a birthday gift from a client. The box features an elegant design and still smells of sandalwood when I open it. I've always wanted one, and it's my favorite thing to look at. □