

NEW YORK

Mara Silber: Seeking Perfection

Have a non-negotiable element to your design process?
Mara Silber (<http://www.marasilber.com/>) says,
“Challenge accepted!”



M marasilberstudio • 2 months ago



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in staples that can be
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withstand trends. You
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classic pieces.

What two words best describe you?

I'm loyal. And a perfectionist.

What was your path to becoming a designer?

I've always been interested in design and fashion. As early as high school I worked for a jewelry designer and a ceramics studio, which influenced my perspective of design. I later studied interior design and art history at the George Washington University in Washington, D.C. GW's program allowed me to learn from well-known designers and tour fascinating sites around the District. It was at GW that I started working as a fashion stylist and design consultant. Shortly after moving to New York City I joined the firm of AD100 designer Mark Cunningham. Mark is insanely talented and taught me the ins and outs of producing impeccable spaces, many of which have been featured in Architectural Digest, Elle Decor, Interior Design Magazine, Living in Style, and other leading publications. I opened my own studio in 2015.

Tell us about your work.

I have a number of projects across the country, focusing mainly on high-end residential interiors. I love the challenge of working with clients that have different styles. I even appreciate client "non-negotiables" that require me to problem-solve creatively. Because of this diversity, my day can take me from designing a tonal bachelor pad in downtown Manhattan to a bright, kid-friendly beach house in Westhampton.

Every phase of a project is so exciting and so different. Before the initial consultation, I typically see a picture of the house and possibly a floor plan. Immediately, I'll have ideas flowing of how I envision the space. Once I meet with the client, this picture may transform completely as my ideas are blended with the client's specific aesthetic and needs. As the project progresses, you learn more about what the client likes and dislikes and it's fun to watch the product come to life as we collaborate and combine our visions.



What is your favorite part of your day?

Summer mornings! I am an annoyingly early morning person (just ask my husband). I love waking up naturally from the sun, getting to the gym, and coming back feeling energized with a clear head, ready to work.

What is the most common design problem you encounter? Is there a simple fix you can suggest for this problem?

Design is all about meticulous details. I find that clients typically get so excited about designing their ideal space that they want to skip ahead and go straight to purchasing. I love that kind of excitement but I always emphasize the importance of process, especially the need to conceptualize a space aesthetically and functionally before heading out on a shopping spree! I'm here to personalize a space for you, so it is critical that we dedicate the time to really consider how you will use the space and how you visualize the room. In the end, a really well thought-out space will actually look and feel more effortless.



How would you describe your style? How does it translate to your work?

Classic, clean, sophisticated, timeless. I believe in investing in staple pieces that can be versatile and withstand trends. You will never regret investing in quality, classic pieces. I've also always had a good instinct for great deals, so when I see a bargain, there is zero hesitation!

Sometimes that means seeing the value of a flea-market find. I love sifting through sample sales and thrifty places to find something special for a client that might not normally fit into their budget.

Translating my style into an interior could mean having a great Chesterfield leather sofa from your modern, urban newlywed home that ultimately works with your kid-friendly Colonial house in suburbia. In this way, timelessness results in a better and more economical project.



What has your experience been with decorating your own space? How is decorating for yourself different from decorating for other people?

Oh my gosh! I love being my own designer. I appreciate a wide range of styles and enjoy discovering new, beautiful interiors—so much in fact that I usually don't have enough house to design!

Sometimes it feels so different designing for myself, but regardless of the "client," I always spend the time to edit several ideas into a unified point of view. I have a strong sense of which styles can coexist and I'm constantly saving inspirations that don't fit into my current home for future dream houses.

When I'm not designing for myself, clients rely on me to refine all of their ideas into one cohesive home. A lot of my clients are really visual, too. They usually like to see that it's been done before to feel comfortable signing off on a direction. I view part of my job as pushing clients out of their comfort zones to produce a unique and personal spaces. Often I'm the only one who is able to visualize the final product from an early stage so it is my responsibility to earn their trust and provide the proof points to move the project forward.

What, in your opinion, makes a space feel homey?

Found items – things you stumble upon rather than seek out – almost always end up being the perfect final accessory to bring a space together and make it feel homey. I love to get to know my clients and their interests so I can identify found items that feel like their home. When I'm out and about, I constantly stumble upon something that ends up being the perfect finishing touch for them. I think it's obvious when a space is filled for the sake of filling it. Instead, I prefer naturally and serendipitously acquiring pieces to make a place feel authentic.