

# rue

march/april 2011

---



# A PENCHANT FOR PATTERN

DALLAS DESIGNER **BONNEE SHARP** FINDS  
HER CALLING IN CUSTOM TEXTILES



PHOTOGRAPHY: STEVE WIKUBEL  
STYLING: JENNY O'CONNOR  
FLORALS: HAILE WOSSEN  
COPY: MACKENZIE HORAN





**FABRIC DESIGNER BONNEE SHARP HAS NEVER BEEN ONE TO SHY AWAY FROM COLOR.**

Having traded in her writing gig at a creative ad agency in New York to pursue interior design at Emily Summers Design Associates in Dallas, Bonnee found herself searching fruitlessly for the patterns that would best punctuate her clients' homes. "I started designing patterns in my free time because I knew what our clients loved and what I couldn't find in showrooms," she explains.

Realizing there was a void in the market for the fabrics she envisioned, Bonnee began printing her patterns on a project-by-project basis, much to the delight of ESDA clients. The more clients gravitated toward her textiles, the more Bonnee was convinced that she had found her niche. She left her position with ESDA to have her first daughter, Georgia, and, six months later, to launch her own





"I FOUND MY VOICE WHILE  
LIVING AND WORKING IN NEW  
YORK CITY.  
I FORAMED THE CITY EVERY  
WEEKEND WITH MY CAMERA IN  
HAND AND MY MIND OPEN."

BONNIE SHARP







creative career with the fabric line Studio Bon.

"I flew to New York with a 75-pound suitcase of fabric samples, called the best houses I knew, made appointments, and showed them my work," Bonnee recalls of that fateful first trip. Her unique geometric patterns, coupled with her palpable enthusiasm for this new line of work, quickly won her the favor of renowned fabric house Schumacher, who agreed to represent Studio Bon in ten cities across the country. And the rest, as they say, is history.

Today Bonnee and her husband Marc live back in Dallas with four-year-old Georgia and ten-month-old Genevieve, but Studio Bon's designs have hardly lost that initial urban appeal. "I found my voice while living and working in New York City," Bonnee says. "I loved the









"A HOME WITH  
SMALL CHILDREN  
CAN BE BEAUTIFUL,  
FUNCTIONAL, SAFE,  
AND FUN IF YOU  
ARE INTENTIONAL IN  
YOUR DECISIONS"

ROUSSET SHARP





"I NEED AGE AND SOLID WOOD  
FRAMES, BUT ALSO THE CRISPNESS  
THAT PATTERN BRINGS."

BONNEE SHARP

hustle and bustle, the history, the people, the energy, and the artistic opportunities. I roamed the city every weekend with my camera in hand and my mind open."

The artistic inspiration Bonnee discovered in New York is now apparent in her family's home, whose clean lines and generous rooms provide a blank canvas for Studio Bon's contemporary creations. In addition to showcasing her studio's modern textiles, Bonnee's home features an enviable assortment of family antiques, from her parents' collection of vintage Pink Vista china to the pair of coral porcelain lamps that Bonnee's grandmother had saved up to buy for her own mother.

The mix of modern materials and traditional heirlooms in the home sums up Bonnee's taste perfectly: "My style is moditional—wait, is that a word?" Her love of organic lines is most evident in the dark wood Danish dining set she discovered at an estate sale in Austin, whose seats she had reupholstered in chic bone-colored leather. "I need age and solid wood frames," she explains, "but also the crispness that pattern brings."

How do Bonnee and Marc preserve that sense of style with two little girls on the loose? "A home with small children can be beautiful, functional, safe, and fun if you are intentional in your decisions," Bonnee insists. That means the mid-century coffee tables in the living room—a serendipitous flea market find—double as surfaces for board games with Georgia and a place for Bonnee and Marc to kick up their feet after a long day. "We're often still working after we put the children to bed at night," she admits, "but ideally we can have a glass of wine and relax!"

Of course, the continued expansion of Studio Bon's fully customizable collection means Bonnee's work schedule won't be slowing down anytime soon. Not that she'd have it any other way: "This is what she was meant to do," reads her bio on Studio Bon's website. Anyone who's had a look at her delightful patterns would find it impossible to object.