

DECADENT DESIGN

Diane D. Edwards

Bringing the Modern to the Mountain Home



Adding couture to classic creates unique interior design

What you *will* see—eye-widening accent color, lush textiles, carefully chosen antiques among custom avant-garde furniture, and perhaps some provocative wallpaper.

What you will *not* see—weighty furniture stereotypical of mountain lodges, a monochromatic palette, or antler-bristling chandeliers.

Décor designed by Victoria Crawford and Robyn Shaw, partners at Tweed Interiors of Telluride, evokes both the sense and the sensibility of the venerable tweeds of British royalty and Wall Street—versatile, elegant, and always in style. But their interiors evolve into spaces well beyond the conventional.

“Fashion has been a major influence for me, hence the Tweed name,” explains principal owner Victoria Crawford. “I think trends in interior design directly relate to what is on the runways. And I like the way it sounds. Tweed can either be very serious, or it can be very fun.

While respecting the classics, Crawford, 41, and Shaw, 35, both embrace what they see as the more-joyful modern styles of interior design. They share an affinity for color, unexpected found *objects* that distinguish spaces, eclectic fusion of natural and manufactured materials, and well-considered *mélanges* of retro and cutting-edge.

Their interiors blend distinctive details like artisan-lathed wood lamps or bright-hued tufted chairs with vibrant walls and burnished metals. Their artistic influences range from abstract artists Jasper Johns and Willem de Kooning to revolutionary architects Frank Gehry and Zaha Hadid.

Crawford admits that her own artwork, principally oil painting and mixed media, daily informs her personal decorating style, clearly affected by her abstract creations that are “very, very colorful...a little playful with a serious undertone.”

Shaw describes their sophisticated design aesthetic as modern minimalism, with “clean lines, natural materials, a lot of metal... using textures, from wools to cashmeres to silks, to tufting or anything to make different textures.”

“Vic is really strong with the colors and the paint and is very resourceful, whereas I focus more on furnishings,” says Shaw of their newly established partnership. “About 90 percent of the time, we like the same thing. We have different styles, but the same taste.”

The two decorators attribute their complementary sense of design to their respective, notably similar, style-shaping lives. Born in Vermont, Crawford spent part of her childhood in Montreal, where her mother designed and made children’s clothing. In 1990, with an art degree from Middlebury College, she came to ski Telluride “for just a year” and never left.



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Tweed Interiors partners Victoria Crawford and Robyn Shaw, use classic accent pieces to add dimension to this Telluride residence master bedroom.

Her life in Telluride, like her genre-bending interiors, combined her many interests and talents. As an artist, she painted greeting cards sold at area stores while she coached the local ski team. Her heavily textured paintings showcased the encaustic technique of combining oil paints with beeswax; her mixed media pieces were layered amalgams of historic maps, old photographs, wire and other metals. She contributed to annual shows at the local Ah Haa School of Art. After the birth of her daughter four years ago, she began dreaming of her own home furnishings retail store, "something contemporary, something fresh."

When the owner of Telluride's Carter Home Interiors asked Crawford to become her design assistant, the artist quickly discovered interior design came naturally. A year later, in June 2007, she bought the business, launching Tweed Interiors. Shaw, a longtime friend, joined the studio in November, becoming a partner this past January.

In 1994, Shaw – a Massachusetts native with a degree in English literature from UM-Amherst – also came to Telluride to ski. After four years on the slopes, she moved back East to make her own mark in interior design, in part inspired by her mother's career as a professional decorator. For nearly six years, Shaw worked in Manhattan as design consultant, project manager, and sales manager for the Swiss-based company Vitra, a high-end furniture manufacturer and retailer. She oversaw residential and commercial design projects, including the USA Today headquarters adjacent Washington DC, two 11-story towers with miles of deluxe furnishings. At Vitra, she learned by working with prominent architects and designers, using "modern, very artsy, very expensive" products to create her designs. But she always expected to return to Telluride. In 2003, pregnant with her second child, she retraced her steps westward.

Not intending to work full-time, Shaw began designing and sewing clothing for Telluride boutiques, first baby clothes, then children's, and this past year, a line of women's clothing for the Telluride AIDS benefit. But when invited to join Tweed Interiors, she seized the opportunity to work with her like-minded partner.

"We both love fashion, we're both very fashion-forward," Shaw explains, insisting that stilettos in the snow might seem impractical but are nonetheless stylish. "We try to step up our decorating because we've both been exposed to very high fashion and that's inspiring."

Crawford and Shaw also share enthusiasm for luxurious fabrics, high-end furniture, local photography, eco-friendly products, all types of art, inspired uses of natural materials, the breathtaking landscapes nearby, and at least one surface animated with wallpaper meant to provoke comment.


"I think we're unique because there are very few decorators in Telluride that only do the decorating," Shaw points out. "We're hoping to bring more modern minimalism to town. We have great energy, a great mix, and we have a lot of fun. That's why it works."

Crawford also credits their successful collaboration to her partner's extensive business and management experience, as well as their mutual ability to make quick decisions on design features.

Both agree that design only truly succeeds when clients are satisfied. "It's great to have clients feel that you've heard them, that you're listening to their ideas and then guiding them in a direction," says Shaw. "If the client is happy, we're happy. It's rewarding to start the project, to get all the ideas on paper, to start seeing it come to fruition with the floor plans, then do the installation, right down to making the beds, which Vic and I do ourselves."

"We look at where we're doing the house," says Crawford of their creative process. "You look at the environment at the site and the architecture. Do you want to play up the architecture or downplay the architecture? Architecture is taking a new, more modern approach now and interiors need to mesh with what happens on the exterior of the structure."

For Tweed Interiors, the dream job would be the well-resourced client who gives carte blanche to do the entire home – creating unique spaces with their modern touch, their signature mixture of old and new, and their choice of memorable art and colors. For Crawford, the dream job could be designing the interiors of a small boutique hotel. For both decorators, commitment to family and community remains paramount. Crawford believes that interior design should be available to everyone, despite its reputation of being only for the wealthy.

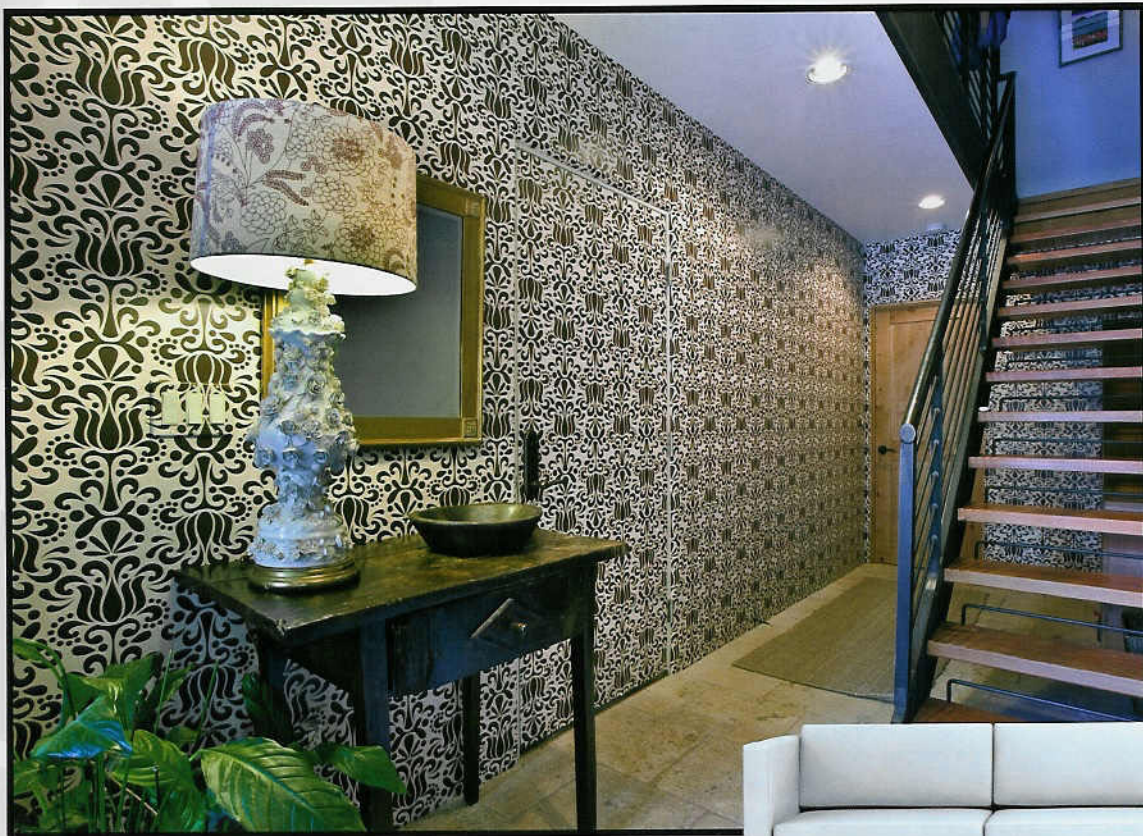
"When I started Tweed Interiors, I wanted the slogan to be 'Design for All' but unfortunately Target beat me to it," she says. "We'd like to make design more user-friendly and available to a broader clientele." 

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Telluride residence guest bedroom.

Whit Richardson



When it comes to wall art, Tweed Interiors took this plain box Telluride residence entryway and made it pop with a fun and whimsical wallpaper.



Whit Richardson

