



Billee Smith

Her Distinctive Style
Brightens Interiors
& Sets the Trends
in Home Décor

"For me, design is about relationships. I try to get into my client's heart and soul and find that inspiration that will give them a space they will love for years to come."

Billee didn't start her career as an interior designer. Her original career path took her into the medical field as a respiratory therapist. But, after 18 years, she was ready to move on. Coming from a family of strong, creative women, Billee just felt there could be something more, although at the time, she wasn't sure what that might be. Fate stepped in when she was laid off from her job, and she suddenly found herself with the freedom she had been looking for.

Thrilled at the sudden possibility of a new career, Billee decided to do some decorating around her house to keep her busy until something new presented itself. She didn't have to wait long. The interior decorator Billee hired to make window treatments for her was blown away by the sketches she had casually drawn to illustrate what she had in mind. "It never occurred to me that I could become an interior designer, but my designer was convinced that I was a natural, and it wasn't long before I was believing it too," said Billee.

A new career was born. Billee went to work for her interior designer, who trained her and sent her for intensive design classes. She was enthralled, and threw herself into her new career with a passion she still has today; not just for design, but for the inspiration she finds working with her clients. Billee started her own business in 1997, and worked out of her home for the next several years.

A local Pennsylvanian, Billee found herself relocating with her husband to Harford County, and opened her retail space in Havre de Grace in 2005. She named her business "Distinctive Décor, Ltd", and began filling the space on St. John Street with distinctive home furnishings and accents that she prides herself in finding. Throughout the showroom you will find sample window treatments to inspire you, with thousands of fabrics to choose from.

"I appreciate all design styles," said Billee. "My personal taste is very eclectic, with new fabrics and stylings being introduced everyday, there are always exciting options to be offered to my clients." It's important to Billee to work with and incorporate treasures from her clients' homes to utilize in her design. She scours her clients' homes for items that can be re-used or re-purposed. Old lighting fixtures in the attic or beat-up cabinets in the basement are all treasures to Billee, and she knows how to bring them back to

life. She is not a frivolous designer... re-purposing these treasures may not only be a cost savings but it also retains character and what she says are "conversation pieces" for her clients home. Finding old lighting fixtures or old pieces of furniture and restoring and re-purposing and mixing in with the new finds is exciting to Billee and offers something distinctive which can not be found at the "big box stores".

"My inspiration comes from my clients", said Billee. "Every homeowner faces their own set of unique challenges in their living space. My goal is to solve their long-term lifestyle goals, within a design aesthetic that the clients will love. Every decision from traffic-flow to fabrics will have a lasting impact on their lives." Billee collaborates with her clients every step of the way, and attends to every detail of the design.

To meet the needs of her diverse group of clients, she offers everything from a simple consultation for a home-owner who is looking for advice or direction, to complete home re-do's and everything in between. "I always start out the same way," said Billee.

"I really listen..... what is their lifestyle, desires, dreams and of course their budget and time line. I filter all the information, and help them figure out what realistic options they have for realizing their dream spaces. Sometimes it's a matter of doing projects in stages, or being selective with the new pieces we introduce," she stated.

Billee splits her time these days between her family, clients and the retail store, but somehow she manages to volunteer in the community. She has done several Decorator Show Houses, and has been selected to participate in the 2013 CCA decorator show house at Rockfield Manor. She is also very passionate about her adoptive City of Havre de Grace. She is very community minded and involved dedicating herself to serving on several boards in regards to the downtown business, historic preservation and tourism.

When you are downtown Havre de grace stop by Distinctive Decor on St John and I'm sure you will be delighted in what you find be sure to introduce yourself to Billee and her staff.

