Southern Living

How To Find Your Home Decorating Style—Even If You Think You Don't Have One

By Tessa Cooper | Published on May 30, 2026



Laurey W. Glenn; Styling: Buffy Hargett Miller.

It doesn't matter if they're strong preferences or slight preferences. When it comes to design, we all have opinions influenced by our interests and life experiences. And getting to the bottom of what you like and dislike will help you find the best colors, textures and accessories to decorate your house.

A big part of a designer's job is understanding their client's personal taste, and clearly defining it is the first step. We tapped three designers to learn about their process for helping their clients figure out their home decorating style, and you can definitely apply these methods to determine yours.

- Ashley Gallion is the owner of Ashley Ayer Interiors, based in Montgomery, AL.
- Tracy Morris is the principal designer at Tracy Morris Design, based in Washington, DC.
- Libby Baker Speight is the founder of Baker Design Co., based in Santa Rosa Beach, FL.

Begin With a Home Audit

When working with clients to define their personal decorating style, Washington, D.C., designer Tracy Morris' process begins with a home audit.

"I like to walk through their current home and talk about what they love, what they don't, the textures they gravitate toward, their daily routines, and what truly makes them feel 'at home,'" she says. "From there, we discuss their goals for the house and what they want the space to accomplish emotionally and functionally."

During this walkthrough, one of her favorite exercises is asking her client to show her three home decor items that make them the happiest. Together, they evaluate these pieces and discuss what they reveal about their style.

Evaluate Your Pinterest Boards

Gathering inspiration photos is super helpful for figuring out your home decorating style. But if you don't take a moment to study and evaluate the images you've been adding to your Pinterest Boards, you're not taking full advantage of this tool.

Designer Libby Baker Speight always asks her clients to send her their favorite interior images from magazines or Pinterest, and then she dissects them for common themes and details.

"We zero in with specific questions like 'What about this photo are you drawn to?' or 'Is there one singular thing in this room that stands out to you?'" she says.

Take a Look at Your Wardrobe

Morris believes that personal taste in fashion and home decor is intertwined. That's why she loves examining her clients' clothing and accessories and taking note of a few specific things.

"I love looking at their wardrobe to see what colors they wear, the fabrics and textures they choose, and whether their style is bold or more subdued," she says. "Most people naturally decorate the way they dress."

You can easily do this yourself. During your next closet clean-out, pay attention to the colors and details that dominate your wardrobe. Perhaps you're naturally drawn to blue and pink, or you tend to lean more towards neutrals. Maybe you like the relaxed look of linen, or prefer the sophisticated vibe of silk. If you like dressing yourself this way, there's a good chance you'll like dressing your home this way too.



Finally, Give Your Style a Name

Once you've put thought into your home decor preferences and lifestyle, putting your home style into words can help you understand it better. Alabama designer Ashley Gallion offers three categories that make for a great jumping-off point.

"A major factor we find is whether a client likes modern, traditional, or transitional, which is a happy combination," she says. For example, if she has a client who loves to host formal parties and is naturally drawn to antiques, she will probably assign them to the "traditional" category.

From there, you can assign other adjectives that show up as common themes. It could be a region or an era that seems to drive your taste, such as "traditional French" or "Romantic Victorian with a modern flair."

The way you define your style is entirely up to you. It could be as long as a few sentences, or as short as two words. If it's helping you make design choices that you feel confident about, you know you've succeeded.