

MARCELLE GUILBEAU

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It was in the energy vortex of Santa Fe, New Mexico, that interior designer Marcelle Guilbeau had a spiritual awakening. After studying philosophy and art history in Florence and London, working in academia, and practicing massage therapy, Guilbeau eventually discovered interior design and her ability to expose beauty within it. "Connecting the physical world with the spiritual world was something that I was in to," she says. "Interior design is like that intellectual side of connection combined with that physical side." A calming personality and a Buddhist, Guilbeau was raised in Louisiana, and hints of French culture have influenced her lifestyle-oriented homes, imbuing a sensual side of design with the comfort of European culture.

BEAUTIFUL LIVING: Guilbeau learned the building blocks at Watkins College of Art, and her love for architecture in commercial design and interiors developed. She drew naturally from her theological background when her residential clients came to her with the same problem: "I don't know what my style is." So, Guilbeau created a method similar to a four-quadrant chart that helps discover one's style combination, or "Soul Style."

SOUL STYLE: The two major (traditional and modern) and two minor (practical and sensual) design styles fuse based

on values, priorities, and commitments. For example, you might be a hearth and home traditionalist, or maybe a historian traditionalist. A zen modernist or a techy modernist. "If you take [a client's style] from purely an aesthetic side, you're going to waste a lot of money," she says. For Guilbeau, aesthetic is what makes you feel alive. "But there's also lifestyle. In interiors, lifestyle is what you love to do, what you long to do. I have to cook, but I don't love to cook, so maybe that's not a room you focus on."

LIFESTYLE: "Getting visual helps people get out of analyzing. It needs to come emotionally. I ask what speaks to you, and sometimes it's just a feeling." Through magazine story boards and images, the more clients weigh in, the clearer their "Soul Style" chart becomes. "It's like a discovery and unfolding," she says. "It's magical to see when someone finally connects with what's really in their heart and soul."

HANDMADE TALE: Whichever way her clients lean, one consistency is Guilbeau's introduction of pieces that soften the space. "I think that one thing I always strive to do is bring something handmade and unique, possibly ethnic, maybe a little bit bohemian and casual into the space—even with a modernist, I don't want it to be just crisp and clean."

