ECO-CHI Space City St magazine Lonny doe Laura Day: Designer, editor and, mother. Take a look inside Her Madison Avenue digs. MITT FAIR PORTSAITS APRIL/MAY 2010



Laurann Claridge's chic highrise home beckons guests with
a subtle come-hither gesture of
fragrance. Whether it's the smell
of fo Malone candles burning or
something the French culinary
school grad (and 1997 James
Beard Award winner) is whipping up in the kitchen, the 19thfloor abode is a sensory experience that greets all who enter as
warmly as the gracious hostess
who lives there.

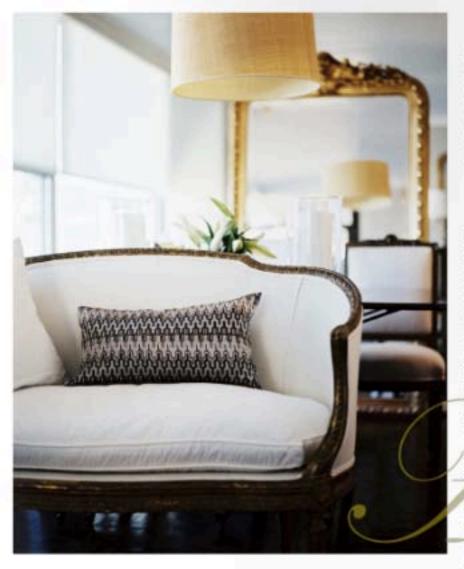
A delicate blonde with radiant skin and expressive eyes, Claridge is the does-it-all type who effortlessly serves up goat cheese-stuffed Peppadew peppers and St. Germain Champagne cocktails while talking modern art and 19th-century furnishings over the faint sound of Frou Frou, Lyle Lovett, or Adele playing in the



Olegance

Written by Holly Crawford Photography by Patrick Cline

Art Direction by Michelle Adams Equal parts editor, fashion designer, and world traveler, **Laurann Claridge** has an eye for stylish details that conjure old-world elegance in her high-rise apartment



dainty 19th-century French settee Claridge picked up in Paris years ago contrasts with an oversized, raffia-covered Pottery Barn shade overhead—all framed by a dramatic Louis Philippe gill mirror that rests on the dining room wall.

background—and, in the process, looks positively polished in a tuxedo shirt and lounge pants.

She elegantly represents all that she is: editor for a city magazine, published author, fashion designer, and world traveler. And so does her home. Painted in varying shades of gray (mostly Martin-Senour hues) throughout, the two-bedroom retreat is an edited combination of European antiques and structured

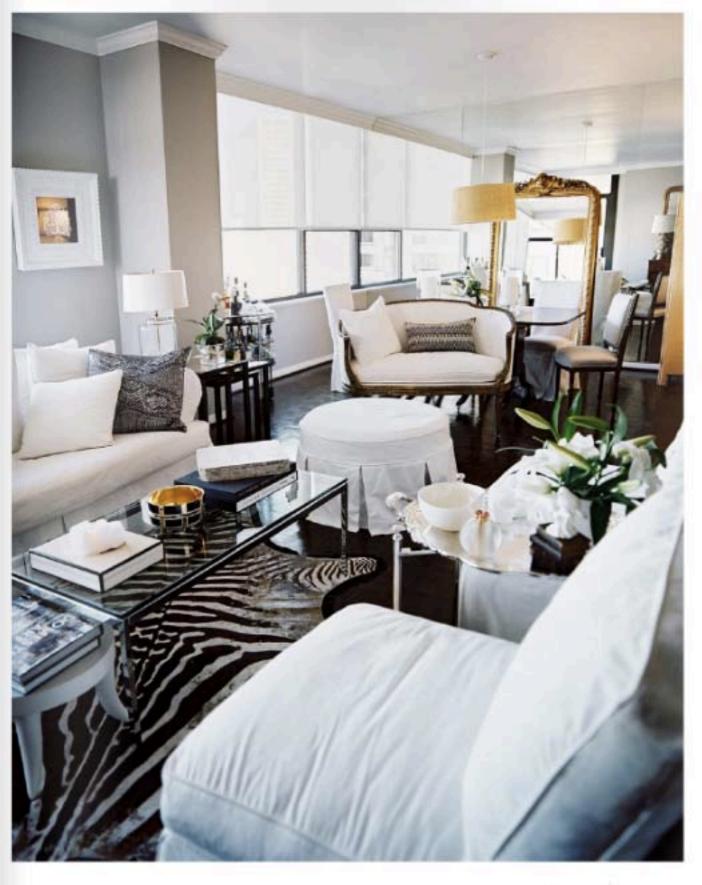
of-the-moment pieces accessorized with family heirlooms and eclectic finds from places she's visited. "I don't want it to be decorated, but something more meaningful," she says.

Like a story Claridge would write for Houston's PaperCity (where she's been the features editor for ten years), her 1,500-square-foot apartment unveils itself—and a lot about its design-savvy owner—in a tapestry of well-chosen statements. "I love the idea of creating a collected environment in my home," she explains, "where rooms, over time, become richly layered and interesting as you add treasures from your travels and pieces you've picked up along the way. All of those layers and all of these little memories give your life so much richness."

And as one half of the two-yearold luxury loungewear company Claridge + King, which she owns with her sister, Lizbeth King, Claridge brings that same mindset to their menswear-inspired women's line of crisp shirts, robes, tanks, comfy boxers, and pants. "I really believe there is a strong tie to how I live and how I express myself in terms of fashion," she says. "Claridge + King is building a collection of basics with a nod to subtle detail that can blend easily with the pieces vou've acquired in your wardrobe and statement jewelry you treasure." And that's not all: like Claridge's space, most of the line comes in neutral shades of gray and white and is packaged in a matching pinstriped travel bag









or pillowcase. "I have a fascination with the color gray and have for years," she says. "I love to live with gray and wear it, too. And white's the ultimate neutral, crisp and clean. I dress much like how I live and design."

Raised in a rural area of Connecticut, Claridge admits she "didn't have access" to fashion growing up until being inspired by famed Vogue editor Diana Vreeland. "Thad great exposure to fashion at a young age because of her book," she says.

Interestingly, it's all come full circle for Claridge; she coauthored Domestic Art: Curated Interiors, a coffee-table fixture full of Houston's most inspiring interior design, and her home is now a source of inspiration in its own right, with its thoughtful paint palette, walls of windows, and custom add-ons, like floorto-ceiling bookcases in her guest room. Instead of a traditional setup in this room, she opted for an extensive library that also functions as her office. "I love libraries, and I adore heing surrounded by books," she says. With hundreds of books amassed on the two walls. Claridge had two bookshelves custom-made for the room. "They're designed to pop out in one piece if you remove the molding, just in case the next occupant I sell it to doesn't enjoy books as much as I do."

As for giving up her guest quarters, she solved the problem with a circa-1820 Swedish settee that can double as a daybed. Expertly reupholstered by David



Longwood, the owner of Designer's Furniture Mfg., who also created a 100 percent down mattress and bolsters for it, Claridge says the settee is deceivingly comfortable. "David found the box spring was made with copper coils," she says. "Apparently that's quite rare to find, since steel has been used for quite a long time." The plush Dransfield & Ross linen pillows only add to the luxe look of the settee.

Each antique objet d'art in her home tells a narrative, from the master bedroom armoire that just so happened to have her initials carved on its crown to the chipped two-tiered bar cart she labored to refinish in her parents' driveway. "I must be an old soul," Claridge says. "I love the idea that I'm just the temporary caretaker of a piece that used to belong to someone else, and one day someone else will possess it.







". Flove the small. understated details. like a mitered corner in striped ticking at the end of a neck-roll pillow. They're unexpected but appreciated.

who I hope will enjoy and care for that piece as much as I did."

When it comes to newer additions, Claridge gravitates toward meaningful pieces like the Royal Dream Crowns photograph that hangs behind her sofa. Framed in a "Royal Icing Narcissus" custom frame, the artwork is by her friend, New York-based artist Rachel Hovnanian, and is part of a collection on beauty pageantry. "I'm in artacquiring mode now," she says. "That's the sort of thing you have to happen upon, but the hunt for the right pieces is just as fun as the catch."

Claridge also complements her home's palette with gilded bowls by Waylande Gregory that nod to the gilt mirrors and a handful of other



James Farmer punctuate a wall in the master bedroom.

glimmering accents. "I tend to tie things room to room," she says, "whether it's that blue ticking in the library and bedroom, a snakeskin tray in the bathroom and snakeskin-patterned pillows in the living room and bedroom, or white linen. This sort of repetition can really unify a space and make it simple to move pieces from room to room."

These sorts of design principles never fail, but there's something to be said for the natural coming together of a space, of the culling and evolving over time, just as Claridge has, during seven years in her place. "I'd like to think [my home] is a reflection of me, my travels, and the things I've collected over time," she says. "I feel like it's a comfortable, easy place to be, too."



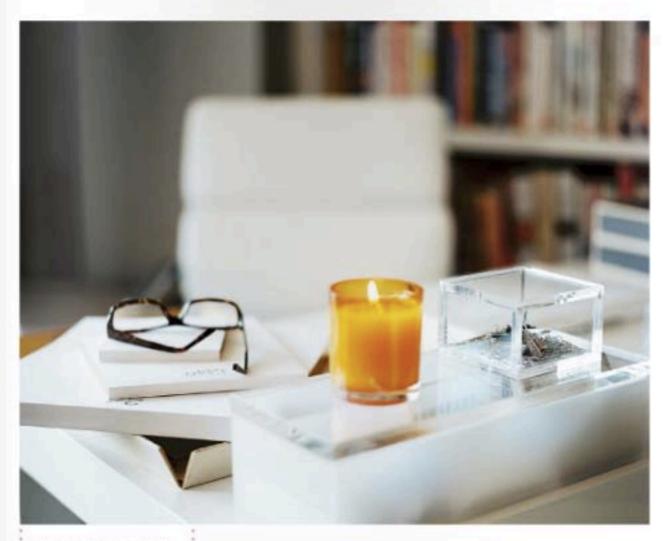




Claridge has a gift for making a bathroom beautiful, with artful displays and coordinated details like the gray Greek-key-bordered shower curtain in her master bath. "I'm a sucker for a pretty shower curtain," she says. "If you don't have a built-in glass shower stall, splurge on a great shower curtain."







Lucite boxes take the role of drawers where there are none—like on Claridge's desk—holding stationery, paper clips, pencils, sewing supplies, and embroidery scissors. "I adore amassing boxes," she says. "They're a practical and pretty way to tidy up all those knick-knacks that gather in our lives."

Favorite Laurann Stops

Installations Antiques, Houston
Area, Houston (713) 668 1668
Kuhl-Linscomb, Houston
Thompson + Hanson, Houston
The Container Store



Five House Rules

Buy only what you love! Really, truly, madly, deeply love! Don't settle for "like." Acquire what feels so very right deep down Inside-be It fashion or home design. Stick to this credo and you won't have any regretful purchases.

Play! Move things around and have fun with your environment Why keep accessories and furniture stagnant? Change and rotate them with others you've stashed away for a while. I acquire. pieces with the idea that if I tire of them in one room, I can move them into another fairly easily.

Don't forget to update. While I aspire to live with a timeless sense of style, I don't want to get stuck in a rut, either. Technology and the world around us are constantly changing, bringing to the fore. new things that can enhance your life in countless ways. Embrace change and update your surroundings and your wardrobe often.

Don't underestimate the power of stylish accessories, for fashion or home. I've designed a collection of uncomplicated clothing intended to be multitasked in myriad ways. I love nothing better than seeing someone take a Claridge + King piece and make it completely their own with statement-worthy accessories and their favorite wardrobe staples.

Great style is all about the mix. It's more interesting to mix a designer splurge with Gap leans or a set of funky bracelets or a necklace from Forever 21 or Target. At home, I love playing with scale and age. Filling a room in neutral tones with contemporary art and furniture. blended with a balance of vintage and preclous antiques, feels at once both invigorating to the eye and harmonious.

Domestic Art: Curated Interiors

(Assouline, 2008)

"It nearly sold out in its first printing, and it will go into its second printing soon," Claridge says. "At the moment, Amazon.com is selling copies of the first edition for \$901...It's becoming a collector's item quickly.

"We had more than ten years' worth of layouts from the pages of PaperCity in Houston and Dallas to cull from....Doing a book was something that Holly Moore [editor-in-chief and founder of PaperCity], Rob Brinkley [Dallas co-editor of PaperCity1, and I meant to do for a while, but the timing felt right to release it in fall 2008.

"Knowing we had a penchant for rather eccentric, curated spaces completely reflective of the people inhabiting them, we felt it was important to focus on houses and projects that reflected that particular sensibility. PaperCity has over the years gained a following in both Texas and across the nation for our very unique home coverage, and these were the sort of stories we found really resonated with readers."



Texas s Round Tow Antiques: Fau

the one I'm working on. I labor over each detail, contemplating a piece from every angle, trying it on myself and other fit models. I started with the aim to fill a void in my own wardrobe, and that's still a big motivator. Now I'm in the advantageous position of hearing what our customers crave, too, and incorporating those ideas into the line. I'm excited about the T-shirt dresses I'm doing this spring/summer and our shirtdresses coming out this fall and next spring."



Can't Get Enough of...

Fragrance

Be it perfume or scented candles, I'm so intrigued by beautiful scents, especially uncommon, small boutique brands. Fragrance and candles are a wonderful treasure to bring back from your travels, too. Every time you wear a scent or light a candle, you'll be reminded of its origins. I love, love, love almost any fragrance by Frederic Malle, but the one I wear most and get stopped about all the time is Une Rose by Edouard Fléchier.

Frost flowers

It's the one little splurge I do for myself every week. I especially love white lilles, lady slipper orchids, peonles in May and June, pink tulips, sweet peas, and ranunculus.

Freshly troned heets

Since we spend so much of our lives in bed, why not sleep on well-made bed linens? Linen sheets are especially cool and cozy in summer, and I adore the set of Leontine Linens I had monogrammed in a two-tone gray font. They all seem to get better—softer and cozier—as they age, too.

Juckets, couts, and sweaters

I'm forever chilly, and adding a fun top layer is not only a practical way to ward off a chill any time of year, but a good way to personalize your look. I love to scour vintage stores and small retailers when I travel for uncommon pieces.

Good food

Whether it's humble or haute, I appreciate a good meal. I love to cook and bake whenever I have the chance. You'll always find homemade cookle dough stashed in my freezer, so fresh-baked chocolate chunk or peanut butter cookles are just ten minutes away!



"The idea of oreating something is so satisfying to me.
"It the end of the day, it's so meaningful."

Lonny