

MIAMI LIVING

The Best of South Florida

TORREY DEVITTO



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UNLOCKING THE ARTIST

CELEBRITY INTERIOR DESIGNER ERINN VALENCICH SHARES HER SECRETS TO GREAT DESIGN, SUCCESS, AND MORE

WORDS BY ANDREA GALLEGU-PATRICK · PHOTO CREDIT: JOHN RUSSO

Renowned luxury interior designer-to-the-stars, Erinn Valencich has appeared on NBC's *American Dream Builders*, *The View*, several HGTV shows, *Access Hollywood* and E! She's a fine furniture designer, residential developer, author, sought-after media personality, and serial entrepreneur, who attributes her success to hard work and not being afraid to fail.

"You don't get anywhere if you don't try, if you don't risk getting out of your comfort zone and putting it on the line. I always grew up with this idea of why not me? If other people can do cool things, I can too! I like to just jump in and figure it out as I go. I think that's also what attracts me to being an entrepreneur, the challenge of it. To create is really exciting. I think that willingness to not quit when the going gets tough is really the only things that makes people successful. Diligence is the main key to success. If it's not

working, suggest a strategy before throwing in the towel."

The California native is an inspiring artist whose Los Angeles-based design firm, Erinn V. Design Group, is known for creating interiors that redefine casual elegance with a modern, sophisticated touch. If you desire a unique, masterfully designed project, Erinn is *THE* designer to call. Celebrities like Ashton Kutcher, Jennifer Love Hewitt, Mischa Barton, Jaime Pressly, and Antonio Sabato, Jr. have all enlisted Erinn's coveted expertise. "I've done several houses with Jaime Pressly. She's very fun to work with. She loves home decor and style and doing her place. Most recently, I've worked with Dorit Kemsley [*The Real Housewives of Beverly Hills*]. I loved working with her and her husband. They have a very cool, but very glamorous rock 'n' roll vibe. I think that's one of my favorite projects," says Erinn.



What is your interior design motto?

Erinn Valencich: I took an art class during high school once and the teacher said, "Draw what you see, not what you think you see." That to me, was very profound. I think that alone can change a space dramatically. If you look at a photo of a room that you love and you try to apply that to your life, a lot of people just don't take the guidance from the image or the design they are inspired by—they just do their own thing. But if you want the room to be light and bright with white walls and soft blue rug, then why are you painting your room burgundy? To bake a cake, you have to have flour, sugar, salt, vanilla. To design a room, you can't have all flour and sugar and expect the cake to be great. Why would you think you can have one thing in a room and expect it to be great? People get really stuck on a favorite coffee table rather than thinking of it more holistically. They get stuck on the individual elements and that never rings about the most interesting design.

You were born into a family of artists [her grandfather was a fine cabinetmaker and father an architect], tell us how you believe that influenced you and the artist you are today?

EV: I grew up on a farm outside Sacramento. My grandfather had been a contractor. He built the town church, put the second story on our house. By the time I came around, he was a fine cabinet maker. He was making beautiful kitchen cabinets and furniture pieces out of his woodshop. I spent a lot of time there and found myself making a Barbie sofa out of scrap wood. My mom was the ultimate DIYer! She was always working on projects: recovering an old chair, fixing up something she found in the flea market, and finishing up our house with beautiful murals and textures. There was always somebody making something and being artistic in our family, so it was definitely an influence.

How did your collaboration with Baldwin's Hardware come about?

EV: I was doing a project in Wynwood during Art Basel. We were designing this loft space and needed a hardware line to collaborate with us for door hardware and started talking with Baldwin. They were looking for a designer to do a collection with and wanted to get into the high-end design world... We started talking and they asked me, "What would you do for us?" When I gave them my feedback, their head of marketing was like, "Wow! You're saying everything that our focus groups have been saying." They've been absolutely amazing to work with! For that line, I really wanted to design something that I knew I could provide my clients. Something that I could put into a modern house and warm it up, and put into a traditional house to modernize it. The design had to be very flexible and fit perfectly into oth environments. There's such a range of architectural styles from the traditional influence, the Mediterranean, the modern influence.

How did you come up with the concept and application for StyleRow?

EV: I knew I wanted to do something in the tech space but wasn't quite sure what that would be. For about the last eight years, I've been mulling over different concepts. Then about a year and a half ago, I was just fed up with how hard it is to do the back-office work as an interior designer these days and tried to cobble together different technologies to make our work flow a little easier. I started trying all of the best software solutions for designers out there, and they were all just very lacking... We are developing really powerful workflow tools for interior designers in the beginning of the design process as they start pulling together their design ideas, doing a budget for their client, doing a beautiful presentation for the client. I wanted to cut down the manual entry around putting products into my invoicing software, that's where our marketplace was born... All of the big design firms, furniture brands, and showrooms are signing up and it's pretty awesome.

You've designed everywhere from Los Angeles and New York to Las Vegas and Cabo, have you ever designed for a client in Miami?

EV: I've done many projects there. I'm there five to six times a year now for my furniture line. I work with a lot of interior designers in the Miami area. Our furniture is in J Nelson, a showroom in Hollywood at the design center there.

What is the most unique project that you've ever worked on?

EV: I did an oceanfront villa in Mexico. That certainly had its challenges. Working outside of the country and shipping products there and dealing with a contractor very far away. I also developed a very large modern estate in Sunset Plaza Drive in L.A. That was a three-year project. We found the land, brought in investors, built the home. It was a very exciting and unique project.

Early in your career you worked with former supermodel and lifestyle guru, Susie Coelho, assisting in a number of projects, including two best-selling books, *Everyday Styling* and *Styling for Entertaining*, tell us about your experience.

EV: I worked for Susie for six years. She's a very dynamic woman and really great at PR and marketing. When I started working with her, she had just reinvented herself as a lifestyle expert —when Martha Stewart exploded on the scene and HGTV was just taking over the world. And so, I helped her with those two books on home decor and style and were doing regular episodes on *The Today Show* and *Oprah*. There was a lot of media-based design, makeovers, and entertaining segments. I was doing everything from negotiating contracts, to helping her style segments and life tips, and produce the books. We were designing bed, bath, and table products, so it was a great experience!

Are there any other projects we should keep an eye out for?

EV: I'm doing a line with Fine Art Lamps, also based out in Miami. They do all hand-blown glass and beautiful art fixtures. We will be launching that in the spring. **ML**

For more, visit <https://www.erinnv.com>

