

Rhinestones and River Rock



By Mackensy Lunsford
Photo by Brent Fleury

Everyone can use a little advice from a design expert, right? Jean Greeson of Greeson and Fast Design sat down with *Carolina Home + Garden* to share her thoughts on Feng Shui, rhinestones and river rock.

What does Greeson and Fast specialize in? Mostly our designs are unique, colorful and playful. Our work stands out because it is unexpected—we will push the client a little bit to go through doors they wouldn't go through without us, but we're careful not to knock them off of the fence.

How did you get into design? I'm very artistic and creative, but I'm not good at drawing or painting. It took a while to figure out what to do with what I had. It was a slow evolution—my first commercial project was a dental office in Kansas City. I did a little bit for friends and I studied it in college. I was an art major in college—I

loved it. Even as a kid I was doing stuff like this around the house.

What is the most innovative project you've taken on? It was a big mountaintop home—this awful big barn. We took it beyond ugly and made it wonderful, beautiful, fun and playful.

What are today's hottest design trends? A real mix of glamour and nature. Lots of rough-cut woods for tables and beds. A lot of purple and lavender, a lot of sparkly stuff, like rhinestone buttons on a rough brown leather sofa. It wasn't just in places that you would expect where everything is kind of Hollywood. I love that contrast—I think it's really fun. Greens and blues are a little stronger, but the robin's egg blue and brown combination is pretty much gone.

What do you think of the woodsy mountain cabin look that's so popular? You know—with all the river

rock and exposed timber? It can be wonderful if it's done well, but I think that an awful lot of designers can do it in a really dull way.

What are good tips for working with a designer? Talk to them honestly. Before you meet with them, get a good idea of what your vision is. Give them good information about how your family lives in your home. Get some kind of a budget in mind and discuss it with them—a good designer will make the most of your money for you.

What is the next wave of design? People are tending to do things that are a little more natural and respectful of the environment. But that doesn't mean there will be no more crystal chandeliers—I would be a very sad woman if there were no more crystal chandeliers.

What do you think is the biggest mistake that people make in design?

Fear. Fear of trying something new.

What design tips can you provide for revamping an outdated room on a budget? Look at the biggest surfaces. Refresh the paint on the ceiling. A screaming thing that can be outdated is wallpaper. I love wallpaper, but if it's old wallpaper, that can be taken down. Refresh the carpet. If the floors are hardwood, just add a new throw rug. I would rather see a minimally furnished room with just a few pieces that they really like—there's nothing wrong with empty space, although I don't have much of it in my own house! Maybe a few pieces of art on the walls—something that means something. Something that makes them feel good when they look at it.

Any words of wisdom? Your home is your nest and you want to love to come home to it. Find out what that means to you, and do that. □