



DESIGNER CRUSH: DENISE LAVEY

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1. Who is your biggest role model?

That's easy: my grandmother, Grace. She taught me the amazing combination of absolute honesty mixed with unconditional love, which can be a little complicated. Sometimes being honest is not a warm and fuzzy grandmotherly trait, although I knew I could come to her with anything and she wouldn't judge me. That's what I think of when I think of the term "grace", and it helps me with every part of my life.

2. Which movie or play do you wish you could have designed the set for?

The Big Lebowski! Purely because of the amazing Sheats-Goldstein house, by architect John Lautner. His dynamic, organic but still modern approach to architecture, really resonates with my own creative goals. I would have LOVED to be in on the design team!

3. What is the best way to gauge a client's personality before starting a project?

First and foremost, meeting in person is so important. That's how you get a feel for how your personalities jibe, and everything flows from there. I always ask them to send me photos of their strong likes and dislikes both. Sometimes it's much easier to get a client to articulate what they don't want, and from there you can really zero in on the right vision.

4. What new design elements are you excited to integrate into your work?

My clients always inspire me with design elements. I don't want to sound like a cliché here, but it's why I love what I do. Collaboration is the key to successful creation, in my world. That said, I am always excited about new fabrics and textiles.

5. How do you completely unwind?

I don't! Not completely anyway. But the closest I come is when I travel for inspiration, not for work. A couple years ago I went to Africa by myself on a photo safari. For the first nine days I had no phone, no internet. That might be the most relaxed I've ever been in my entire life.

6. If you hadn't become a designer, which career would you have pursued?

My family and friends tell me I'm a really good debater, which I think is their nice way of saying I like to win arguments! I might have been an attorney in another life.

8. What's your favorite recipe?

In August and September my favorite cocktail, Passionfruit Margaritas, is made with Passionfruit from my garden.

- 1oz Don Julio Blanco
- 2oz Passionfruit Juice
- Squeeze of Lime
- Agave to taste
- Shake and pour over ice

Create your perfect playlist for us.



10. Who is your designer crush?

Raf Simons, he was head of Dior recently, but everything he does is so full of passion, imagination, and gorgeous style. After being in Paris watching the documentary "Dior and I" last summer, I was so inspired that I ended up wearing Dior for my wedding last Thanksgiving. Talk about design inspiration!

Lightning round!

11. Would you rather shop new or vintage?

Vintage. I always try to start with vintage, and go from there.

12. First celebrity crush?

Tom Petty! Love his musical talent so much.

13. What's your hidden talent?

I played trumpet when I was younger. On a full moon, I will sometimes break out the horn and play a little somethin'!

14. Best restaurant in your area? Where is it?

Salazar, it's in Frogtown, near my house in Atwater Village. The owner started with a taco truck, and has now opened in a former auto body shop. You go and feel like you're in a beautiful, funky little courtyard in Mexico, and the food is incredibly modern and comfortable all at once.

15. SF or LA?

LA!!!