

ETCETERA

Anatomy Of A Design: A Closer Look At Product From Bassett McNab

DECEMBER 2, 2020 BY RAYMOND PAUL SCHNEIDER

Anne Hahn-Waddell, Creative Director of Bassett McNab, joins us to discuss the latest collection from the textile brand.



Design by Traci Zeller. Photo by Stephan Karlisch.

Raymond Paul Schneider: When did you first start to develop this new collection?

Anne Hahn-Waddell: The development process began literally a heartbeat after Stout announced its acquisition of Bassett McNab in early September 2019.

Raymond: What was the overall timeline from conception to achieving the final design?

Anne: We felt it important to place the archive's treasures back in the hands of designers as quickly as the design process would allow. Inception to fabrics took less than six months, which, in design time, is equivalent to a roller coaster moving from zero to sixty miles per hour in seconds.

Raymond: What was your initial inspiration, and where did the idea come from?

Anne: The backstory linking the Bassett and Stout families is epic. Both brands have weathered more than a hundred years of challenges, which speaks to their timeless style and iconic designs. Sifting through the archives was a time-travel through twentieth-century American design. I recognized many of the patterns and was so amused by the bright colors of the '80s. What I hoped to find, in particular, was a consistent design thread – the "voice" that would define and set the brand's identity. The vibe of the archive was upbeat, energetic and crisp. These are not shy designs; they have quite a bit of strength and moxie.



Photo by Maximalist Studio.

Raymond: Please describe your overall creative and design process.

Anne: Jean-Michel Frank noted, "Throw out and keep throwing out. Elegance is elimination," -wise advice that I keep taped to my design table. My creative process was about pinpointing, in each fabric, the design element that's timeless, understanding its DNA, and imagining how that timelessness could be moved forward. For some patterns, a simple rescaling or recoloring was enough to meet contemporary criteria, while for others, perhaps a change in ground cloth or print method was needed. The design of companion woven and embroidered fabrics followed the lead of the prints. Each was created to support and augment its printed counterpart and to enhance the overall look of a room. I am fortunate to work with some of the most talented artisans in the world. What I find most remarkable about each of them is their commitment to creating a superlative product.

Raymond: Did you have a specific audience or theme that you had in mind?

Anne: The first collection, "Origins," speaks to characteristics inherently Bassett McNab. Bassett McNab designs are timeless, chic and inspired. I have challenged myself to push beyond what's already available in the market and to give designers the fabrics they need to create spaces that are truly personal and unique.



Photo by Maximalist Studio.



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Raymond: Please describe any challenges that affected the design and perhaps steered you to an entirely new final design?

Anne: I'm a bit "bullheaded," so no challenge would deter me from implementing the vision I had for the collection! That being said, supply chains, communication and timelines were all massively disrupted by the worldwide pandemic. Imagine trying to coordinate printers and weavers from half a dozen countries around the world as each was forced to close and wait for COVID to subside. Design was a joy, implementation was a challenge, but we did it.

Raymond: Describe your overall brand DNA and Ethos:

Anne: With so much available to designers in the market, I wanted to establish brand clarity—a consistent point of view that sets Bassett McNab apart. Our mission is to empower designers to create timeless interiors by offering fabrics of an uncompromising quality. The patterns create a classic, modern American style in the legacy of design greats like Elsie de Wolfe, Dorothy Draper and Rose Cummings, all pioneers of a brighter, lighter and more streamlined style, so on target for today.

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