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GIL WALSH

THE INTERIOR DESIGNER TO KNOW IN PALM BEACH

By Jermery Murphy

In the heart of Palm Beach, Gil Walsh runs one of the region's most prestigious interior design firms, Gil Walsh Interiors—a company known for its sophisticated blend of classical training, theatrical sensibility, and intuitive client rapport. With a background that spans fashion, set design, and architecture, Walsh, who is a registered, licensed interior designer, brings a multidimensional approach to each project—whether it's a historic waterfront estate, a country club, or a cultural center—infusing every space with a sense of story, structure, and soul.



"I started in fashion, and then worked in the theater doing set and costume design," Walsh explained. "Eventually I realized interior design encompassed everything I loved—art, theater, fashion—and that's where I could build a life." Her transition into interiors may have begun as a practical choice, but it quickly became her life's passion. Over the years, she's established herself as one of the most respected names in luxury design, known for her deep understanding of proportion, architecture, and the emotional connection people have with their homes.

That sensibility was forged early. "My mother was an artist, my father was a surgeon—but also very artistic. We grew up in museums, learning how to paint and understand that world," she recalled. "I became fascinated with furniture—how it's made, how it fits in a room, what it means emotionally." Walsh's professional journey took off in Cleveland, where she worked for a major firm that offered a full-service model—interior designers, carpentry shops, upholstery rooms, even lampshade makers—all under one roof. "I learned all of that in one big warehouse," she said. "And I went back to night school to understand things like furniture scale, arm height of a sofa, doorway dimensions—everything that fashion doesn't teach you."

After a decade of hands-on learning, Walsh returned to Pennsylvania, where she worked in architectural firms and refined her understanding of how buildings and interiors must work together. "Architecture and interior design have to be married to create the stage set that is our environment. Without good architecture, you don't have a well-rounded room."

THE INNER SANCTUM OF THE CLIENT

But what truly separates Gil Walsh Interiors is her approach to the client relationship. "We go through a very specific process. We start by asking for inspiration pictures—because people can't always articulate what they want with words. But show them an image, and suddenly their memories come flooding out." Often, Walsh said, it's not just style preferences that emerge; it's childhood experiences, personal traumas, deeply emotional cues that shape how a person wants to live. "They remember something from when they were young, something they loved or hated. And that memory drives their vision. That's when you know you've hit the inner sanctum of the client." Walsh's work is rooted in that intimacy, but also in deep expertise. "Our niche is the knowledge I've brought from the Northeast—my education, my cultural background," she said. "I've lived the life of my clients, I understand how they live. But I'm very happy going in through the service entrance. This is art in three dimensions—and that's what I love."

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She also credits her firm's success to its long-standing relationships with highly specialized subcontractors and craftspeople. "The best upholsterers, workrooms, finishers—they came to Florida from the Northeast thinking they'd retire, then decided to keep working. We've built trust with them. That's part of our edge."



THE ARCHITECTURAL INTEGRITY OF A SPACE

Walsh is known for her deep respect for classical design, but she's no purist. "I'm working on a classical home right now where we're incorporating mid-century modern and art deco elements. With the right education and understanding of scale and proportion, you can marry these styles beautifully." Her guiding principle? "In our world, nothing is really new—it's all a repeat of history." Still, she has rules. "Something in the red family—coral, orange, pink—should be in every room. That's just written in gold," she said. And while trends come and go, her focus remains on proportion, scale, and honoring the architectural integrity of a space.

While her firm is best known for high-end residential work, Walsh is increasingly taking on commercial and cultural projects, including hospital interiors, country clubs, golf courses, and theater lobbies. "If you think about it, a hospital is just like a country club—if you don't have beautiful interiors and good food, you're not going to attract the best doctors or patients."

RESTORING FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT'S ICONIC FALLINGWATER

One of the most memorable projects of her career came out of nowhere: restoring the interiors of Frank Lloyd Wright's iconic Fallingwater. "I didn't even understand Wright's rhythm at the time—I had to go to the library and do a quick study," she laughed. "But I took the job. And I'm so glad I did. That experience changed everything. Now I sit on the board."

Looking ahead, Walsh sees continued growth for her firm. "We're equipped to do large-scale homes, specialty commercial spaces, and cultural institutions. Palm Beach is expanding rapidly, and there's a real demand for thoughtful, high-end design."



Ultimately, Gil Walsh sees herself not just as a designer but as a storyteller, one who paints homes instead of canvases. "This is not reabout trends. It's about people. It's about how they want to live, what makes them feel safe, and what makes them feel joy."

Gil Walsh
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