

Interior designers: Paul and Shannon Wehsener

Design duo, Paul and Shannon Wehsener are a force to be reckoned with when it comes to interior design.

Jennifer Ebert
July 16, 2019 12:45 pm

Meet Paul and Shannon Wehsener

Paul Allen Wehsener and Shannon Crane Wehsener, both San Diego natives, have been married since 1992. The couple have two university-aged children and one rescue dog.

Paul studied architecture, fashion and business marketing at university, while Shannon indulged in interior design and art.



We knew we wanted to work together, and with a commitment to raise our children at home, we began our company, Paul Allen Design in 1995. The business primarily focuses on all phases of residential design, both remodel and new construction.



Our first Historic Hotel project, was The Washington Schoolhouse Hotel, in Park City Utah. This successful project, and amazing visionary & design connection with owner, Marcy Holthus, continued a design collaboration for other projects. Knowing there would be another hotel after Washington Schoolhouse, Paul came across an article in a Design Magazine about the listing of Château du Grand Lucè, and ‘insisted’ that this Castle be next in the Holthus hotel portfolio.



The Chateau acquisition lead to our current role as Creative Directors for Pilot Hotels. Together with Holthus, we are charged with creating, designing, developing & overseeing: Concept, Branding, Programming, space planning, purchasing, construction administration, landscape, styling, uniforms & amenities.



When asked about the inspiration behind their design for Hotel Château, they reply 'simply put, being Americans in France!' The Design had to be decidedly French, as seen through modern American eyes. We have a reverence for French Design & Style & respect for tradition Visiting the archives of famous fabric houses of Pierre Frey & Lelievre provided context.

The concept was to be authentic, demonstrate a refreshing sparseness and exhibit a Fresh opulence. The aim was to incorporate and highlight each beautifully crafted piece by styling & layering spaces with an edited sophistication.



A signature for our design style is to create a curated collection, specific to each client and project. For Hotel Château, this meant: physically searching the Paris Antique shops, the Paris Flea Market, L'île sur la Sorgue Markets, Loire Valley Brocantes and antique stores in the countryside of France, repurposing the Chateau inventory, and combing websites (Proantic & Chez Pluie) to locate dealers and treasures. Custom pieces were sourced mostly from European ateliers, which continue hand-carved traditions and designs.



Luxurious fabrics, wallcoverings and custom carpets, were intentionally selected using primarily French and European manufacturers. Patterns were chosen based on 18th century historic designs and embossing techniques. Upholstery & drapery fabrication was done by French Ateliers. True collaborations were formed to realise our vision, combined with the vast expertise and the mastery of traditional techniques used by these French tradesmen.



Such detailed communication is required to achieve successful results.

We had to learn many things such as: a 'French Pleat' is a 'Pli Dior,' 'more feathers, less mouse' is 'plus plumes, moines de mousse' and that Houles is a French standard. Our most cherished compliment came from Felix, our drapery fabricator, who said we had a good eye for colour.

Our typical day as a design couple has changed drastically due to our 'empty nest,' and a project in France. For two years, we took multiple trips to France & resided on-site. Each morning begins with coffee and a walk to the village boulangerie for fresh croissants. An Americano for Shannon and a Cappuccino for Paul.



Our next project is to undertake further renovations in unrestored areas of the Hotel Château du Grand Lucè. Following that, we are looking forward to designing the next addition to the Pilot Hotels portfolio – a beach house in La Jolla, close to home.

Photography/ Adam Lynk