

Pro Spotlight: Finding Balance When Styles Collide

LA designer shares her secrets for colorful, personality-filled spaces that honor individuality.

Who: Alison Kandler of [Alison Kandler Interior Design](#)

Where: Los Angeles, California

In her own words: “Nothing makes me happier than creating rooms that reflect the personalities of the people who live in them.”

Blending two distinct design styles under one roof can be one of the toughest challenges for homeowners — and one of the most rewarding. Los Angeles designer Alison Kandler has built a reputation for turning potential clashes into cohesive, colorful interiors that feel authentic to everyone who lives in them. Known for her fearless use of color and her knack for weaving personality into every project, Kandler helps couples find common ground while celebrating their individuality in joyful, unexpected ways.

A Passion for Personalized Design

Kandler didn’t take a straight path into interiors. With a BFA in advertising from the Art Center College of Design, she first worked as an art director before following her true passion in 2001.

Her eclectic style draws inspiration from the Bloomsbury Group, Impressionist painters and chance flea market finds. “I love mixing colors, fabrics, textures and shapes in unexpected and fresh ways,” she says.



The Challenge: When Two Styles Collide

“I sometimes feel like part designer, part marriage counselor,” Kandler says with a laugh. Whether one partner leans toward classic simplicity or the other gravitates to bold, whimsical details, her philosophy is clear: honor both voices while creating a cohesive story.

Here are three strategies she uses to bring balance to even the most divided spaces.

1. Keep Major Surfaces Simple

When styles clash, Kandler starts with a neutral foundation. “Counters, cabinets and floors should remain simple and timeless,” she says.

In one Los Angeles project, the husband wanted classic white finishes, while his wife hoped to showcase her French Moroccan heritage. Kandler balanced both: streamlined cabinetry paired with colorful tile and wallpaper accents. The result feels fresh, vibrant and deeply personal.



2. Introduce Color in Thoughtful Layers

For clients hesitant about bold hues, Kandler layers color in measured ways.

In a Santa Monica master bath, a crisp white backdrop set the stage for a playful surprise: a shower floor tiled in purple blossoms. “The first impression is calm and fresh, then you realize the entire floor is a bed of flowers,” she says. It’s a joyful detail that delights without overwhelming.



3. Divide and Conquer

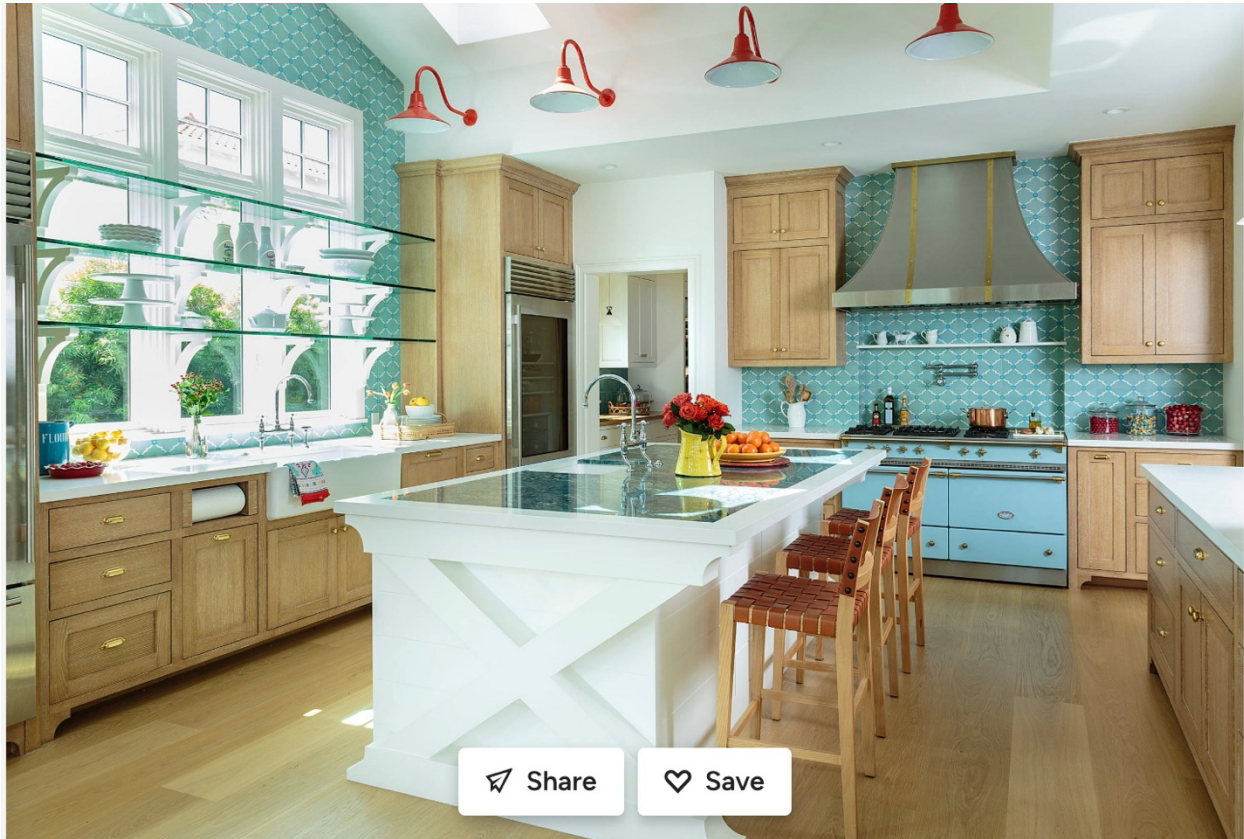
When compromise feels impossible, Kandler suggests carving out ownership of different spaces.

In Pacific Palisades, parents let their six-year-old daughter choose her favorite colors. Kandler transformed them into a life-size dollhouse bedroom with shutters, a picket fence and a hidden library niche. The result proved that compromise can spark creativity — and make every family member feel at home.



Homes as Colorful as Life Itself

For Kandler, the joy of design lies in its intimacy. “Homes should reflect the people who live in them,” she says. By blending restraint with vibrancy, she turns differences into spaces that celebrate individuality and strengthen connection.



Questions for Alison if interviewed:

- How do you navigate conversations when couples have strongly opposed tastes?
- Do you use any exercises (mood boards, color testing, shopping trips) to help couples visualize their shared style?
- What role does humor or storytelling play in easing design disagreements?