

SPECIAL: BEST OF SHOW

# DESIGN TIMES

THE ART OF INTERIORS

HOME IS WHERE THE PARTY IS ♦ ALEXANDRA STODDARD

95 US / \$5.95 CANADA

01 >





BY JULIE JACKSON

Susan Orsini creates liveably stylish interiors and has the business sense to go with them.

## Orsini's Way

Susan Orsini had always wanted to be a veterinarian. If it weren't for her parents, perhaps she would have been a doctor by the age of 25 instead of the owner of Orsini Design Associates. "I have always had a love of animals. I thought I would maintain my interest in design as a hobby. Fortunately, I discovered I had it >>>



"The harder you work, the luckier you get." This has been interior designer Susan Orsini's motto since starting her company at age 25.



Orsini carved this living area out of a photographer's New York loft. Responding to her client's many interests, she created a colorful room for work and play. Orsini chose a Stark Carpet that intentionally camouflages the family dog.



backwards before it was too late," said Orsini, dressed in a blueberry Karl Lagerfeld jacket and black straight skirt.

Orsini's parents had always encouraged her to work in design. "They believed it was where I had natural talent," she said.

"During spring break, I came home and found that my parents rented an apartment for me in the Village, had moved in all my things, and had applied to Parsons in my name. All I had to do was take the test, go to the interviews, and get in."

But was life always this easy for one of Manhattan's hottest designers?

**DESIGN TIMES:** So I guess your parents had the right instincts?

**SUSAN ORSINI:** Yes. No one in my family is shy. Often I think back to the events that have shaped my life, lifestyle, and my work. My family is very driven by fashion, art, design, music, food, and a certain quality of life. I'll give you an example: it was not until I went

"There are three major reasons interior design projects fail: surprises about time, surprises about money, and surprises about aesthetics."

away to college that it occurred to me that restaurant food could be as good as the food you had at home. My parents are incredible cooks and are good at entertaining.

**DT:** Why did you agree to go to Parsons?

**SO:** The Environmental Design program, in which I have a degree, encompassed interiors, products, furniture, urban design, and architecture. I had an interest in all of them

"My client wanted a very private retreat in a country home setting. We added an attic to the main residence, with sleeping accommodations as well as a powder room." Ottoman by Schumacher. Chair and ottoman fabric by Fonthill, Ltd.







"A book of etiquette should be required reading." This library for the Long Island Historical Society Showhouse is one of Orsini's prized designs. Antique Amritsar carpet from Doris Leslie Blau.

and was not sure which would be my specialty. Having all disciplines was very appealing.

It was a very intense program. It was full-time most days and very often all night. There was very little time left for life outside the Parsons environment. The hours were grueling. Actually, it was pretty good training for what I do today.

While at Parsons and after graduation, I worked at the City Planning Commission in the Department of Urban Design. Then I worked for Unigram, a very hot design boutique that specialized in high-end restaurant, commercial, and residential projects. The project mix and profile at Unigram became the model for my own firm.

DT: Where did you get your confidence?

SO: Truthfully, I didn't think much about it; I just did it. I do not over-analyze. **CONTINUED ON PAGE 104**

## Manhattan Shopping Spree

Susan Orsini tackles shopping in the same rigorous way she approaches her design projects. Two shopping days are regimented into her weekly schedule. "On the days I shop, I decide on certain quadrants or areas of the City, or go out of town to upstate New York or Connecticut for the day."

Orsini has even written an interiors and accessories shopping guide for out-of-town friends and clients. Here are some of her favorite stops:

**E. 61st Street:** Sentimento, The Dining Trade, Town & Country, Naga Antiques.

**E. 60th Street:** Antique Passage, Jean Karajian, David Duncan

**E. 62nd Street:** Marvin Alexander

**E. 63rd Street:** Yale Burge

**Uptown:** Nancy Brous, Lee Colicchio, Deco Deluxe, Stair & Co., Morton & Co.

**Carpets:** Stark, Doris Leslie Blau

**Downtown:** Wooster Gallery, Niall Smith, Karl Kemp, Kentshire, Maison Gerard

Carpet (below) from Doris Leslie Blau.

