



Design informs everything at IBB



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Step into IBB Fine Furnishings in the Dallas suburb of Frisco and it doesn't take long to realize there's an interior designer running the place. There are two, in fact — and many more lending a hand.

The business started 30-some years ago as an interior design firm founded by Beth Rafferty (IBB stands for Interiors by Beth). Together with her daughter, Shay Geyer, the duo has grown the business to a 40,000-square-foot store and design resource, a quarterly magazine, a product design brand, model home design and more.

Additionally, the store offers white glove delivery and is expanding its warehouse space with a new 50,000-square-foot building.

But everything goes back to design, first and foremost.

I had the chance to visit IBB in June while in town for the Dallas Total

Home & Gift Market. I wanted to talk to Geyer about what makes the store — a 2018 Home Accents Today Retail

Star — unique.

"We really look at this space — obviously it's a retail store and we sell furniture and everything you need to complete a project — as our design lab," said Geyer, who now co-owns IBB with Rafferty. "We put wallpaper up and we change our paint colors every three to four months. We let all of our designers have input in what's going to go up."

In all, there are 36 designers on staff at IBB, including two who deal in nothing but visual merchandising, which means they're constantly reinventing vignettes because of a churning assortment of products.

"They probably have the toughest jobs because we sell right off the floor," Geyer said. "If a client's having a party on Friday night and needs everything delivered today, we can make that happen."

As part of selling everything from the floor, many of the furniture pieces found in IBB are one-off items with custom details. Geyer said those touches ensure that clients and customers get products that create a space all their own.

"We don't buy sets of anything," Geyer said. "We want people to have a well-designed home that they're proud of and can live in."

Twice a year, IBB hosts special

events. Once annually, it holds a Day of Design in which vendors visit and have the chance to talk about their products. In September, the store hosts an open house in which its staff of designers has the opportunity to create vignettes in store and talk to visitors about what sparked their inspiration.

"We try to make it an experience for the client from beginning to end, whether it's somebody just walking in as a retail customer or a client for whom we're doing the home from the ground up," Geyer said. "A lot of our work is project-based, but we have clients referred by word of mouth who need a sofa or a lamp, or even a previous client for whom we did the whole house but may want to refresh some things."

Business has grown in IBB's three-plus decades. The new warehouse comes from needing more space because of design projects, model home design and in-store sales. Product design opportunities have arisen (Geyer has licensed rug designs with Nourison and permanent botanicals with The Botanical Mix), and the magazine developed as a way to promote design projects.

It helps, though, that Geyer has a background in media. She graduated from the Walter Cronkite School

LEFT: The store's vignettes includes these permanent botanicals designed by Shay Geyer for The Botanical Mix. RIGHT: IBB Fine Furnishings is located in the Dallas suburb of Frisco, Texas.

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of Journalism at Arizona State and interned for ESPN, working with the Sunday Night Football crew. I, too, worked in sports journalism for years and enjoyed talking with her about our experiences.

"Solomon Wilcots was a sideline reporter at the time, and I was his assistant," Geyer said. "At the time, I was meeting all these professional athletes who were my age, and they were getting these crazy houses. My parents had a house (in Scottsdale, Ariz.) and people knew my mom was a designer. I'd go help them and my mom told me I might want to consider this as a career. It just sort of happened, and it was inherent in me

and didn't feel like a job."

Having grown up in and around interior design and the home décor industry, Geyer got to see her mother work for years, which she said still carries weight in everything IBB does.

"Everybody asks about our business model. For me, I'd say the fact that we're nimble and we're a family-owned business, so we call the shots," she said. "I want to say there's some specific formula but we try to be true to our brand. We want to create the lifestyle for families that they're comfortable in and can create memories for years to come. Every decision we make for our business revolves around that." ■

TOP: While these walls inside IBB Fine Furnishings currently have green and orange hues, that won't last. The store refreshes with new paint colors every three to four months.

MIDDLE: Shay Geyer co-owns IBB Fine Furnishings with her mother, Beth Rafferty, who founded the company as an interior design firm.

BOTTOM: The resource room in IBB Fine Furnishings' upstairs area has spaces for design meetings as well as fabric and rug samples.

