



Caroline Tyler DeCesare is a 5th generation native of Mesa, Arizona. She received her Interior Design degree from Arizona State University in 2000. After working at a high-end Scottsdale, Arizona, design firm for 10 years, she decided to go it on her own and opened a design studio in January 2009. Her firm specializes in high-end residential and hospitality properties.

CAROLINE TYLER DECESARE

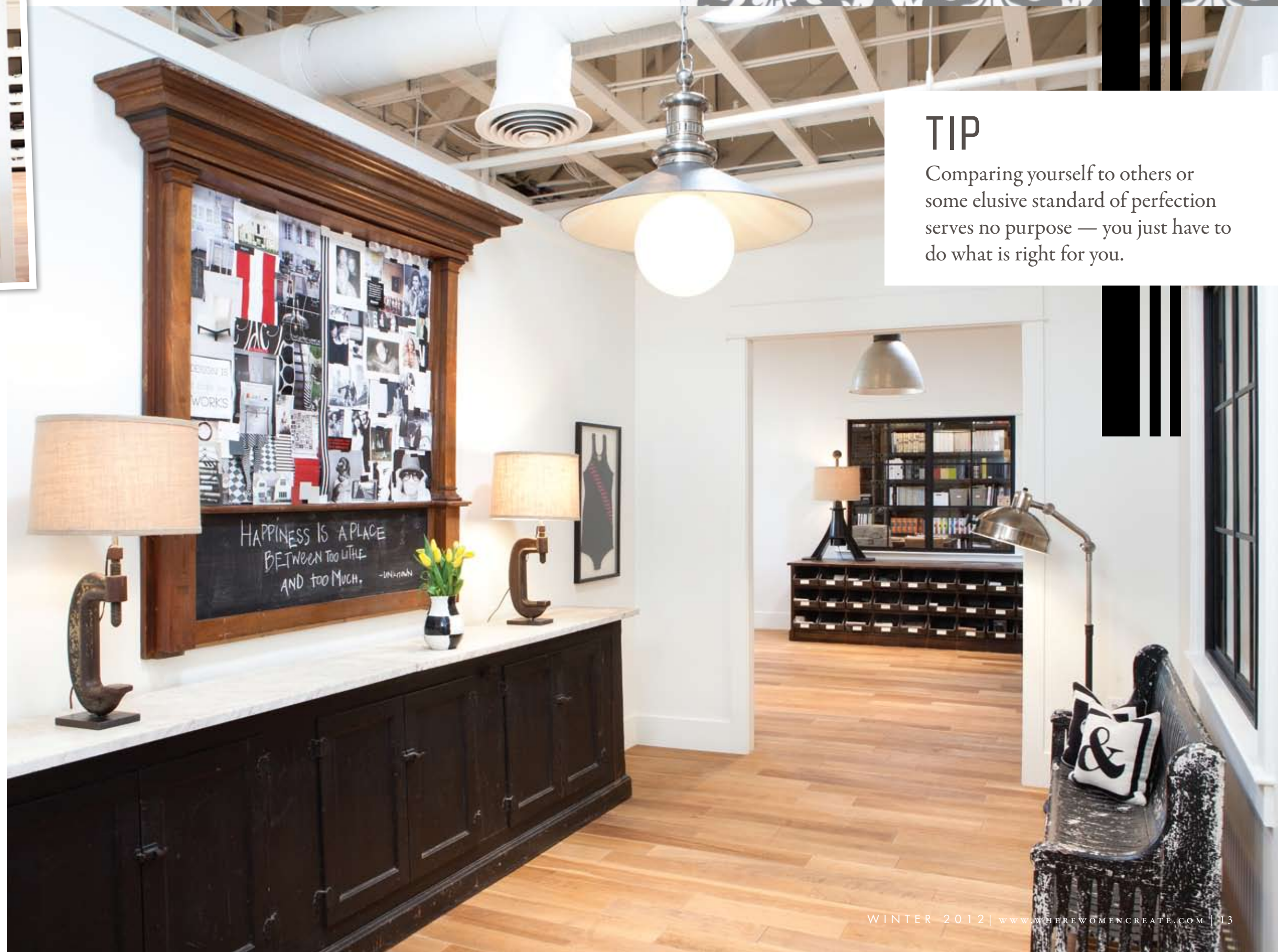




My mother is a very talented decorator and had her own furniture store in the early 1980s. I remember spending time in her store and watching her work on our home as well. As a young girl, I spent many nights rearranging the furniture in my room. It seems like every aptitude test I took during my school years suggested interior design. However, I never thought of myself as “artsy.” I was always an overachiever academically and had my sights set on a more traditional profession.

I initially started college as a physical therapy major but after a few life-changing events I ended up helping a family friend run her interior fabric store for the summer. After remodeling the store and doing the window displays, I realized that design is my passion and started ASU’s highly ranked, highly competitive, interior design five-year program.

I have been blessed with many mentors in my life — strong women who have shown me that I can do anything I set my mind to. In terms of my design career, I was very fortunate to start at Wiseman & Gale under the tutelage of Anne Gale. It was at W & G that I had the opportunity to work for Donna Vallone. Donna took me under her wing and gave me every opportunity to learn and grow as a designer. After three years of working at W & G, I was part of the team that helped Donna start her own design firm, Vallone Design, in 2001.



TIP

Comparing yourself to others or some elusive standard of perfection serves no purpose — you just have to do what is right for you.



FAVORITE QUOTE

"Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness, that most frightens us."

— Marianne Williamson



I am inspired by the process of both living and creating. My favorite part of any project is finding out how the client really lives and uses their home and then shaping the spaces to meet those needs. Whether it is the distance from the garage to the kitchen, or the size of the laundry room, the smallest details can make the biggest difference. I have always been inspired by the inherent beauty of very functional objects, such as clocks, typewriters, and old machinery. Perhaps growing up watching my father custom build horse trailers made me also appreciate how things are crafted, and the many connections that combine to create a whole.

Interiors should be authentic to the people who live in them. The home should tell the story of its inhabitants — both in its

design and decoration. I enjoy mixing styles and periods as well as “high and low” furnishings. I don’t believe that something has to be insanely expensive to be designed well. However, in a quote stolen from our local master plasterer, Dennis Hopper, “Just say no to faux!” I am not a fan of materials that are trying to be something they’re not. Nothing can replace authenticity in materials and craftsmanship.

My studio is a mix of fine and functional — luxurious meets industrial. The building my studio is located in was built in the early 1900s. My great-grandfather — one of Mesa’s first sheriff’s deputies — used to patrol the building, checking to make sure each merchant’s store was locked tight. Exposed brick walls, reclaimed wood floors, and exposed ceiling beams

create ... it

Functionality is key in design and life. If you create systems to organize things, chances are you will use them more frequently. We have a sorting system where I place inspiration images I have collected from magazines, websites, books, and blogs. Because each category has an open slot to put the photos in, I can do it quickly. Then, my assistants can trim the images, put them in a sheet protector, and place them in the correct notebook. When I need inspiration, there it is, neatly in the correct notebook.

all combine to create a loft-like feel. Antique fixtures and furnishings collected from all over the world mix with modern lighting. With the thousands of finishes, fabrics, and furnishings necessary to do our projects, organization is crucial. Fabrics are sorted by color and pattern, tiles are sorted by pattern, stones are sorted by species, wood finish samples are sorted by color, etc.

My best advice about design (and life!) would be that no one can decide for you what is the right or wrong way to be — only you can decide what is right and works for you. As a mother, wife, and business owner, I am constantly asking myself, “What is the right way to do this?” In the end, I just have to choose what works best for me and my family, relationship, and business.



WHERE WOMEN CREATE would like to thank Caroline Tyler DeCesare for her involvement in our Winter issue. To learn more about Caroline, visit decesaredesigngroup.com or email her at caroline@decesaredesigngroup.com.

