

south+english

SOUTH SPEAKS.

ENGLISH SPEAKS.

Q+A with Palmer Smith and David Ebbetts

Tell me more about the South aesthetic. What is it?

PALMER: “South + English’s Southern roots are entirely mine, inspired by my idyllic childhood in south Georgia. I was surrounded by beauty at every turn – from acres of daffodils to drawing rooms covered in chintz. I was not born to the manor by any means, but this graceful and gorgeous world was my milieu, and as I grew up, it became my life’s work to create beautiful welcoming things in the world of art, antiques and design. And with a modern twist. *My South* is about beauty with surprising twists, juxtapositions and a bit of edge.”

And English?

DAVID: “Guilty as charged, I’m the Brit, London born, and a bit buttoned-up, I’m told. Our English accent, if you will, is in a modern vernacular. So more Harry, Meghan and Archie than the old guard. The English influence is also classically rooted, so you’ll see a lovely design integrity and pleasing proportions in our pieces. It is the mix and meld of styles – the hip and classic paradigm – that makes South + English something special.”

Where is South + English made?

PALMER: Here, there and everywhere! We seek out the best partners to bring our designs to life. You’re going to see South + English furniture proudly made in America – and Asia, as well as other countries. We think of ourselves designers who make things. David’s engineering background comes in especially handy. Creativity does not exist in a vacuum. Our design process is collaborative, and includes developmental back-and-forths with our factories.”

What is your business strategy?

DAVID: Quite honestly, our business strategy is fluid. This does not mean we lack direction by any means. South + English targets designers, boutique retailers and discerning consumers. Integrity of design, operations, customer service and quality are bedrock. Yet, fluidity – being responsive to ideas and concepts is essential, especially for a new brand. We will never hesitate to change a design or process to make it better.

Who does what? You are co-founders. What is the division of labor?

PALMER: “It’s all hands on deck! Seriously, South + English is all about bridging the gaps. David and I collaborate. Sometimes he might lead a concept or idea. Other times I do. We’re not good at staying in our lanes!”

Who has veto power in this two-party system?!

DAVID: I’m pleased to report we have not hit any kind of Brexit standoff. On those occasions when we are not in agreement, the process of breaking it down and sorting out the variances always advances the cause. I’ll add there is one realm that is exclusively Palmer’s – I only observe and applaud. Palmer is an accomplished painter – under the brush name of Linwood. Many South + English fine art reproductions began as Linwood originals.”

What is a penultimate launch?

PALMER: Rome wasn’t built in a day, nor is a furniture brand! South + English was formed just six months ago. We are very proud of our Market introductions, but there is much more in production and on the drawing board. The October Market launch is a rich preview of coming attractions. We crave designer feedback and connecting with our industry peers and friends. HPMKT is a must-shop and must-show.”

Why Suites at Market Square? Why Salon?

DAVID: It’s the right time and the right place. Salon is the perfect October venue for South + English. The ground floor of the Suites at Market Square – Salon – is a launch pad for the next wave of brands, and it’s quite competitive to secure space. They mind the neighborhood! We are delighted to introduce South + English in this space, and are putting heart and soul into creating a wonderful inaugural experience.”

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