

**Maggie Boozer** July 27, 2015

## **Summer 2015 – New York City – Kemble Interiors Internship Report**

This summer I was given the opportunity to intern for Kemble Interiors. Kemble Interiors was founded in Palm Beach, Florida by Mimi McMakin in 1982. However Mimi's daughter and partner at Kemble, Celerie Kemble, decided to expand the company to Manhattan where the firm quickly became recognized as one of the top 10 interior design firms in New York City designing luxury residences and commercial projects throughout Manhattan, the Hamptons, Texas, LA, Italy, the Dominican Republic, and Palm Beach. In fact, Celerie herself was recognized as one of the country's top interior designer's and was bestowed the A-List Award by *Elle Décor* in 2012. Kemble has been featured in the *New York Times*, *Elle Décor*, *Vogue*, *Town and Country*, *W magazine*, and the list goes on.

As an intern at Kemble, I was constantly busy assisting designers with their various residential projects whether on-site or in the office. The two main residences I helped with this summer were a bachelor penthouse in SoHo and a family home in Palm Beach, two very different design aesthetics. Due to the variety in the projects, I was able to view and participate in designing both a more modern home and a more traditional home while attempting to maintain the company's own design aesthetic. While working on these, I tried to keep in mind a quote Celerie begins with in one of her books *To Your Taste* "At the end of a project, you, like my clients, should feel the result is a reflection of your ideas, standards, and preferences, not mine. In my professional life I try to familiarize myself with all the

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design possibilities that my clients would want to have in their own mental flip book as they enter into this process”(Kemble, 13). She mentions here that a key element in interior design is keeping in mind the client’s style as you piece together fabrics, furniture, and other accessories for their home, which is how I approached these two summer projects.

I was fortunate enough to work on-site some of the time, traveling to different homes Kemble had been working on. This was an extremely unique experience, as I got to see some incredible New York apartments on the Upper East Side and elsewhere. However, the place I spent the most time on-site was the three-story penthouse in SoHo. I was able to be a part of the transformation process picking out furniture, wallpapers, and fabrics. I worked in and out of the office, even visiting the colossal D & D (Decoration and Design) building on the Upper East Side, which contains approximately 132 showrooms.

In the office I assisted the designer heading the Palm Beach house in setting color schemes for each room and picking out everything from tiles to cabinets to go with each scheme. For every room in the home we utilized bulletin boards to create pseudo “mood boards” so we could piece together pictures of potential furniture and fabric ideas, working essentially like a real life Pinterest board. For this project functionality was just as important as looks, as the couple that own this home have three college age kids which means lots of traffic throughout the house. With this in mind, I reflected on one of the most important pieces of design advice Celerie offers in her first book: “All of us have an idealized “magazine life” (the image we would

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like to project to the outside world, showing our best, most polished selves) and our “real life” (the often messy comfort zone where we raise children, eat microwaved meals, stretch out exhausted at the end of the day, and watch TV). Neither lifestyle is more authentic than the other” (Kemble, 10). The combination of this “magazine life” she alludes to and our real everyday life is what makes homes unique, and in that regard I learned that it’s important to take into consideration clients lifestyles and choose décor that will be both beautiful and functional.

Purchase Orders were also something I learned how to create. A Purchase Order is a legally binding document between a buyer and a company or supplier. Every time Kemble purchased an item such as a yard of fabric or a piece of furniture for a project, a Purchase Order would have to be created. That way Kemble, as the buyer, could purchase these items on account before the homeowners paid for them. Therefore, the supplier delivers or ships the items before the homeowners pay for them and the Purchase Order serves as the risk protection. It took me a while to get the hang of Purchase Orders, as they were much more technical than most tasks I completed this summer, but it was neat getting to see the business side of an interior design company.

I am so fortunate to have worked for Kemble this summer. They provided me with a hands-on learning experience, and due to that I feel like I’ve gained a solid foothold into the world of interior design. People have always told me that work is not work if you love what you do, and I finally feel like I’ve found that. This summer I enjoyed going into the office every day, having the ability to employ my creative

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side in a useful way. It felt natural, as growing up my whole life my mother always had a passion for interior design and would often drag me along to antique shows and showrooms for our own house. Not only that, but I gained such an introspective into the business world from working in Manhattan. I learned so much about myself as a person, and for that I am so grateful Sewanee gave me the opportunity to experience an incredible summer through the funding provided.