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WHERE WOMEN CREATE BUSINESS



ANAHATA KATKIN OF PAPAYA! A MOTHER & DAUGHTER DREAM TEAM

THE FAST-PACED WORLD OF FOOD TRUCKS WITH STEPHANIE MORGAN OF SEABIRDS

MELODY ROSS OF BRAVE GIRLS CLUB ON ORGANIZING AN ART RETREAT

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JILLIAN PRITCHARD COOKE

BEE



Housed in a mid-century storefront in Atlanta's Buckhead neighborhood, interior designer Jillian Pritchard Cooke's eco-living lifestyle boutique, BEE, is full of fabulous pieces and carefully curated finds — from furniture to linens to clothing to gifts — all non-toxic and environmentally responsible. By combining her vision to create beautiful homes with her mission to help us all take better care of ourselves and the planet, Jillian has made BEE not just a successful business, but a warm and welcoming environment where customers and friends learn how creating a more harmonious environment leads to happier, healthier, and more balanced lives.

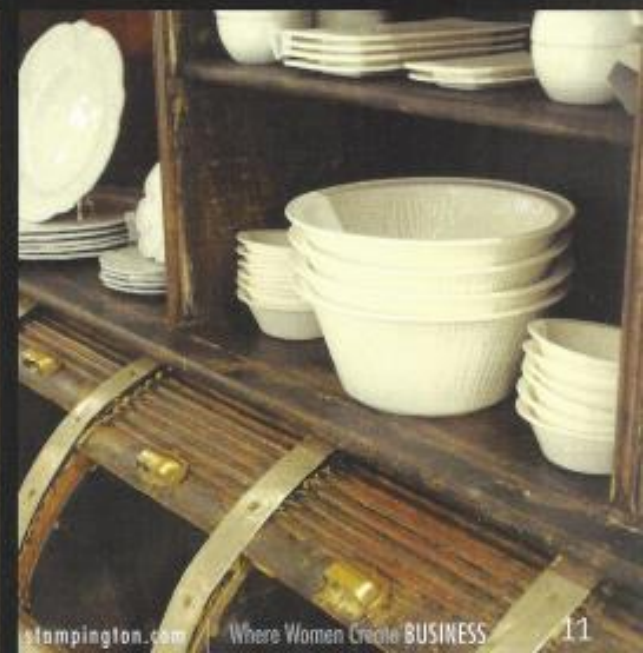
It's truly amazing how our lives evolve and how we end up where we're supposed to be. I've been inspired by my life's wide-ranging influences — from my Irish roots, to a childhood split between the idyllic English countryside and the bustle of New York City, to my years immersed in California's environmentally aware milieu. Over the years, as I found myself drawn to design projects that emphasized eco-friendly living, my interior design firm, DES-SYN, became the go-to source for environmentally aware decorating and furnishing. At the same time, I successfully battled cancer, and I came to embrace that wellness lies in the choices that we make every day, both large and small. I envisioned a retail space that celebrated sustainability and healthy living, and where we could share our passion for creating beautiful homes and advice on living happier, less stressful lives.

At BEE, we passionately believe in our platform: BEE Kind to the planet, BEE Kind to yourself, BEE Kind to others. And, just as our namesake, the bee, accomplishes amazing tasks when in a group — including pollinating one third of the world's food — we believe that by working together we can create powerful change in ourselves and in the planet. That community-oriented approach pervades our entire business model and is a huge reason behind our success. →






BEE




BEE









BEE is a feel-good place. We have customers who come in every week and gather around our vintage French bakery shopkeepers' counter to visit with friends and hear about new finds. People keep returning because they know they're always going to see something new and exciting, including amazing one-of-a-kind pieces. All of the products available at BEE — upholstery, case goods, antiques, rugs, lighting, accessories, textiles, fashions, and gifts — are sustainable and non-toxic, and each piece tells a unique and compelling story while still being good for the planet. We find that the best stories come from those items that have been repurposed again and again and come from suppliers who have a passion for what they're creating. Our bestsellers are our private label, locally harvested honey and tea (both great hostess gifts for under $10), natural soy and beeswax candles, glass and tableware, clothing made from natural materials such as linen, hemp, or French linen and lace, vintage furnishings, linens and natural bedding, and lighting from unique materials like bamboo and paper. We work closely with the design community, providing guidance and knowledge, and we are always willing to go the extra mile to find the perfect piece for all of our clients.

BEE is also a feel-good place for everyone who works with me. We take care of each other and we allow each other to grow and to reach our full potential. One evening recently, we all gathered at one of the dining room settings in the middle of the store. We ate a farm-to-table catered dinner, drank wine, and had a great time discussing our boutique, our design clients, and the many wonderful resources we have discovered. Meeting outside of the normal day really allowed us to relax, and also share with each other what has been working well at BEE and what we need to modify. →







We house three companies under one roof: BEE, DES-SYN, and a satellite office for our newest company, Wellness Within Your Walls ®, which is a program promoting reduced toxins in home furnishings and building products. By doing so, we have created an efficient, low-overhead, and highly productive work environment. With our retail space, design studio, offices, and storage in one work space, we are able to brainstorm together, solve problems together, and learn from each other. We're proud that BEE is the first Wellness Within Your Walls ® certified retailer; and because all products available in BEE fall under the WWYW guidelines, BEE leads the way in discovering vendors who share our commitment to the environment.

BEE proudly features different artists throughout the year. One recent show featured photographer Charlie McCullers' series of dancers, "Twirl." Charlie's work evokes a mystical, natural feeling with a delicate softness that married perfectly with our airy and romantic room settings: sheer linens with clean lines and creamy white hues accented with black, which included gray-washed chairs, crisply pressed bed linens (some of which are hand embroidered in Portugal), organic cotton pajamas made in California, and beautiful textiles made in Belgium from the finest flax. BEE donated a portion of sales of the photographs to the Atlanta Ballet.

During Atlanta Celebrates Photography month, BEE collaborated with artist Susan Beallor Snyder for the promotion of PRI-MO — a fusion of primitive with modern as a design entity — and displayed both her powerful textured rope sculptures and her black-and-white photography of Manhattan's modern and post-modern architecture. Our creative team put together a collection of furnishings that showed how the two design entities can coexist in the home, including African kuba clothes made into pillows, tables made from fallen trees, handbags of sweet grass from Madagascar, natural woven floor coverings, and bent-wood chairs constructed of sustainable harvested woods. →













For many of the merchandising stories, we host an event with the artist in attendance with all facets of the evening, including the entertainment, attire, and food (hors d'oeuvres often featuring our local honey, delicious wines, flavored waters and teas) tailored to complement the theme of the event. Each featured artist has helped to both bring in new traffic and to differentiate us from our competitors. The featured artists promote the pieces within the store, and the store promotes the artists. As with everything at BEE, it's an inclusive rather than exclusive strategy, and it's been thrilling to gather together as like-minded people and grow together within our community and beyond. ■

BUSINESS TIP

We should all take the time to slow down and enjoy the things in life that we have, not focus on the things we don't have, and be inspired by all of the beauty that Mother Earth has provided for us. And in turn, we should be kinder and gentler on our natural resources.





FAVORITE QUOTE

"I begin with an idea, then it becomes something else."

— Pablo Picasso







Where Women Create BUSINESS would like to thank Jillian Pritchard Cooke for her involvement in our Summer Issue. To learn more, visit bee-atlanta.com, email beekeeper@bee-atlanta.com, or call (404) 365-9858. BEE is located at 26 East Andrews Drive, Atlanta, Georgia, 30305.