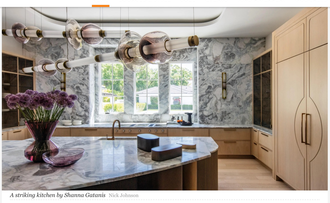


*A striking kitchen by Shanna Gatanis* Nick Johnson

TRADE TALES | JAN 9, 2026

# What is your biggest 2025 regret?

By Aidan Taylor

Last week, we asked designers to describe their greatest achievements of 2025. This week, we're flipping the script, pressing 10 designers—Karin Bohn, Everick Brown and Lisa Walker Brown, Jen Dean, Shanna Gatanis, Eve Jean, Jean Liu, Kerri Pilchik, Lisa Tharp, and Danielle Wallinger—to look back and share their biggest lows of last year and how they learned from them.

## SWERVING AROUND TARIFFS

*Jean Liu* Courtesy of Jean Liu Design

"My biggest 2025 regret is not pushing my clients harder to get their furniture orders placed before tariffs went into effect. Most projects already include cost overruns, and we work hard to not add to this touchy subject, so when surcharges became a reality, we needed to talk through how best to proceed. In some cases, our clients begrudgingly moved forward knowing there would be an additional cost; in others, we needed to go back to the drawing board to reselect something that would keep the overall project within their initial budget. It added more work for everyone during the busiest time of year." —*Jean Liu, Jean Liu Design, Dallas*

## BET ON AI

*Shanna Gatanis* Courtesy of Shanna Gatanis Design Studio

"Not integrating AI more intentionally into the foundation of our studio operations earlier. As our practice grew, it became clear how valuable these tools can be—not as a replacement for creativity, but as a means to support it. From bookkeeping and client communication to design development and workflow optimization, AI presents an opportunity to streamline the operational layers of the business, allowing us to focus more fully on thoughtful, human-centered design." —*Shanna Gatanis, Shanna Gatanis Design Studio, New York*

## MIND THE PIPELINE

*Danielle Wallinger* Courtesy of Studio D Design

"If there's one lesson that stands out from 2025, it's the importance of being diligent about our pipeline. We have been so busy for so long that, while a quiet voice kept reminding me to keep looking ahead, my attention was fully consumed by the work directly in front of us. By the end of 2024, both my team and I had been operating at full capacity for eons, and when the economy softened in early 2025—something I hadn't experienced since 2008—it felt less like a setback and more like a rare moment to catch our breath. We used the opportunity intentionally, turning our focus to long-overdue back-of-house work that had been sidelined while we were fully immersed in construction. The experience gave me a renewed respect for the importance of spacing projects thoughtfully, so I can show up not just for our clients, but for the broader needs of the business. As my firm approaches its 20-year anniversary in January 2026, the lesson feels especially clear: In this industry, nothing can be taken for granted, and attentiveness is as important as creativity." —*Danielle Wallinger, Studio D Design, New York*

## HOLD YOUR GROUND

*Kerri Pilchik* Courtesy of Kerri Pilchik Design

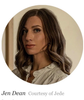
"My biggest regret in 2025 was not standing up for myself soon enough or clearly enough with a difficult client. I value relationships so much, and always want to do whatever I can to serve my clients in the best possible way. However, I realized that if you give an inch with some people, they will take advantage, from taking several months to pay invoices to refusing to pay for billable time to thinking that any complaint, however unfounded, is your responsibility. I have learned that, although it's tough, you need to stand your ground and demand to be treated with respect." —*Kerri Pilchik, Kerri Pilchik Design, Ridgewood, New Jersey*

## POSITIVE REINFORCEMENTS

*Eve Jean* Courtesy of Style My Space Design

"My biggest regret was trying to carry too much on my own. In an effort to keep clients comfortable, I delayed adjusting my pricing, despite clear guidance from business mentors. That choice limited my ability to bring on additional support and slowed the development of stronger operational systems. With more structure around onboarding and project close-out, the business could have run more efficiently and sustainably while protecting my time and energy." —*Eve Jean, Style My Space Design, Massapequa Park, New York*

## THE RIGHT MATCH



*Jen Dean* Courtesy of Jede Interiors

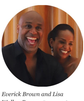
"Saying yes too quickly. Growth brought incredible opportunities, but I learned that discernment is just as important as ambition. The projects that truly align—creatively and energetically—deserve the most space, and that clarity came into focus later than I would've liked." —*Jen Dean, Jede Interiors, Orem, Utah*

## LOG OFF

*Lisa Tharp* Courtesy of Lisa Tharp Design

"Spending too much time in front of a computer! We can now source unique finds with just one click. Yet, there is no substitute for using all five senses to interact with beautiful fabrics, furniture, artwork and more, and to hear the stories of how they came to be from proprietors invested in good design. We are ringing in the new year by attending the Paris design shows, Déco Off and Maison&Objet, in January. We are also recommitting to our sustainability roots by making more time to visit the studios of local makers, artisans and craftspeople, and engaging more fully with their creative process on behalf of our clients." —*Lisa Tharp, Lisa Tharp Design, Boston*

## STRENGTHEN THE FOUNDATION



*Everick Brown and Lisa Walker Brown* Courtesy of Everick Brown Design

"The studio's biggest regret of 2025 was not carving out enough time for long-term internal investment, both personally and organizationally. With the intense demands of delivering major projects, including large-scale, mission-driven work, there was limited opportunity to prioritize personal time—a reminder of how easily balance can be displaced during periods of momentum. Equally challenging was the lack of dedicated focus on building internal infrastructure, systems, processes, and operational frameworks that are essential for sustainable growth. The pace of work also constrained the studio's ability to expand the team as strategically as intended. While the workload clearly signaled the need for additional talent and leadership capacity, the urgency of project delivery often took precedence over recruitment, onboarding and mentorship. These are not regrets of direction, but of bandwidth. 2025 reinforced the importance of building a business that is not only creatively ambitious, but structurally resilient, one that supports the people behind the work as much as the work itself." —*Everick Brown and Lisa Walker Brown, Everick Brown Design, New York*

## DIGITAL FOOTPRINT

*Karin Bohn* Courtesy of House of Bohn

"Not spending as much time or focus on marketing and our digital presence as I would have liked. This year, I was very hands-on with our studio's production and delivery, refining our internal processes while also laying the foundation for future growth. When I wasn't working on design for our clients or managing my team, I spent as much time as possible with my 3-year-old daughter. Marketing fell lower on the priority list this past year, but with so many great projects happening at House of Bohn, my regret is not taking fuller advantage of key design moments—and turning them into marketing moments as well." —*Karin Bohn, House of Bohn, Vancouver, Canada*

MORE: TRADE TALES

*Want to stay informed? Sign up for our newsletter, which recaps the week's stories, and get in-depth industry news and analysis each quarter by subscribing to our print magazine. Join BOH Insider for discounts, workshops and access to special events such as the Future of Home conference.*

TOP STORIES

1 What's on your client intake form?

2 What investment pieces do you love to see clients splurge on?

3 What's the secret to less stress on install day?

4 What happened at 3 Days of Design?

5 City Furniture is now City Home. It's a sign of the times

6 What do you do when you're being ghosted by a vendor?

7 How Google Lens changed antique shopping forever

8 What are your tips for brand building?

9 How do you deal with an indecisive client?

JOBS

Kitchen & Bath Design Assi...
WEBBER COLEMAN WOODWORKS
Watkinsville, GA

Business Development Direc...
MORRIS MOVING & STORAGE
Remote

Senior Interior Designer
ABRAMS VALENTI INTERIORS
Chicago, IL

Sales Manager
MADE GOODS
Remote

Director of Sales
FRANCOIS & CO.
Atlanta, GA

Senior Interior Designer
OVADIA INTERIOR DESIGN AND ARCHITECTURE
New York, NY

MORE JOBS »

Got a tip? Get in touch.
tips@businessofhome.com

RELATED ARTICLES

How often do you reassess your fees?

What's the secret to less stress on install day?

How do you know when you want to shoot a project?

What are your tips for brand building?

What's on your client intake form?

How do you adjust your process if you're working for friends and family?

COLLECTIONS

VEER DECOR
Kids & Nurseries Fall 2026

NGALA TRADING
Safari to Sea Coastal Collection

LILLIAN AUGUST
The Antiquaire Collection

STOUT TEXTILES
Spring 2026 Marcus William

CRYPTON
Crypton x United Fabrics Casual Classics

VAUGHAN
Spring/Summer 2026 Collection

ALL COLLECTIONS »

WHO WE ARE

*Business of Home* is the daily media of record for the home industry, and the voice of authority for interior design professionals.

NEWSLETTER

Sign up for *Design Daily* to get the most important industry headlines in your inbox each morning.

Email SUBMIT

By signing up, you confirm that you are 16 or older, agree to our Terms of Use, acknowledge the data practices in our Privacy Policy, and opt in to receive newsletters and promotional emails. You may unsubscribe at any time.

SUBSCRIBE

*BOH* offers a quarterly in-depth analysis of the topics that matter most to the interior design community—plus digital access to all magazine issues.

SUBSCRIBE »

ABOUT US | CONTACT | NEWSLETTERS | SITE FAQ

©2026 Recurrent Ventures | Terms and Conditions | Privacy Policy
Articles may contain affiliate links which enable us to share in the revenue of any purchases made.
Do Not Sell or Share My Personal Information