

Designer Mark D. Sikes, known for his chic interiors that embody a beachy, indoors-outdoor lifestyle, is honorary chair of the 2017 Lake Forest Showhouse.

THE RIGHT STRIPES

Designer Mark D. Sikes explains how fashion informs his design and why blue will always be the perfect color.

By Ann Marie Scheidler

Photography by Amy Neunsinger

For anyone familiar with designer Mark D. Sikes, it's hard not to see a room swathed in blue and white patterns without thinking of the rising star and his signature stripes (marksikes.com).

"The house we lived in in Decatur [Ill.] was all blue," recalls Sikes of his first memory of being drawn to one of his favorite colors. "Blue and white together creates a classic look that lends itself to coastal, traditional or modern interiors. It works anywhere—indoors and out. I've never met anyone opposed to it."

Sikes will serve as the honorary chair of the 2017 Lake Forest Showhouse & Gardens taking place from April 29 to May 21 in a reimagined Howard Van Doren Shaw estate in east Lake Forest benefitting the Infant Welfare Society of Chicago (lakeforestshowhouse.com).

The showhouse will be a bit of a homecoming for the now Los Angeles-based Sikes, who began his career in visual merchandising with Banana Republic and the Gap. After more than 20 successful years in fashion, he launched his interior design firm and began a lifestyle blog—a colorful record of "chic people, glamorous places and stylish things." Since then, he has grown his business to include new furniture, fabric and accessory collections with Soane, Henredon, Merida and Schumacher. Last fall, Sikes released his first book, *Beautiful: All-American Decorating and Timeless Style* (\$45, Rizzoli) while continuing to keep his finger in fashion with MDS Stripes, his collection of women's clothing (perfect for a chic weekend getaway by the lake). "Chicago is magnificent," says Sikes. "When I'm in the city, I can never get enough of its architecture."

And while fashion may have given Sikes his start, it's interior design that has captured his heart. "Working with clients in their homes and telling their stories is so rewarding, so creative and so emotional for me," he says. "I am beyond blessed and fortunate to do what I do every day."