



Audrey Margarite (left) and Jennifer Potter of the recently launched Fete Home.

## THE CREATION OF FETE HOME

Audrey Margarite and Jennifer Potter met in 2008 while working at Bunny Williams Home. Audrey arrived first, starting in Bunny's design business before heading over to the product and marketing side. At the time she resigned, she was the brand's Creative Director. Jen came on board as CEO, wielding her numbers and operations background to manage supply chain, financial oversight and distribution. The two women shared a desk, a devotion to the success of the BWH brand, and a nose-to-the-grindstone mindset.

Fete Home is their brainchild, conceived organically and after hours. The basic idea is: a smart, stylish home décor company, that releases five aesthetically-driven collections per year of mostly proprietary tabletop, accessories, textiles, and accent furniture, and uses influencer marketing and other strategies to sell direct to consumer and build community. The concept took shape as they looked at their own friends who wanted good design that was affordable and quickly accessible. The notion of designing with themselves as the target audience was exciting, but the most important piece of their new dream — they had the experience and connections to actualize it.

### WHAT WAS IT LIKE WORKING FOR BUNNY?

**AM:** It was like a family. Bunny graciously threw wedding showers and baby showers and opened her homes for employees to stay. In business, it was very clear that her decisions were final. It was her name on the door.

### WHAT WAS THE BIG TAKEAWAY FROM YOUR TIME THERE, THAT IS VITAL TO YOUR BUSINESS NOW?

**AM:** To have pride in every piece that comes out with your name on it. And ultimately, only produce what you would want in your home.

**JP:** Good ideas come from a variety of sources, so listen and read everything and talk and ask questions to as many people as possible. There is always someone doing it better and there are always ways to improve.

### HOW DID YOU RESIGN?

There is no way to sugarcoat this — it was impossibly hard. We talked about it a lot beforehand but there was no way to predict how Bunny or our team would react. We met with Bunny together, and had several meetings outlining the plan for the company in our absence. Through it all, we knew we made the right decision. Just as Bunny had done when she left Parish Hadley, it was time for us to forge our own way.

### SIX MONTHS LATER, FETE LAUNCHES. DESCRIBE THE ROAD TO LAUNCH.

We hit the ground running. Top priority was making the order process as seamless as possible — from shopping to fulfillment and shipping. Our website talks directly to our warehouse in upstate New York eliminating manual paperwork and the back and forth. Since we manufacture in India, Vietnam and the USA, it was key to time inventory so we could have most items in stock. Along the way, we also talked to entrepreneurs, many in women-owned businesses, who started from scratch and realized quite extraordinary goals.



## HOW DO YOU SPLIT THE WORK?

In general, it's similar to how it was at BWH, and we both work tirelessly on our website, we agree on final product offering and choice of ambassadors, and are both hands-on in the less-than-glamorous things like delivering inventory, shipping samples, and photo shoot prep. Because we know the importance of the outward message, we also contract with skilled copywriters, photographers, stylists, web developers, etc., and then we work with a bookkeeping firm as well as a CPA firm that manages all our corporate filings.

## HOW HAS THE MEANING OF "WORKING HARD" SHIFTED NOW THAT IT'S YOUR BIZ?

We took personal ownership in our work at BWH so we are pre-conditioned to sleepless nights and constant business thinking. That said, when it really is your own business, your mind works differently and more efficiently. When a good idea hits you, the only thing stopping you from executing is yourself.

## EXPLAIN THE UNIQUE WAY YOU WORK WITH INFLUENCERS.

Each collection has an ambassador associated with it. This is a person we've chosen to represent the collection because we admire his or her style and feel it works well with that aesthetic. We have a photoshoot at their home with our collection mixed in with his or her personal things. Our ambassadors post on Instagram and are paid a royalty on the collection they represent.

## WISDOM CULLED FROM THE JOURNEY SO FAR?

Yes! One, in a partnership, set up the structure of the business and initial round of funding in an honest way. Two, the importance of patience - no matter how organized and proactive you are, hitting sales numbers and growing your audience takes time. Three, despite having systems in place, there are always factors beyond your control. And four, the best you can do when you get knocked down is to stand back up. Cliché? Sure, but it is an absolute in business.

## WHERE DO YOU SEE FETE IN FIVE?

20 collections, an incredible family of ambassadors (we see huge opportunity with this), a few whispering thoughts of some exciting licensing deals ... and a book perhaps!



Trouvaile, a hand-stamped linen (above), is a signature Fete Home fabric.

Jen (left) and Audrey at the November launch.

Half Moon stoneware plates (below) celebrate the Minimalist aesthetic.



Brass accessories are exclusive Fete Home designs.