



Clockwise from left: New CW Stockwell CEO Katy Polsby pages through a catalog of the 114-year-old company's handscreened prints; a bold, new navy colorway of the brand's famous Martinique banana leaf motif—available as wallpaper or fabric—is complemented by swatches from additional prints in the updated line; Martinique Encore, a distinctive single-screen print, reverses the popular pattern for a fresh, graphic twist.



# ON A ROLL!

A fabulous yet fading wallpaper and fabric company triumphantly returns with a splash of 14 new patterns and a fresh face at the helm.

By Kelly Phillips Badal

**T**rust us, you know the work of L.A.-based wallpaper and fabric company **CW Stockwell** (Harbinger, West Hollywood, [harbingerla.com](http://harbingerla.com); [cwstockwell.com](http://cwstockwell.com)) even if you've never heard of the 114-year-old brand. The line's signature print, Martinique, is the bold banana leaf motif that's bedecked the hallways and coffee shop of The Beverly Hills Hotel since the Pink Palace's redesign in the 1940s. It's since been the Instagram-before-Instagram iconic backdrop to countless celebrity photos, galas and more, and is credited—alongside Dorothy Draper's 1937 Brazilliance palm

pattern—with sparking the tropical print craze that continues today.

At its height, CW Stockwell was one of the United States' preeminent wallpaper companies, but as third-generation owner Remy Chatain aged (he's the grandson of founder Clifton W. Stockwell), he downsized. When he passed away in 2013, Martinique was one of the few patterns in production from a line that once boasted hundreds. And here's where the CW Stockwell story takes a unexpected twist: While Chatain didn't plan for the company's future without him, the mantle was nevertheless taken up by his longtime family friend and Pasadena neighbor, Jill Polsby, the executor of his estate. And after a few years of keeping the lights on (even baking bundt cakes to keep the East L.A.-based printer happy!), her daughter, Katy Polsby, has stepped in as the new CEO, bent on reinvigorating CW Stockwell's heritage.

"Remy was like an uncle to me," says Polsby, who honed her textile and design chops at West Elm and Serena & Lily. Her personal connection, design pedigree and ultimate decision to steer the company into the future feels a bit like fate. "I finally realized I had get CW Stockwell going again. I was starting to pay attention to all these small-batch textile companies and to everything going on in the world of design—like the return of maximalism—and there was just no time like now to get started," she says.

Polsby dove into the company archives and set about reimagining the line while taking care to retain its spirit. The result is a collection of 14 new wallpaper and fabric patterns (from \$188 per 5-yard roll; from \$158 per yard), including fresh takes on Martinique—which, not to worry, is still available in its beloved green and pink. "Some of our patterns are exactly as they were originally, and some we simplified or changed in color or scale," she explains.

Notably, Martinique now comes in four fresh colorways, including a neutral version that Chatain had customized for a client in the early '80s, and Polsby has created an all-new, stripped-down spin on the print called Martinique Encore. "It was important to me to not cheapen Martinique; I didn't want to force this to exist," Polsby says of the graphic single-screen pattern. Her goal is to not only bring the brand full circle, back to its *crème de la crème* status and availability at top showrooms across the country, but also pick up where Chatain left off. "I'm passionate about being this company's steward," she says. "This is a total dream job."