

Designers give their philosophies

Tastes differ, but motivations are the same

Several local designers answered our request to give their ideas and philosophy about their profession. Their allegiance is partially to the firm for which they work, otherwise they wouldn't be a part of the organization. The overall approach to the challenge varies somewhat, but the end results are the same—rooms the client likes, appreciates and feels comfortable living in.

It has been said that a designer should be chosen with the same care that one would take in choosing any other professional and that during the life of the project there should be a close, agreeable relationship between

client and decorator—both have to live with the results.

DIANE DRAPER of Stewart-Glenn wrote:

"Life today for most people is filled with last-minute deadlines and reverend pressures. One of the ways to achieve more peace and tranquility is within the home.

Perhaps this explains the popularity of the 18th-century designs. The simplicity of its elegant lines can have a calming effect. It has been our experience that both young and old appreciate escaping the stark look present in much of today's modern design.

Why has the 18th-century look retained its popularity? At least part of the answer lies in the use of warm, rich woods as opposed to the sterile plastic so often seen in the furniture of today.

Secondly, these designs reflect a tradition which is more than 200 years old. And they're ours—as Americans—our own country's heritage. Make your home an island of tranquility in the midst of everyday turmoil. The softness and elegance of 18th-century furniture combined with the beauty and practicality of today's fabrics allows you to accomplish this. The innumerable carpets, wallpapers

and accessories readily available make it easier to achieve this objective.

If you like 18th-century look, but want the plushness and comfort of more traditional furniture, an eclectic room may be the answer.

Queen Anne furniture design blends easily with other styles of upholstered and wood pieces to give a comfortable look that's all your own."

GERRI ADLER and Joanna Doyle, interior designers with Brasch Imports, Inc. have a slightly different approach.

"We specialize in Scandinavian and American contemporary home furnishings. We rely on a mix of these two worlds, combining chrome and glass with Scandinavian wood, wool and leather. . . . We start our design work with the attitude that people intend to live in the rooms and homes we design, so first, we look at our client and his needs. After this, we consider the space to be designed."

Our strength in designing rests in contrasts like that of a full, pillowy sectional sofa flanked by sleek, wood framed leather chairs from Norway. Along with this we like to use eye-raising and accent tables of various tile and wood selections or chrome and glass.

Wall systems, a Scandinavian specialty, incorporate a variety of design uses. First, they often provide a major focal point in a room that might be drab otherwise. The wall systems provide enough space to make up for the storage that is always needed, and they are often used as music centers to hold stereo equipment and records."

BARBARA J. MILES, ASID, director of interior design, Wiggs, presents still a third viewpoint on the role of the interior designer.

"Interior decoration is the art of creating harmony and beauty through fabrics, furniture, paint, wallpaper and floor coverings. It took Picasso 20 years before he could turn out a painting in 20 minutes just as a professional designer makes it look easy—but it has taken years of experience and training to achieve that effortless approach.

Quality comes from the Latin word "qualitas," meaning what it is worth. A well-constructed piece of furniture bought in a reputable store actually costs less in the long run because it will last and give better satisfaction and the owner can pro-rate that satisfaction and pride of ownership over many years.

A few good rules to remember are:
• Buy the best you can afford.
• Buy all upholstery at one time so you can mix and match patterns and

textures more efficiently and successfully.

• Buy multi-purpose items that can be used in more than one room such as an armoire (a large wooden cupboard or wardrobe originally used to store arms or armor) can be used in the bedroom for clothes, in the den for TV, in the library for books, or in the living room for an enclosed bar. I have even used them in doctors' offices to store medicines.

Never underestimate the importance of lighting, for it is the most undervalued influence on the look of the room.

Greenery such as trees and plants adds a breath of living nature and makes a room come alive. Rooms like flower gardens shouldn't be emotionally demanding, they should be comforting.

Comfort and color, guiding not dominating, exposing—but not pressuring, is my style. If I'm designing a room, I want it to be my client's taste, not mine.

A good designer is like a good dancer, one step follows the next with no mistakes, no fumbles, the designer simple moves into another step as if he (or she) had planned it all along. That's what creating is all about."

Ms. Miles went on to describe color as the most effective means of accom-

plishing the effect of character saying, "Color can create atmosphere and individuality, unity, balance and proportion."

She said color sense is important in producing the right mood and personality and that color can be used to play up good points and cover bad ones.

Color triggers the emotions—it can either calm or stimulate, she said. If a single item is most important in decoration, Ms. Miles believed it would be upholstery.

"No matter what else is in the room, fine lamps, fine wood, fine carpet, the minute the furniture fabric shows signs of soil and wear, the whole room looks shabby and tacky. Fabric should look alive, vibrant and fresh.

"When it begins to show obvious wear, replace it like an old coat that has been worn for many years."

She offered some hints for small rooms:

"A room that is cluttered or over furnished decreases in size. Use as few pieces of furniture as possible to open it up. Avoid a too-busy or startling look in a small room.

Try a one-color scheme or fabric cover the walls and slipcover the furniture in the same fabric. A sheet is the best fabric buy—you get color and pattern and seamless 90-inch width."

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