



Interior Designer: R. Thomas Gunkelman
Photographer: John Umberger



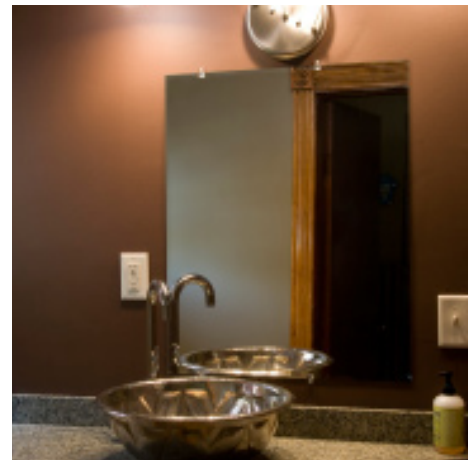
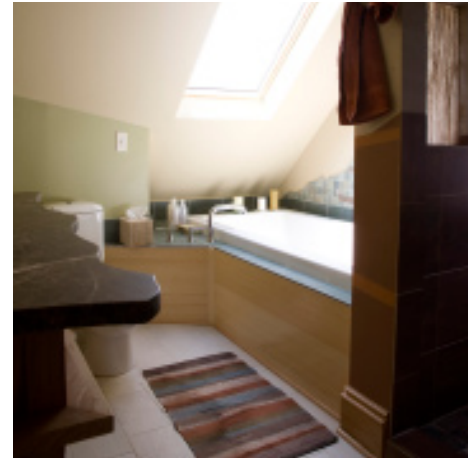
**Change is in the Air*

FROM ART DECO TO RETRO, FROM THE RUNWAY TO THE HALLWAY, TODAY'S HOMES ARE ALL ABOUT PERSONALITY

FALL IS A TIME of transition. After all the spring and summer clothes have been stored, most Minnesotans begin preparing for the long, cold winter just around the corner. This nesting instinct is understandable, which means that now is the perfect time to think about what that nest should look and feel like. You'll be glad you did, because sometimes a little change can make a big difference.

Today's interior design trends are all about risk-taking, individuality, and creativity. In the past, this wasn't always so, says Tom Gunkelman of the design firm Gunkelman-Flesher. "Before, Americans were very pseudo-traditional," he explains. "That was a style, that people went to furniture stores to get their furniture. Homes had a department store sort of feeling." Now, working with an interior designer is more of a collaboration, says Gunkelman, who is widely considered to be one of the top designers in the country. For timeless, contemporary furniture and textiles, he suggests designers such as John Saladino and Rose Tarlow.

Design in 2008 embraces antiques offset by playful pieces and unexpected splashes of color. In keeping with fashion's love affair with the 20s, 30s, and 60s, homes are taking on a more European, almost art deco, style. Try mixing it



*Interior Designer: Michael Anschel
Photographer: Evan Baden*

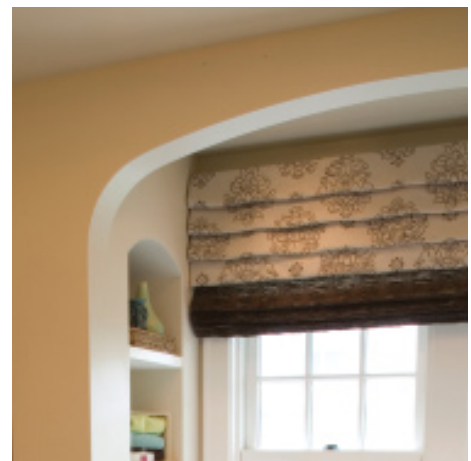
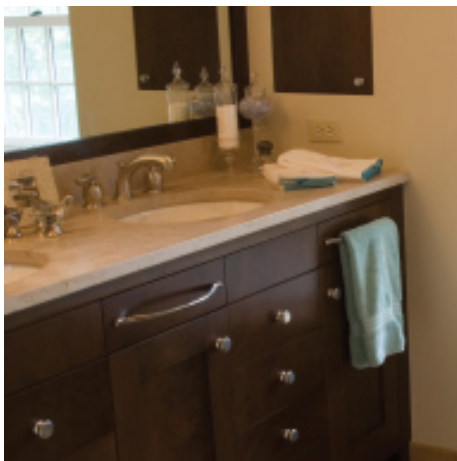
up: couple a French-made, 100-year-old couch with a sleek lamp, or find ways to incorporate exotic objects found while vacationing in far-flung places like India or Tibet. The emphasis here is on quality, not quantity. One well-designed Mies coffee table can co-exist with other fine pieces – but you should love them all before you spend a fortune on them.

To stay current (without breaking the bank), focus on sustainability. What will continue to have resonance five, ten, twenty years from now? If you're going to take a chance on a new, bold color, try it first on bolsters or trim, recommends Lucy Penfield of Lucy Interior Design. Penfield helps her clients achieve a classical contemporary look by combining dark, rich woods with gleaming countertops and sophisticated, modern lighting fixtures. "Instead of upholstering the sofa in something you'll get tired of, accessorize it with a hand-painted linen pillow and hang a piece of modern art on the wall. Think lighting, art, and accents. It's an easy way to take a risk without a big expense.

"[Spicing things up] can happen in small ways, just like you can take an Armani suit and dress it up," says Penfield, who often looks to fashion as a gauge for what's haute in the home. "You can bejewel the suit or funk it up,

do the grand dame, Tiffany's look or...go mod. So with interior design, you can introduce quirkier elements with pillows, with big pots, and you can turn giant vases into lamps." Beloved and patinated objects should be utilized, not shoved into a corner or an attic. Color and natural light play a huge role this season – choose from lighter beiges to richer hues and jewel tones. Don't be afraid to let your imagination run wild (your designer will let you know when enough is enough).

Wallpapers, too, are making a comeback, this time with hand-blocked, printed, or flocked patterns. Chunky rugs complement minimalist gallery walls, and gardens are being worked into the architecture of the home. If cost is not an issue, consider some of the striking African woods, such as Zebrawood – a wavy-grained, blond wood with dynamic streaks of brown and black – and anigre, a lustrous, straight-grained wood that works beautifully as a decorative veneer. Environmentally conscious cork and bamboo flooring are made from organic, replenishable materials that look and feel fabulous. Gunkelman is a fan of rehabbed carpets and natural fibers. Synthetics don't hold up well, he says. Again, for major purchases, think in the long term. A home should be treated like a stock portfolio – invest wisely.



Interior Designer: Lucy Penfield
Photographer: Evan Baden

Michael Ansel is the owner of Otogawa-Ansel Design-Build, an award-winning green and urban living design firm. He works wonders with pre-war Victorian homes, and is able to modernize and enliven them without compromising the systems of the original building. "I take a holistic approach and think of a house as a living thing," says Ansel. If you're remodeling, he says, refinish the beautiful hardwood floor instead of tearing it up. "Green is about extending the life of the home and improving its durability," he notes. Ansel uses smart design and eco-friendly materials – taking advantage of southern exposure, creating skylights, and using remnant materials for countertops, tiles, and floors, for example – as well as subtler techniques to make a home truly inviting. Energy Star appliances, dual flush toilets, and condensing washer/dryer units save money, energy, and reduce noise. Understated wood flooring made from Douglas fir fibers impresses with its simplicity, beauty, and uniqueness. A green home also begets fewer chemicals, which translates into cleaner air, improved health, and happier homeowners.

Master suites and makeshift lofts continue to be popular, but big empty rooms that are rarely used – think blinding white living rooms and enormous, desolate dining rooms – are giving way to a more human scale. Over-sized tubs and

Jacuzzis are also on their way out, and the spa experience, influenced by the Japanese, is definitely here to stay. The bathroom has become a retreat space, says Ansel, with walk-in showers, specialized layouts, and custom-made countertops. Mudrooms, too, are making an appearance.

Of course, the most important design trends for the coming year – or any year, for that matter – are the ones you can live with. There are many things in life that are out of your control. What your home looks like shouldn't be one of them. **JAIME KLEIMAN**