

SCRIBBLES...POSSIBILITIES...& DISCOVERIES



Commitment to exercise translates to work

Today as usual I got up just after 5 a.m., splashed some water on my face, threw on my workout duds and by 5:30 was down in the lower level basement with several very good friends working up a good sweat with my long-time trainer, Todd McLaughlin from McLaughlin Fitness.

Kick boxing, free weights, exercise ball and bands, core strength development - Todd puts us through our paces and restricts us to a minimum of chitchat for a good hour. I can't believe that this is roughly the same regimen I've repeated twice a week for the past two decades, though I cringe a little to say it! Now as I sip some post-workout tea I am crunching the numbers - today marks roughly my 2,184th workout, give or take a few - and what have I gained? Exercise for me is a must-have. It's the only way I center myself. I sleep better, have more energy and feel more confident. It reduces stress and focuses me too. And of course it helps me maintain muscle strength, flexibility, reflexes, balance and endurance, not to mention controlling blood pressure and cholesterol.

Do I sound dedicated? A little crazy? Yes! But that's the kind of crazy dedication that the entire Sweet Peas Design team has been bringing to our clients day in and day out for a decade. Do we sweat? Well yes, actually, we do! There's more physical effort than you might imagine and I wouldn't be able to keep up the Sweet Peas Design daily pace without it. But the most important "exercises" we do here relate to client service: attention to detail, communication, bringing our best in creativity to the job every day and so much more. It takes loads of energy, but we try to keep the bar high every day.

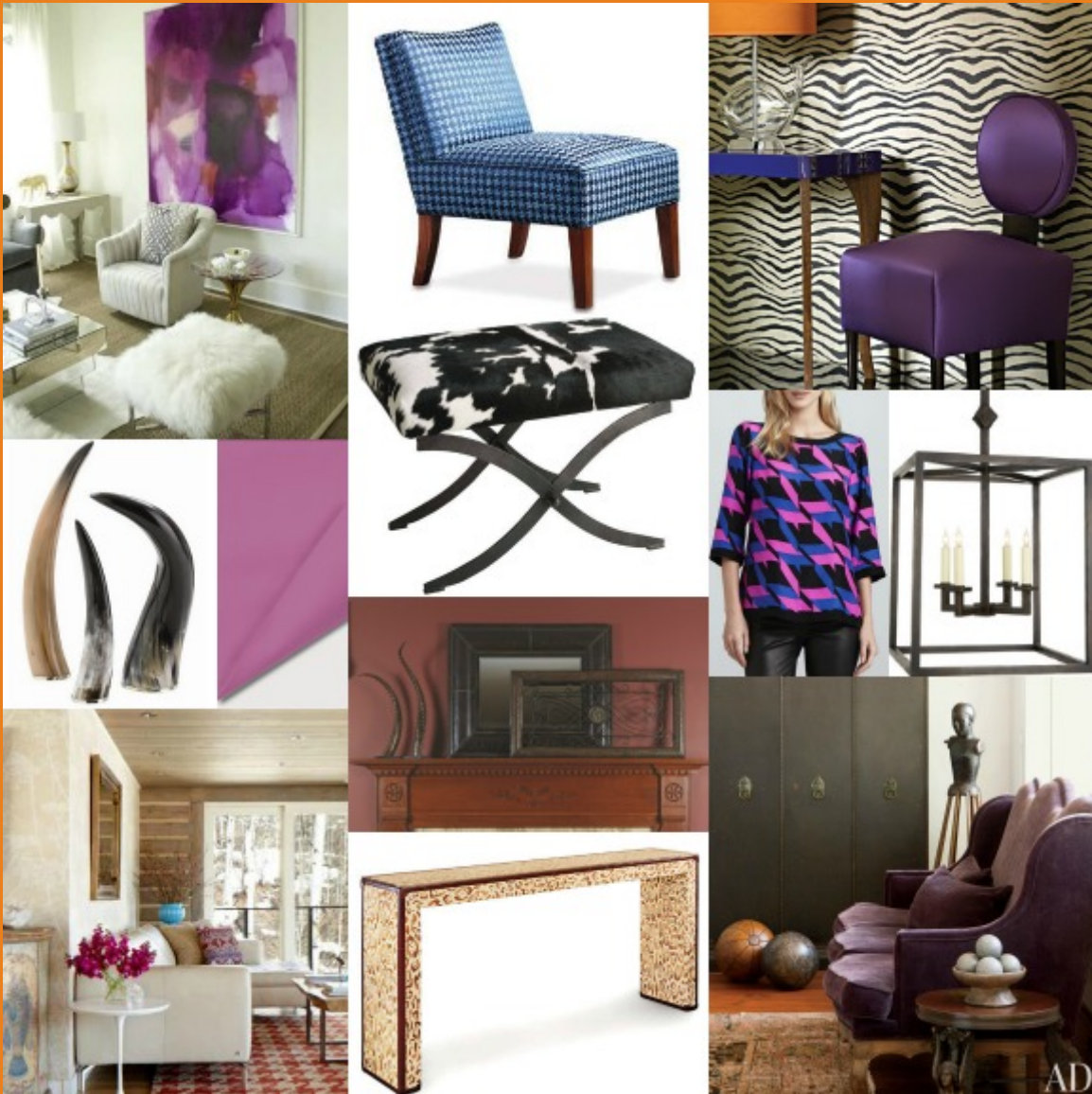
Now if I could only get a little more control over calories...

Sincerely,

Susan, Beth, Jennifer, Tod, Becca
The Sweet Peas Design Team

what's **in** what's *out*

WHAT'S IN



1. Wild animals invade homes! Zebra, ocelot, bear, leopard, cow and sheep hides are making their way into home interiors, and not just in the colors nature gave them. We're seeing them in vivid patterns of pink, green, blues and yellows. Wild! You can layer more than one hide underfoot, or layer one on top of a wool or sisal rug. We like them as accents or a second rug in a room to define a second seating space. Or hang one over a stair rail, balcony, chair or ottoman. Many hides are stain resistant, easily cleaned (a quick shake) and add texture and interest.

2. Lanterns stage a comeback. Quickly becoming a "must-have," whether as a chandelier or a table topper. Add the candle and voila: instant ambience.

3. Radiant Orchid is Pantone's "Color of the Year." We know, purple décor makes some of us nervous, but don't be. Give it a whirl as a new accent piece or accessory. Add Radiant Orchid to an existing gray or neutral palette to add warmth, charm and "the unexpected." This color can be beautifully paired with other purple hues, reds, greens and teals. At the very least, buy an orchid plant!

4. Horns a Plenty! Our fetish with horns has reached new, ahem, heights. Horns adorn silver trays and wall groupings, they are table accessories and lamp bases. How about horns as coat hooks or a grouping on a cocktail table? They are tall and thin, so try them on your fireplace mantel too.

5. Houndstooth is never out of style. This classic pattern can be found in traditional rooms with traditional colors or "changed up" for transitional and contemporary room settings in today's color palettes. We're seeing houndstooth in fabrics, wall coverings, accessories and lampshades.

> left to right photos courtesy of: top row- kathykuohome.com, barclaybuteralifestyle.com, osborneandlittle.com; middle row- Arteriors Home, Pantone.com, Arteriors Home, Sweet Peas Design, Neiman Marcus, Visual Comfort; bottom row- coloradohomesmag.com, bottegaveneta.com, designfile-architecturaldigest.com

WHAT'S OUT

1. The cold winter weather!

sweet
tip

Changing up your cocktail table

Tired of looking at the same old-same old accessories and magazines on top of your cocktail table? You may want to consider a minimalist approach: a simple vase of flowers, a small stack of interesting books and something meaningful - an heirloom or a trinket from a recent trip. Enhance the look with a light-reflecting object and say goodbye to ho-hum.



Our design tips: vary the height of the objects you select. Cut the flower stems to your desired height and then stack the books at a different level. Try layering to add impact and to change heights. Remember - you want to achieve an artful arrangement.

Also: Always make sure you have lovely coasters on your cocktail table or hidden in a drawer near by... also candles, unless you have a dog with a waggly tail!

> *photo courtesy of: Sweet Peas Design*

FABU FABRIC



FAUX FUR FOR WINTER, AND YEAR 'ROUND TOO

Baby, it's cold outside! And nothing says "warm" like fur, including faux fur. These last few weeks in Chicago absolutely require something furry to snuggle with. Today's faux fur is so wonderful it defies you to tell the difference between the real and the fake, though we're seeing them in "unnatural" colors such as dark blue, green, grays and purples! Add a beautiful fur fabric with a pillow, throw, ottoman or chair. You'll feel better equipped to beat the winter blahs . . . and oh so trendy. But don't forget that faux fur's lovely texture works year-'round too.

> *clockwise photos courtesy of: yliving.com by Kartell, latimes.com, esty.com, esty.com, Horchow, Neiman Marcus, Restoration Hardware*

Mirror Mirror on the Wall

Looking to visually expand the size of a room or add some punch? Do you want to increase brightness for a more open look to your space? A mirror might be the answer to all those questions. Today's mirrors come in a variety of shapes and sizes, finishes and styles, from traditional to unusual contemporary shapes with eye-catching frames

Here's an interesting tidbit: Those who believe in feng shui - the ancient art of balancing energies in a space to assure good health and fortune - have called mirrors the 'aspirin' of feng shui. Properly placed they can shift the flow of energy and bring a sense of refreshment and calm. We like the notion that a round mirror in a gold leaf frame can encourage wealth and abundance, especially if placed in the "money" area of your home. Maybe where you pay bills?! Believe that or not, but the choices are exciting whether you need function or want to make statement with a mirror.

One caution: Be sure your mirror will reflect something attractive in your room. If not, hang artwork instead. Some of favorite mirrors are spotlighted below.



> photos courtesy of Christopher Guy, Arteriors, Made Goods, Christopher Guy

At Sweet Peas we don't let any grass (or snow!) grow under our feet. Here's an update of our comings and goings.

"SPOTTING" A TRENDS BATHROOM

Bathrooms Trends magazine (Volume 30, No. 1) spotted something special in the powder room we created for last spring's Lake Forest Showhouse. [Click here to view article.](#)

Maybe it was those custom-painted walls covered in a beautiful scrollwork of 133,000 paint dots! The space is featured in a two-page spread in the current issue of the New Zealand-based magazine, which has circulation of roughly 200,000 here and at home.



Trends says: "This meticulously reinvented powder room nods to the bold eclecticism favored by the original architect (David Adler)." Thanks to Trends editorial director Paul Taylor and writer Charles Moxham for the opportunity to showcase this unique project. [Click here to view movie link.](#)

ON THE AIR WITH SWEET PEAS AND LXTV

We never miss an opportunity to celebrate, especially when one of our projects is broadcast nationwide! LXTV recently aired our segment on client Nancy Burton's 1920's stone charmer in the Libertyville Heritage District, and if you missed it just click here and I'll take you on a virtual tour: http://www.nbcnewyork.com/blogs/open-house/OHNAT_5234_E-BLOCK-239675911.html

To celebrate the occasion we organized a viewing party at the scene of design. Dozens of people showed up, from Nancy's friends to our clients, trusted service providers including Meredith Carlson of Designing Kitchens, Suzanne Deichl of Suzennials landscaping and Larry Maddock of Maddock Construction, and of course the Sweet Peas team: senior designer Beth Kweton, architectural associate Jenifer Cioni Tarello and junior designer Rebecca Snow. On the menu from caterer Benita Jording and daughter Trisha Lambert: stuffed mini red potatoes with bacon and cheese; polenta squares with cheese and shiitake mushrooms; and sweet & sour chicken skewers. Overheard in the hubbub: "It's so homey, I don't want to leave!" "How did they get the whole house done in six months?" And "I would never have thought of hiring a designer before moving in." Big thanks to Nancy who graciously opened her house for the celebration, and also Patrick Barkley and Adam Moorman at the network for the opportunity to showcase this lovely home.



ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL YEAR FOR SWEET PEAS DESIGN

During 2013 we collaborated with 29 new clients (16 of them were referrals) and 7 repeaters. Clearly, word of mouth and repeat business are major factors in our success, and that wouldn't be possible without you. Please accept big warm thanks from all of us to all of you for the privilege of working in your homes. We value your trust and your friendship very much. Many thanks also to our talented and reliable service providers. You help make Sweet Peas and our clients' homes look good. Here's to another great year!

GET THE LOOK



Rustic with a Touch of Glam

Adding a bit of glam to your rustic mountain retreat, whether it's out West or in your lower level great room, can be a little challenging and a job often left to the pros.

When we think 'rustic retreat' most people imagine Hudson Bay blankets, stone fireplaces, Ralph Lauren plaids, lots of worn wood and perhaps a moose head. As for the color palette, don't we have to have rust, olive, gold, red and black? No!

Let's add some glam with something white, some shiny objects, crystal-dangling light fixtures, a contemporary piece of furniture, a bit of steel and some modern art. How about creating a color palette based on the view outside your window? Greens, whites, browns and blues, even purples, pinks and oranges.

End result - rustic elegance.

> *clockwise photos courtesy of: elle decor, trendsideas.com, designfile-architectural digest, trendsideas.com*

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- > **Website:** www.sweetpeas-inspired.com
- > **Blog:** www.susanbrunstrum.com
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