

## SCRIBBLES...POSSIBILITIES...& DISCOVERIES



### *I'll (NOT) Be Home for Christmas*

For the first time since I've owned my own home I am not putting up a Christmas tree and I'm not going all-out to decorate my home.

This year my kids and I are breaking with tradition and embracing something totally new and different: We're going to sunny California for the holiday. I never thought I'd hear myself say that and feel really good about it at the same time.

Matt, Kelsey and I have never gone anywhere for Christmas before, not even someone else's house. We have always celebrated in our home, so this is really a leap, but the timing is right.

Our lives have been in transition quite a bit lately. I sold my Libertyville home, moved full-time downtown and recently sold this condo because I need a bigger place and will have to move again by March 31. Matt has graduated from college, has a full-time job and will be moving out and Kelsey isn't far behind, so this trip to California also is an opportunity for the three of us to have a vacation together before everyone's lives go in different directions.

I know we're not the only ones who have done something like this, but at first it was unthinkable for me to consider not being "home" for Christmas. Since then I've realized that "home" is where my family gathers and that can be anywhere. I've also learned, like Tevye in "Fiddler on the Roof," that traditions can and should change as our lives change.

What this has done for me is create a sense of calm about the holiday. I don't have to go full-on as usual putting up decorations and I don't have to entertain multiple times throughout the season. Instead, we are all just looking forward to visiting dear friends and spending five nights together at Pelican Hill Resort in Newport Beach.

Here's another surprise: I'm closing the studio from December 23 to January 1 for the first time in 11 years so the entire team can all have time to rest and rejuvenate. In the meantime, Happy Holidays and a Happy New Year to all of you from all of us at Sweet Peas Design!

Sincerely,  
Susan, Beth, Jennifer, Tod, Lauren  
*The Sweet Peas Design Team*

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

## WHAT'S IN



**1. Nail Heads as Architectural Details** We love nail heads, but they are much more than just embellishments on upholstered headboards, chairs, sofas, ottomans, and screens. Expand your horizons and apply them to walls or doors to trim and frame your space. But use restraint: A little bling goes a long way!

**2. Washstands** For a fresh take on the same-old vanity try a washstand! Different from a pedestal sink, these free standing, vintage-inspired pieces have been updated in some cases with a towel bar and bigger countertop, allowing for a little more functionality. (Ladies, we're always thankful for extra space to scatter our makeup and hair dryer in the morning!) Standing on two legs and mounted on a wall, the plumbing is exposed which we think is pretty cool. For a contemporary twist, try Lucite legs.

**3. Chinoiserie Inspired Wallpaper** The use of Chinoiserie design (French for Chinese-esque) has been around since trade opened up to the Orient hundreds of years ago, and now it has definitely come back into trend. The 18th Century English and French, including various monarchs, adopted this intricate patterning for furnishings in their homes and castles, and today, use of Chinoiserie patterns can apply to just about everything. One dramatic option we have seen is Asian-inspired floral wall covering, a distinctly feminine but bold application. Like anything else, too much can get theme-y, so pair Chinoiserie wall covering with simple pieces. Afraid of commitment? Try a few panels of this paper framed with trim on your walls for a fun cross between architectural elements and artwork!

**4. Woven African Like Baskets** Everyone needs stylish ways to conceal their everyday not-so-stylish items around the house, whether that's kids' toys, blankets, shoes or the mail. Here's one way to solve the problem: African-inspired, woven baskets. These artisanal baskets will help keep clutter at bay while providing some color, texture and shapeliness to a room. Don't the patterns remind you of flat-weave rugs in a three-dimensional form?

**5. Leather Cabinet Hardware** We have to admit we are obsessed with leather in many forms, from a leather-trimmed dress to shoes, purses and upholstery, so we're happy to see leather cabinet hardware trending upward. Leather has always been considered a luxury material, and though it used to be considered quite masculine it has successfully crossed over to the feminine side as well. In this powder room the sleek leather cabinet pulls are rather subtle masculine contrast for the decidedly feminine basin. We're seeing handsome metallic accents on some leather hardware too, almost like cufflinks or earrings. Thinking of updating your cabinets? This new look is worth considering.

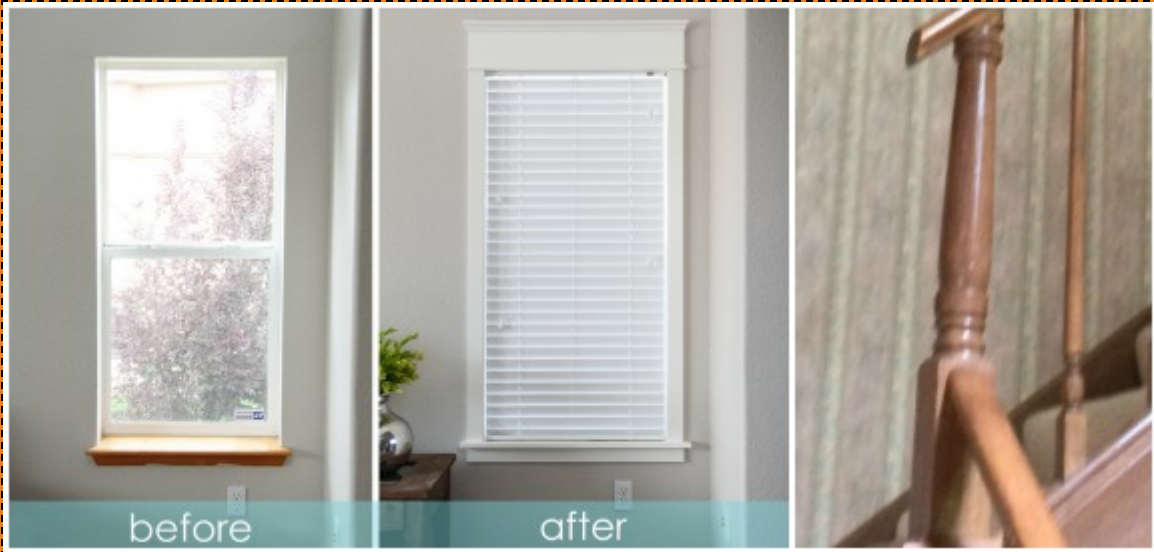
*> clockwise photos courtesy of: [architecturaldigest.com](http://architecturaldigest.com), [decorpad.com](http://decorpad.com), [onekingslane.com](http://onekingslane.com), [beso.com](http://beso.com), [splendidsass.blogspot.com](http://splendidsass.blogspot.com), [homedit.com](http://homedit.com), [decorpad.com](http://decorpad.com), [vidalandcompany.com](http://vidalandcompany.com), [thelittlemarket.com](http://thelittlemarket.com), [Sweet Peas Design](http://SweetPeasDesign.com)*

## WHAT'S OUT

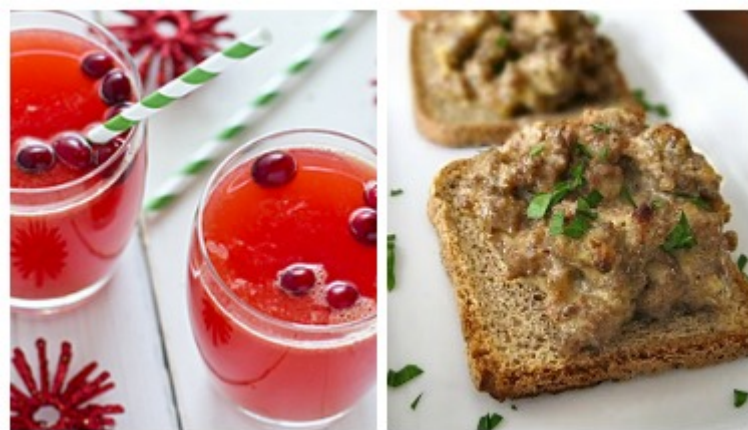
**1. Windows Without Casings** Put a frame around your windows and take them from boring to eye-catching. Frames add a beautiful architectural element to your rooms.

**2. Same-old Newel Posts** Everyone seems to have the identical newel posts. Update them -give your staircase something different and exciting!

*> photos courtesy of: [makeit-loveit.com](http://makeit-loveit.com), [Sweet Peas Design](http://SweetPeasDesign.com)*



sweet  
tip



**Favorite Recipes**

***Cranberry Christmas Spritzer***

*2 cups sparkling wine or champagne  
1 cup club soda  
½ cup cranberry juice cocktail  
1 cup St. Germain Liqueur  
½ cup vodka of your choice  
Ice  
Cranberries to garnish*

*Mix cranberry juice, St. Germain, vodka, club soda, and sparkling wine. Pour over crushed ice. Top with a few fresh cranberries. Voila!*

***Susan's Go To Appetizer - "Hanky Panky"***

*1 lb cooked, drained hamburger  
1 lb cooked, drained sausage  
1 large block Velveeta cheese, cubed  
Cocktail rye bread*

*Mix hamburger and sausage together in skillet. Add in Velveeta cubes. Continue to stir on low heat until all is melted together. Spread over cocktail rye. Bake at 350 for 20 minutes.*



## CASHMERE

Winter is upon us, which means that cashmere—a staple of holiday gift-giving and cold-weather fashion—has returned to store shelves!

So, what exactly makes cashmere so soft and plush? Cashmere is the downy undercoat grown by goats in extreme cold. The great majority of the world's cashmere comes from Mongolia where goats contend with temperatures below  $-30^{\circ}\text{C}$ . In the spring, as they start to molt, the goats are combed to remove their fine underhair while leaving the outercoat (guard hair) intact. The combings are then washed and "dehaired" of any stray guard hair, so that what is left is pure cashmere.

But not all cashmere is equally luxe: The texture, color, and length of the fibers all affect manufacturing and pricing. Naturally, whiter cashmere fibers require less dye, diminishing the damage that coloring causes to its natural softness. Quality also depends on the region in which the wool is collected.

Cashmere is indeed a luxury. Can you imagine anything cozier than bundling up under a cashmere throw? We know they'll be on all of our Christmas lists this year!

*> photos courtesy of: [housebeautiful.com](http://housebeautiful.com), [burberry.com](http://burberry.com), [scandinaviandesigncenter.com](http://scandinaviandesigncenter.com), [theepochimes.com](http://theepochimes.com)*



SPOTLIGHT ON A FAVORITE

## Fireplaces

The fireplace is often the center of the home, especially during the winter months when a toasty fire is the perfect, cozy escape from the brisk cold. Fireplaces can be a focal point for a room in different ways. With floor to ceiling designs, emphasis is given to the height of the space by drawing the eye up, while smaller scale fireplaces can be the center of intimate spaces, just to place to curl up with a cup of cocoa or a chat with a close friend. The options are endless - flush or raised hearth, free

standing screen or inset, stand-alone or flanked with bookcases, not to mention gas or wood! Take a peek at a few of our favorite custom fireplace designs.



*>photos courtesy of: Sweet Peas Design*

At Sweet Peas Design we don't let wintry weather slow us down. Here's an update on our comings and goings...



### SHOPPING AT SOFA

My head is swimming with all the terrific artwork I encountered last month at SOFA Chicago: Sculpture, Objects, Functional Art & Design.

Jamie Harris's amazing glass art from Wexler Gallery in Philadelphia was truly my favorite. The colors, the shapes and the flow of the design is so mesmerizing. Hey Santa - I really want one of these pieces! This highly rated art fair was held in Navy Pier's Festival Hall and attracted a global audience of roughly 35,000. I'll be sharing more of what I saw in future blogs. Stay tuned.

### FAREWELL, BECCA!

We are sorry to say goodbye to Rebecca Snow, our Junior Designer, who joined a Chicago design firm that is gravitating towards restaurant projects as well as residential. We will miss her hard work, creativity and positive outlook. Best wishes from all of us!



## DERING HALL SHOUT-OUT FOR SWEET PEAS DESIGN

Thanks to DeringHall.com for spotlighting Sweet Peas Design twice in November: Just in time for ski season this online interior design community featured our long-time clients' ski-in ski-out home in Park City, Utah. We created a "mountain modern" look in shades of blue and ivory that you can see in this tour: [Tour a Vacation Home in Utah that Shows the Softer Side of Mountain Living](#)

Susan also was the "Design Professional of the Day" on November 18.

## HOLIDAY SHOPPING? LET US HELP!

Need help with holiday shopping? Sweet Peas Design is the perfect place to discover something unusual and enduring for someone special -maybe you! - and we're happy to assist. We have a hand-selected collection of beautiful furnishings, from lamps, mirrors and occasional tables to accessories. Shop online at <http://www.sweetpeas-inspired.com/StoreCategory.aspx> or stop by the studio. Tell us what you need or bring in a photo and we'll help you find the perfect piece. Coffee or tea is available and if you've been good this past year, we'll share some of our secret chocolate stash!

# GET THE LOOK



## Chic Holiday Décor

### Go Organic

Nature's own décor is a beautiful way to decorate for the holidays. Bring some birch logs, evergreen boughs, moss, dried grasses, red berries and pinecones in from the cold to use as accents throughout your home, including the hearth, bannisters and kitchen. It's a sophisticated, natural look that never goes out of style.

### Clusters

We love the impact of displaying groups of similar items for holiday décor - miniature trees, votives, snow globes or ornaments. Vary the size and shape and your guests will be dazzled.

### Wreaths Of A Different Breed

Instead of the same-old pine boughs this year deck the halls with a wreath made of moss, boxwood branches or magnolia leaves. And how about a square wreath instead of round? Your neighbors will be buzzing. TIP: Instead of hanging just one wreath try a set of three stacked vertically on a thick ribbon for more pizzazz.



### **Elegant Gaming**

Do you love to play cards or board games with friends? Consider tucking a beautiful game table and comfortable, upholstered chairs into a corner of your family room, like this unusual cement-topped version from Bradley with metallic open base and peacock blue chairs. So cozy and sophisticated and perfect for extra seating if you are hosting a crowd for the holidays. Maybe Santa will deliver one - then you will have an adult table and a kid table.

### **Weight-Loss For Homes**

You can take pounds off your living room by choosing furnishings that are less bulky and solid, like these airy end tables from Kravet in one of our recent projects. Notice how the delicate legs and open-style let you see through the room and create visual space? Now, if only we could translate that to our own bodies and shed a few pounds!

> *photos courtesy of: Sweet Peas Design*

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> **Website:** [www.sweetpeas-inspired.com](http://www.sweetpeas-inspired.com)

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email [susan@sweetpeas-inspired.com](mailto:susan@sweetpeas-inspired.com)

## SWEET PEAS DESIGN

507 East Park Avenue  
Libertyville, Illinois 60048 ([map](#))  
tel 847.816.1296 / 312.572.9090

100 East Bellevue Place  
Chicago, Illinois 60611 ([map](#))  
tel 312.572.9090

Sweet Peas Design, Inc., 507 E. Park Avenue, Libertyville, IL 60048

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