

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



### *Nothing Is Ever Black And White*

*"Life isn't black and white. It's a million gray areas, don't you think?"*

*-British film director and producer, Ridley Scott (Thelma and Louise, Alien)*

"Nothing is ever black and white, life is all about the gray." My two children can tell you that was one of my quotes or "Susanisms", during their childhood. In fact, I wrote that in her high school senior yearbook because it's a philosophy I embrace in every corner of my life. To me it means keeping your mind open to the "gray" areas, pushing yourself outside your preconceived notions about yourself and the world. I see this kind of black-and-white thinking in fashion all the time. People lock themselves into a style and won't try something new. I remember recommending outfits to Kelsey when we were shopping and she would say "that's not for me." But I always encouraged her to try on that "different" piece and expand her idea of herself. Sometimes it worked, sometimes it didn't! But she became open to trying something "in the gray."

Interior design is the same way. At Sweet Peas Design we love to nudge our clients a step or two outside that black-and-white comfort zone, whether we're recommending that they paint a ceiling something other than white, or suggesting they add a quirky bird-footed table or a jazzy little citrine green pouf to a room. They may be skeptical at first, but invariably everyone falls in love with our mind-expanding options. Even when we're designing rooms in black and white we're always thinking

in shades of gray, as you will discover in this month's newsletter. The trick is in knowing how and when you can break the rules, and that takes experience and a good eye.

Sincerely,

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

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

## WHAT'S IN



**1. Sconces** They used to be seen only in pairs flanking a foyer door, a bathroom mirror or a dining room hutch. Today we're placing them everywhere - tucked in niches, running up a stairway and above built-in bookshelves. Don't worry about matching the style and

finish to your chandeliers, they just need to correlate. In fact, sconces can be the design "bridge" from one chandelier to another in your house. We love solving the light fixture puzzle for our clients as so often lighting and especially sconces are forgotten about!

**2. Dark Iron Framed Windows** These head-turners add architectural pizzazz to a home. They typically have slender sight lines and a minimal profile with maximum impact. To some, the look is too industrial, to others it is a crisp, clean style perfect for a traditional or transitional space. Always mullioned, these windows create a series of picture frames for the views outside.

**3. Saturated Colors** Crayon colors are making a comeback, and not just for accents. We're seeing whole houses drenched in bright red, green, blue, purple, yellow and orange. It's probably due to all the soothing neutrals we've been seeing for oh soooooo long. Or maybe saturated colors are trending because adult coloring books have also become the latest and greatest to jump start adult creativity!

**4. Black Tile** Drama, drama, DRAMA! Don't be afraid of black tile, embrace it for its updated art deco attitude. Start small with a backsplash in a white kitchen or possibly the powder room floor or as an accent wall behind a pedestal sink or both! Use white elements such as a tub or sink and countertop to offset. Black is the new black!

**5. Sculptural Light Fixtures** Move over, Michelangelo, light fixtures - which didn't exist in your time! - are moving in on your ceiling territory, becoming sculptural works of art that are functional as well as decorative. They make a huge impact in a foyer, over a dining table or as a floor-to-ceiling installation lighting a stairway.

*> upper left photos courtesy of: [apartmenttherapy.com](http://apartmenttherapy.com), [frenchyfancy.com](http://frenchyfancy.com), [veranda.com](http://veranda.com), [lindseyadelman.com](http://lindseyadelman.com), [homebunch.com](http://homebunch.com), [portaromana.com](http://portaromana.com), [pembrookandives.com](http://pembrookandives.com), [atlantahomes.com](http://atlantahomes.com), [informdesign.com](http://informdesign.com), [bloglovin.com](http://bloglovin.com)*

## WHAT'S OUT

### **Impersonal Homes**

Right now you're probably wondering whether impersonal homes were ever in! Well, you just have to leaf through some of the shelter magazines to see that homes can be beautiful but don't always reflect the personality and lifestyle of their owners. Living there is a bit like going on vacation and renting someone else's home for two weeks. It may be lovely, but you just don't fit in.

One of our goals at Sweet Peas Design is to create homes that tell the story of those who live there. The rooms should look "collected" and layered, filled with objects that have meaning, not just space fillers. The challenge is getting to know our clients well enough within a short amount of time to create a uniquely personal home, and we have just the ticket! Each of our clients is asked to fill out our exclusive Client Discovery Journal, which is filled with questions that tell us about them and their lifestyle. What can't you live without? Where are you most productive? Which room do you like the most? We have fun questions, such as "If you played hooky from work, what would you do? And, how do you pamper yourself? It's an enjoyable exercise that's very productive for them and for us.

It tells us how they live in each room, what they need to make those rooms functional and what styles and colors they prefer, among many other important details. The result? A home that is uniquely theirs.

sweet  
tip

### Accessorizing a Fireplace

Now that we've sparked some interest in fireplace screens let's talk about how to accessorize. Whenever we're renovating a room with a fireplace, we start with the fireplace because it's typically the focal point in the space. Here are some important issues to keep in mind:



1. Proportion is critical, especially for the mantel. If the ceiling is really high, you need to choose large pieces. In a single-story room adjust accordingly.
2. Remember the andirons! Beautiful andirons with a simple screen are gorgeous, and they fill the fireplace box so it's not just a black hole.
3. Fireplace tools are common for the hearth, but you don't need them if you have a gas fireplace, so donate them to a friend and use the space to try something new and different - perhaps a quirky sculptural piece.
4. Be sure to take the entire fireplace and the rest of the room into account when choosing accessories - everything should work together.

*>photos courtesy of: Sweet Peas Design, decorpad.com*

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## BLACK AND WHITE PRINTS

If you want to liven up a black and white room consider adding a black and white print. You could make a strong statement with a chair or bedding, or tone it down with an ottoman, bench cushion or table runner. There are so many patterns to choose from - classic stripes, animal prints and geometrics to florals or whimsical polka dots, these fabrics pack a graphic punch. Not going for an entirely black and white room? A chair or a few throw pillows in a black and white print will add brisk, contrasting flair to any space!

*> clockwise from upper left photos courtesy of: [marimekko.com](http://marimekko.com), [lonnymag.com](http://lonnymag.com), [zinctextile.com](http://zinctextile.com), [fschumacher.com](http://fschumacher.com), [kravet.com](http://kravet.com)*



## Fireplace Screens

Spring is here, but at the studio fireplace screens are still a hot topic. Even when we don't need them for safety they add a sculptural, artistic element that gives more depth to the flat façade of the fireplace. Choosing the right one depends on the how often you use the fireplace, what kind of fuel you use, the shape of the opening and the style of the fireplace. Here are some tips:

- For a wood-burning fireplace we recommend inset or attached, fireplace doors. Typically more expensive than a movable screen, but it will protect your home from stray cinders and sparks.

- For a gas fireplace you can opt for a free-standing screen.
- If you build a fire often we always recommend a plain tempered glass screen because it allows the beauty of the blaze to shine through.
- If you don't build many fires then you can opt for a more decorative screen .
- Match the screen to the fireplace opening - if it is arched, choose an arched screen, and always make sure a free-standing screen extends several inches beyond the opening on all sides.



*>upper left photos courtesy of: yatzer.com, johnlyle.com, avrett.com, crateandbarrel.com, christopherguy.com, 1stdibs.com*

### ABBEY AWARD

We have another award on our "trophy" shelf! Susan was one of 20 business people from suburban Chicago who accepted an ABBEY award March 16 from the Daily Herald's Business Ledger. Officially known as the Annual Awards for Business Excellence, the 26-year-old recognition program singles out businesses throughout six suburban counties. Susan told the crowd of more than 100 attendees that she felt particularly proud to accept the award as a woman entrepreneur. " There are 9.4 million women-owned businesses in the United States and they generated nearly \$1.5 trillion in revenues last year and employed over 7.9 million people," she said. "I think that's amazing."



Every award is a team effort, and we could not have achieved this without the talent and hard work of Senior Designer Beth Kweton, Junior Designer Lauren Benditzky, Senior Architectural Associate Jennifer Cioni Tarello and Financial Manager Tod Snyder-Grube. A big thanks us to everyone at the Business Ledger for this honor.

### IN THE (INSPIRED) NEWS

The laid-back look of our "Suburban Zen" project on Chicago's North Shore earned a full-page feature in the winter issue of Inspired. News, a quarterly newsletter published by Kravet Inc., a

major American manufacturer of fabrics and furnishings. <http://sweetpeas-inspired.com/blog/susans-blog/inspiring-news--suburban-zen> Thanks to our Kravet friends for spotlighting our work, and congrats to the whole Sweet Peas Design team.



### HGTV FEATURES US AGAIN

This time the HGTV Professionals Network Team featured five photos from our Art Deco Powder Room at the Lake Forest Showhouse, held in a historic David Adler mansion. We took the cozy space from dingy and dated to chic and eye-catching.

<http://people.hgtv.com/professionals/susan-brunstrum/silver-art-deco-powder-room-pictures>

### SUSAN PRESENTS KITCHENS & FAMILY ROOMS

Susan is taking her show on the road again - this time to the Winnetka Library where she will present Inspired Ideas: Kitchens on Tuesday, April 26 at 7 PM and Inspired Ideas: Family Rooms, on Thursday, April 28 at 7 PM. Enjoy looking at before and after photos and floor plans of Sweet Peas Design projects while Susan discusses topics such as choosing a color palette, incorporating textures, selecting lighting and furnishings. The library is at 768 Oak St., and the program is free of charge. Registration is required and easy to do. Open the library's calendar at <https://il.evanced.info/winnetka/lib/eventcalendar.asp>, scroll down to April and click on each evening's event to open a registration form. Hope to see you there!

### LUXURY TRENDS SEMINAR

What are the latest trends in design for luxury homes? Susan shared her insights with a group of luxury real estate agents from Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage earlier this month during an open house at 143 Cary, Highland Park. What a beautiful estate! Check it out here:

<http://coldwellbankerpreviews.com/property/285387202-Highland+Park%252C+IL>

Thanks to Ronna Streiff, Luxury Markets Manager and broker for Coldwell Banker, for organizing this well-attended and lively event.

# GET THE LOOK



## Black & White

In the world of fashion black and white never go out of style, and the same is true for home décor. Black and white color palettes are classic, clean, chic and sophisticated, and always make a confident statement. Think about Cary Grant in a tux or Audrey Hepburn in a little black dress with pearls - stunning! Proceed with caution, however, if you're considering a black and white theme for your home. Black and white isn't as, um, black and white as sounds, so we're sharing some tips to get you started.

1. Aim for a 70-30 split of black to white or white to black instead of a boring 50-50 split.
2. Always use accents such as metallic accessories, colorful artwork, pillows or other spots of color to achieve greater impact.
3. Break the rules. Think about cream and black, or charcoal and ivory to soften the palette. Or you could layer white, ivory and cream with black and softer grays.
4. Soften the look with a wood floor or other wood accents.
5. Be ready to make a statement, or the look will fizzle, not sizzle!



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