

SCRIBBLES...POSSIBILITIES...& DISCOVERIES



Be Bold

"Originality implies being bold enough to go beyond accepted norms."

-Anthony Storr, English psychiatrist, psychoanalyst and author

Amsterdam is an amazing city to visit, filled with wonderful art, architecture and people. I recently spent two art-centric weeks there and came home not only with wonderful memories and photos but a reminder that it is so important to be bold. The Netherlands is the birthplace of many world-renowned artists - Rembrandt, van Gogh, van Dyke - but the public did not appreciate their work until after they had died. These old masters had to believe in themselves and be bold enough to create a different style of artwork that was true to their vision, even if people didn't accept it. I think these are the kind of people the world admires, the ones who have dared to be different. They don't care what people think of their work, and that's pretty impressive. It's a lesson we can apply to our careers, our opinions, our fashion style and our homes. We say it all the time at Sweet Peas Design: Your personality should shine through in your home because this is where you spend a big chunk of your life. Sometimes it's tough to "be bold enough to go beyond accepted norms," as Anthony Storr recommends, but there's no place like home to start trying.

Sincerely,

Susan, Beth, Jennifer, Lauren, Angela, Caitlin
The Sweet Peas Design Team

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

WHAT'S IN



Amsterdam was so inspiring I want to devote this month's What's In to that vibrant city....

1. Bikes, Bikes, Bikes Trying to get in shape? Be like the Dutch and ride your bike everywhere. I saw people in their 80s riding bikes in this bustling metropolis but I didn't see one overweight Dutch person my entire trip. I think there's a connection! The roads are narrow and parking is expensive, so biking has become a way of life. Time to dust off our wheels!

2. Tall, Skinny Homes Property taxes in The Netherlands are based on the width of the house, not square meters, so the homes of course are narrow and three to five stories tall.

3. Alley-Oop! Staircases in Dutch homes are too skinny for moving in furniture, so many Dutch homes are built with a winch system on the roof to lift furniture up from the street. A massive hook and pulley system is attached to the gable from a heavy beam. Furniture is hauled up to the proper floor and moved in through the windows, which have to be removed for this process.

4. Decorative Gables Many Dutch homes are topped off with beautiful gables, a tradition that dates back many centuries. The wealthier you were the more intricate and personalized the toppers. During the past 400 years a number of basic gable styles evolved, including triangular, stair steps, spout, neck and bell.

5. Wide Window Ledges Older homes in Amsterdam all have wide window ledges - 10 to 12 inches - where people place beautiful art objects such as a Delft vase or a painting on a small easel. Usually they spotlight one or two large items per window, and they leave their blinds, shades and window treatments open so people see the display.

> window ledge photo courtesy of: jasoningram.uk.co, all other photos courtesy of Susan Brunstrum

WHAT'S OUT

Putting Off Loving Your Home

At the end of a project so many of our clients tell us they wish they had updated their house years ago. They're not just excited about their pretty new look, they're surprised at how much editing and organizing they have done during the process. Maybe it's the nesting instinct, but when people fix up their homes they tend to go through closets, drawers, cabinets and even storage spaces to see what they can throw out or give away. It's like spring cleaning on steroids, and everyone feels more put together and efficient when they walk through that front door. Better yet, they have fallen in love with their homes all over again, and that's our goal!

sweet
tip



Easy Spring Cleaning

We combed the web to find the best ideas for making spring cleaning easier so we can all get outside and enjoy the nice weather. Here are our top three picks:

- Use your dishwasher - Load it up with glass light fixture globes, vases, plastic toys, toothbrushes and toothbrush holders, soap dishes, dish racks and plastic hairbrushes. Remember to choose a gentle cycle and avoid the heated drying cycle.
- Load your dryer - Dusty drapes, curtains and throw pillows can go into the dryer for 15 minutes on the "air-only" cycle. Pull out and rehang immediately to prevent wrinkles.
- Steam clean your microwave - Into a 4-cup glass measuring cup or bowl add 1 cup of water and 1 cup of vinegar. Zap it on high for several minutes or until the solution boils and the window is steamy. Let cool for 15 minutes with the door shut. Remove and wipe out the inside and outside with a sponge dipped into the vinegar-and-water mixture.

Now go outside and play!

>photos courtesy of: howstuffworks.com

FABU FABRIC



FLORAL PRINTS

Floral prints are staging a comeback and they seem to be growing like weeds - they are bigger, brighter and bolder than ever. We've spotted abstract and realistic designs, cheerful and somber moods, two-tone prints and free-spirited patterns in a rainbow of colors. These eye-catching fabrics are at their best when other elements in the room are simple and quiet, but you can play with these rules a little. An orange and white striped pillow can be a jaunty addition to a floral sofa.

> clockwise from upper left photos courtesy of: hgtv.com, bhg.com, mydomain.com, [manolo blahnik](http://manolo.blahnik.com) via neimanmarcus.com, elliecashmantextile.com



Patio Furniture

Great patio furniture can turn your backyard into a mini stay-cation with gentle breezes, bright sunlight and the smell of freshly mown grass. With a spacious table, comfortable chairs and sofas it's like having a second dining room and family room, and that's a lot of relaxation and function for the buck. Choosing the right pieces involves more than esthetics, you'll want to consider maintenance, storage and quality. Check out these tips for choosing the best patio furniture for your outdoor living.

- **Think it through** - Do you want a peaceful oasis for reading, a dining area just for family or do you want to have dinner or cocktail parties? Make a list of how you want to use the space as a guide to selecting furniture. If you just want to host cozy get-togethers around the fire pit with drinks and s'mores you won't need a big table, just comfortable seating and some side tables.
- **Test drive** - Before you buy, sit on the furniture to make sure it's comfortable. The prettiest pieces may not be the most conducive to lingering.
- **Choose Easy Care** - Look for metal, teak, cedar and all-weather wicker pieces which typically withstand Chicago's crazy weather. You'll spend more time enjoying the outdoors and less maintaining furniture.
- **Consider Storage** - You don't want to leave even the most durable furniture outdoors during winter so make sure you have enough space to store it during the off season. If space is limited, look for folding pieces or items that can be taken apart for efficient storage.
- **Quality Counts** - Do your research and shop carefully for patio furniture. Generally if you spend more on quality pieces they will last longer and maintain their good looks.



>clockwise from upper left photos courtesy of: sutherland.com, sutherland.com, janusetcie.com, sutherland.com, janusetcie.com, mcguirefurniture.com, sutherland.com

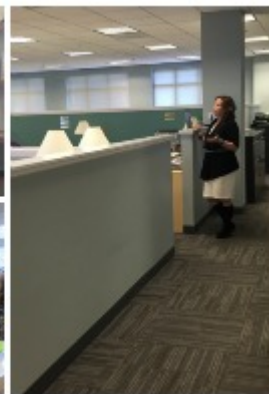
WE WON AGAIN!

We're on a roll! For the second year in a row we have received a regional Chrysalis Award for Remodeling Excellence. This year we won in the Residential Historic Renovation category for a charming 1920s home which we completely updated in Libertyville's Heritage Area. A big thanks to the Chrysalis judges, to our client, Nancy Burton, and to the talented Sweet Peas Design team members who worked on this project - Beth Kweton, senior designer, and Architectural Associate Jennifer Cioni Tarello. We invite you to take a tour of the whole house. Just click here: <http://sweetpeas-inspired.com/portfolio/heritage-chic>



TEENAGE INVASION!

Kristin Johnson and three of her design students from Vernon Hills High School dropped by Sweet Peas Design recently to find out how a real studio operates. Hopefully we didn't scare them off! The students met the whole team as we walked them through the design process, from measuring and creating architectural schematics to floor plans, color palette choices, furnishings and project management. It's always an inspiration to see youthful enthusiasm and energy. Thanks for visiting!



SPEAKER'S BUREAU

Susan has been busy on the speaker's circuit. She presented a two-part seminar in late April at Winnetka Library on kitchens and family rooms, and then met in early May with a group of Coldwell Banker's luxury real estate agents during an open house in Deerfield. Looking for a speaker at your group? Contact Laura@sweetpeas-inspired.com.

WELCOME CAITLIN

We are delighted to introduce our new Financial Manager, Caitlin Ridgeway. Caitlin was born and raised in Libertyville where she attended Libertyville High School followed by Illinois State University, where she graduated with an integrated Bachelor of Science/Masters in Professional Accountancy in 2012. A Chicago resident, she is a licensed CPA who has worked in public and corporate accounting. Welcome Caitlin!

GET THE LOOK

Unexpected Color

Ever notice how the house with the red front door stands out in a neighborhood? We're big fans of colorful surprises like that, indoors and outdoors, and we're seeing more of them all the time. Ceilings, mirror frames, outdoor lighting and furniture legs and even men's legs are getting into the act! Have you seen the colored soles on men's shoes and the coordinating sox? We have! At home as in fashion, restraint is critical for the best results. If you're going for an orange ceiling the rest of the room needs to be hushed.

> clockwise from upper left photos courtesy of: decoist.com, oomphonline.com, bloglovin.com, elledecor.com, architecturaldigest.com, menstylefashion.com



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