

SCRIBBLES...POSSIBILITIES...& DISCOVERIES



Downsizing

"Less is more." -Mies van der Rohe

Whether you call it downsizing, right-sizing or "the cozy life," living smaller but living well is a trend that has been gathering momentum during the past decade for a variety of reasons. For some people downsizing is a way to bring their family closer together - one woman told me she got tired of having to call her kids on their cell phones to find them in the house! For others it's about conserving natural resources, saving time on maintenance and upkeep, reducing stress and saving money. During the past several years I have downsized twice as I transitioned into empty-nesting, and am now living in about a third of the space I had when the kids were young. But I didn't sacrifice quality design, furnishings or custom detailing in my new condo. I completely changed the look and made it my own with a new color palette, crown molding, new lighting, interior door hardware, window treatments and specialty-painted cabinets in the kitchen and bathrooms. I have learned firsthand that downsizing doesn't make a home less fabulous, it makes it better. Living smaller is more like simplifying, which can be a good thing for all of us!

Sincerely,

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

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

WHAT'S IN



In honor of Senior Designer Beth Kweton's retirement (See What's Out, below) we invited her to tell us "What's In" at her house. Here's what she said:

1. Backwards Books No, I don't read my books in reverse! I just recently decided to turn them around on the bookshelves so the pages are facing forward instead of the colored spines. I like the serenity and consistency of seeing the white and cream pages - just a little bit of color shows on the edges of the covers, and that's enough for me.

2. Birds I am truly a nature freak, and birds are one of my favorite creatures. I have always been fascinated by their colors, beautiful feathers, perfect nests and tiny eggs, the variety of songs and calls they produce and the fact that they can fly! Birds symbolize independence for me. At home I have framed bird prints in several rooms and bird statuary

in metal and wood as well as bird books. When I want to relax I sometimes listen to a CD of birds chirping and try to identify the different calls. Was that a Northern cardinal I just heard?

3. Fresh Flowers All year 'round I try to keep fresh flowers in my house, whether they come from the supermarket or my own backyard. They make me happy because they're so cheerful, and I enjoy bringing a bit of nature inside. From spring through early fall I have a succession of tulips, peonies, daisies, lilies and hydrangeas from my yard, but tulips are my favorite. I could look at those forever and ever.

4. Rejuvenating Furniture I don't like to kick good furniture to the curb if I can give it new life with some paint or a fresh finish and new hardware. It would break my heart to see something useful and with so much history thrown away. I used to love to splash some paint around myself - I have updated French dining chairs, some old wicker chairs, a mirror and a couple of 60-year-old spool beds that were family heirlooms. Now I leave the work to a specialty painter - she restored a buffet for me that I keep in the living room and it looks wonderful. You would be surprised at the transformation of painted or refinished furniture - it looks brand new.

5. Boxes There's something compelling for me about decorative boxes - maybe they remind of little treasure chests. They're not only pretty accessories but so functional. At home I have boxes in faux alligator, silver and glass. One holds jewelry, another, scarves and another holds my "nature" treasures such as seed pods. My two grandkids love my glass box filled with antique toys. It's the first thing they want to explore when they come over because I always add something different.

6. Neutrals Just call me Miss Switzerland - I have always been a "neutral" gal. For my wardrobe and my home I always opt for neutral basics and then layer in pops of color with accessories. For my dining room chandelier I have orange or metallic shades that I can trade out, and I have orange accents in my living room that I swap out with lime green ones depending on my mood.

> from upper left photo courtesy of: globalviews.com, [Sweet Peas Design](http://SweetPeasDesign.com), bhg.com, gemoftheweek.com, bloglovin.com, patheos.com

WHAT'S OUT

Beth!

We are so sorry to bid goodbye to our talented and creative Senior Designer Beth Kweton, who is retiring this month. Beth joined Sweet Peas Design in June 2008 and she has been integral to the growth of the studio and the development of our LivableLuxe style. You all know Beth as a genuine and kind individual, loved and admired by all of us in the studio, as well as showroom managers, reps, contractors, service providers and of course, our clients! She has a positive attitude and a desire to produce the best design possible. Beth is a fountain of imaginative ideas and has always been willing to share her wisdom with the team.

We asked Beth to talk about her feelings and plans as she steps back after 28 years in the business. "Design is my passion, whether I'm retired or working, that's never going to leave me. I'm always going to be looking at the next magazine, touching and feeling fabrics and furnishings. It's in my DNA.

Everyone is asking me what I plan to do, and honestly, I don't want to think too far ahead. I'm leaving all doors open for now until I discover what my next moves will be." Beth - you will be greatly missed. Please stop by to see us!

sweet
tip



Biggest Bang for Renovation \$\$\$

We weren't surprised to see in a recent study that kitchen renovations - partial or complete - are the top home improvement if we want to increase the value of our homes. Property owners are able to recoup about two-thirds of the cost when they sell. But who knew that a new roof is the best outdoor improvement project for boosting residential resale prices? According to the National Association of Realtors and the National Association of the Remodeling Industry, buyers value structure over decorative outdoor improvements. Nearly one-third of Realtors surveyed said a new roof helped close a sale on a home, and it more than pays for itself. You can earn back as much as 105 percent of your investment! So, how often do we need a new roof? ProReferral.com says that a composite or asphalt roof should be replaced after 20 years; shake or wood shingles can last up to 30 years and clay tiles hang in there for up to 50 years. Thinking about selling? Time to look up!

>photos courtesy of: qualityexteriorimprovements.com

FABU FABRIC



SHEERS

Sheer: very fine, translucent fabric. Light, delicate, diaphanous

Cheers for sheers! These floaty, filmy fabrics are making a comeback, and why not? Sheers are the classic solution for providing semi-privacy while allowing some sunlight to shine through. Though they went into retirement for a while we're bringing them back, particularly in urban condos with huge spans of windows. But these aren't your grandma's plain white sheers. We're talking about open weave, netting, tone-on-tone pattern, embroidered, embellished, laser cut, interwoven and metallic fabrics. They elevate sheers from blah to "ahhh," though we still prefer that they remain in the background - more accent than statement. Of course, sometimes a whisper can speak volumes!

> clockwise from upper left photos courtesy of: decorfacil.com, zakkahomeandevents.com, Sweet Peas Design, fabricut.com, draperystreet.com



SPOT LIGHT ON A FAVORITE

Backsplashes

If you think the supermarket gives you an overwhelming number of choices in coffee, ice cream and cereal you should see what's happening in kitchen and powder room backsplashes! We're finding stone, recycled wood, pressed tin, glass, aluminum, steel, copper and of course, good old marble and ceramic. Shapes and layouts are changing too. The traditional 3-by-4-inch horizontal running

brick is still a timeless, elegant look, but now those rectangles are bigger and sometimes laid out vertically. The hottest news in backsplashes are circles and curves, however. We like the way they offset all the sharp edges of cabinets, appliances and countertops while injecting some new energy in the room. In some cases we're seeing backsplashes morphing into entire walls in kitchens and powder rooms, which makes sense. In a kitchen a gorgeous but narrow backsplash can be hidden behind small appliances, canisters and knife holders. In a powder room a tile accent wall is a new way to generate a wow factor, plus it makes a great shield against messy-splashy handwashing! What's your style? Take a look at what we found from our favorite sources, and remember to keep all elements of your kitchen or powder room in mind when choosing a backsplash. If your countertops are the focal point the backsplash should be more understated and vice versa.



>from left photos courtesy of: housebeautiful.com, decorola.com, decorpad.com, hgtv.com, housebeautiful.com, purewow.com

PECHA KUCHA? YOU BETCHA!

Have you heard about this? It's a fast and fun Japanese presentation format during which the participants present 20 slides for 20 seconds each. Come join the fun as I participate in a design-related Pecha Kucha panel called "What Defines Luxury?" from 6 to 8 p.m.

Tuesday, July 19 at Studio 41 showroom, 225 W. Hubbard St., Chicago. The event is open to the public and sponsored by the River North Design District. The participants also will include interior

designers Randy Heller, Kenneth Walter, Donna Hall and Mitchell Channon. Some of you may be wondering if I can stop talking after just 20 seconds per image! No worries: the photos advance automatically when time is up. Tickets are \$35 and available online at

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/what-defines-luxuryat-studio-41-with-rn-dd-dornbracht-powered-by-pecha-kucha-tickets-25263222980>.

BTW: The "ch" sounds in Pecha Kucha are like the word "chew."



WELCOME LAUREN BROWN

We are happy to announce the arrival of our first designated Studio Manager/Purchasing Agent, Lauren Brown, a Libertyville native who now lives in Chicago. Sweet Peas Design is experiencing a growth spurt - like most healthy 13-year-olds! - and Lauren is much needed to help us maintain our high level of client service. She is responsible for purchasing and expediting, tracking the status of orders and deliveries as well as database management and the day-to-day studio management.

Lauren attended Kansas State University and has worked in customer service-related jobs for at least 15 years, starting in high school. You can reach her at 847.816.1296 or

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PODCAST POINTERS

A big thanks to LuAnn Nigara of Window Works, the New Jersey-based custom window treatments firm, for interviewing me on her popular podcast. We discussed "Practical Advice for Project Management," which you can find here: <http://windowworks-nj.com/susanb>. I'm always happy to share what I've learned about interior design and running a small business.



TWO GOOD READS

Two authors joined us last month at a meeting of The Design Trust in Washington D.C. - one discussed flower power, the other the power of preparing for the future in today's technology-driven world! Both of their books will be worth a look, and both were spot-on for The Design Trust, a think tank of designers nationwide. Former White House florist and author Laura Dowling discussed her upcoming book and the importance of flowers, not only in the First Home but anyone's home! Here's the bottom line - flowers can change the whole personality of a room. The right colors and varieties make you feel cheerful, special or sophisticated while the wrong ones can fight with your décor and just bring down the mood. We enjoyed listening to Barbara Mistick too, co-author of "Stretch: How to Future-Proof Yourself for Tomorrow's Workplace." The key take-away: technology is moving at warp speed in virtually every sector of our world and it takes some "stretching" to protect yourself from becoming obsolete. I'm working my way through it now!

HGTV PHOTO GALLERY

As part of HGTV's Professional Network, Sweet Peas Design was one of several studios nationwide featured in a photo gallery of window treatments. Check out the white tufted cornices we paired with floor-to-ceiling draperies here: [Window Treatments: 20+ Cornice Styles to Steal Photo](#)
Thanks HGTV!

DERING HALL

We were thrilled to be a featured designer recently on one of our favorite websites - DeringHall.com, a design community that connects consumers and professionals. You can visit our profile and portfolio here: [Dering Hall-Sweet Peas Design](#)
Thanks for thinking of us, Dering Hall!

GET THE LOOK



Barefoot Elegance

If you surf the internet for "barefoot elegance" you're going to find a lot of photos of tropical beach homes and resorts, but you don't to live on the water to get this easy-breezy look. Barefoot elegance is possible in the suburbs, the city or even at a second home in the mountains or the desert. You know you've got it if you feel comfortable enough to walk around the house barefoot but elegant enough to feel luxurious. It's clean and simple and all about juxtapositions - rough with luxe. Think of it as eating burgers from the grill on your best china, or a bride wearing flip flops on the dance floor at her reception. Barefoot elegance can be painted white barn wood paired with sparkly chandeliers, a homey striped rug in front of a marble fireplace or an elegant wood chair upholstered in a rain forest pattern. We found some photos that may spark your creativity. Just take off your shoes and socks and get in the barefoot mood!

> from upper left photos courtesy of: enchantedhome.com, coastalliving.com, palmbeachdailynews.com, architecturaldigest.com, enchantedhome.com, coastalliving.com, enchantedhome.com

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