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SWEET PEAS DESIGN

susan brunstrum

AUGUST 2016

WHAT DEFINES LUXURY?

"Luxury must be comfortable, otherwise it is not luxury." -Coco Chanel



Notice anything different? I hope so! We have redesigned our newsletter to give it a fresh, sophisticated look that's also warm and welcoming. Up above we have a new logo and playful new typeface for the name of the newsletter, and below you will see improved photo displays and a simpler, easier-to-read layout. The changes are part of a larger effort to update our social media, including our website and our blog - read more about that in What's Up farther down the page. In the meantime, I have been pondering this question: What defines luxury? I recently spent an evening with a panel of designers affiliated with the River North Design District sharing our definitions of luxury. My conclusion? Luxury today is not what it once was. It has been

redefined. To find the answer, I prefer to change the question and ask, what no longer defines luxury? Luxury is no longer defined by or equated to: the amount of money spent, objects or possessions, the craftsmanship or workmanship involved, the quality of an item, the wait for perfection. People don't always have the patience to value the vision, expertise and knowledge needed to create something special the way they once did. But don't get me wrong, I respect many aspects of this new definition of luxury - it is less materialistic and more experiential and psychological. According to our clients, luxury is...

- **Feeling safe in your home.** Making your home a refuge where you can shut out the world and all its 'noise,' being free of the stress of life and having a place to bond and share with our family and friends.
- **Having just enough** - not too much or too little. Feeling satisfied with what you have, valuing quality over quantity and choosing the right-sized home for your life style and needs. It requires editing and purging and no longer wishing for what others have, in other words less competition and comparison.
- **Making time to spend with your family and friends,** to lead a healthy thus longer life, to create a functional home and to balance home and work.
- **Being happy with your home.** Designing your home for yourself, not the next owner. Ignoring trends, having a 'touchable' home not a museum and most important, having that "Ahh, I'm home" feeling when you walk in the door.
- **Appreciating beauty.** It feeds your soul, inspires you, balances form and function, mixes old and new.
- **Transforming and experiential.** It could be traveling, tasting your first oyster, your first bottle of good wine or bourbon. It is your first child and your first home.
- **Comes from within your heart and soul.** It is personal, deeply satisfying and emotionally energetic. For some it is family heirlooms, for me it is buying one-of-a-kind art from a talented local artist.
- **You and you and you and me!** As designers we define luxury as the joy of sharing the design process. Nothing makes us happier than helping our clients fall in love with their homes again and taking their dreams and making them better. We love creating an unforgettable client-designer relationship and surprising our clients with ideas they didn't know were possible.

Of course, we all have our personal definitions of luxury. How do you define luxury? Email us and let us know.

Sincerely,

Susan, Angela, Jennifer, Lauren, Laura, Caitlin and Lauren
The Sweet Peas Design Team

WHAT'S IN



Clockwise from upper left photos courtesy of: odetothings.com, purewow.co, decoist.com, savorhome.com, decorpap.com, decordpad.com, oomphonline.com



1) GOING NUDE

No, we're not recommending skinny dipping, we're talking about the neutral color that became wildly popular after Kate Middleton, the Duchess of Cambridge, began showing up everywhere in nude heels. We do recommend trying this at home, but it's critical to choose the right shade of nude or it will be a huge flop. Some nudes can look pink (think a slice of ham) or yellowed (think old pages). We suggest using

it as an accent, not for a major piece of furniture, and then pair it with something vibrant. Nude is not a stand-alone color.

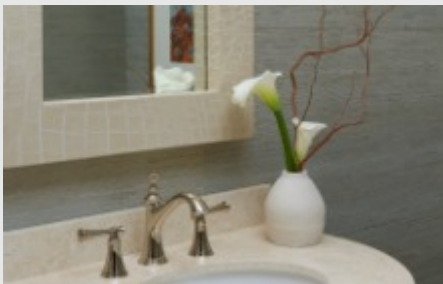
Photo courtesy of: kellywearstler.com

2) PLAYING MARBLES

Marble is breaking new ground in home accessories, and we're happy to see it. This luxurious stone brings a natural element from kitchens and bathrooms into living rooms, family rooms, dens and bedrooms. We are seeing bookends, jars, boxes, obelisks and candle sticks. We have always appreciated the cool, clean sleekness of marble and its organic veining. Marble accessories add a bit of heft and depth to a book shelf or cocktail table, without a look-at-me attitude, and they contrast well with metallic finishes and wood.



Photo courtesy of: esty.com



3) REFLECT YOURSELF

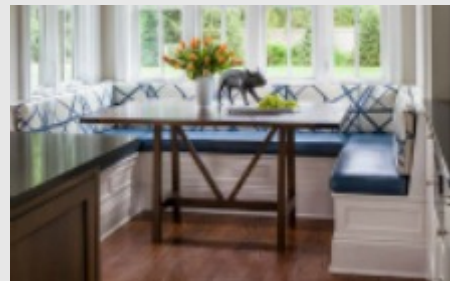
Statement mirrors have become our go-to for bathrooms and powder rooms. Wouldn't you rather look at your reflection in a fabulous one-of-a-kind mirror instead of a boring one? Mirrors are like artwork - they become the center of attention and can pull a whole bathroom together. We love the Asian inspired glossy red mirror we selected for a powder room and leather-framed mirrors are another favorite- alligator,

ostrich and even crocodile! To balance all that pizzazz we prefer simple wall sconces.

Photo courtesy of: Sweet Peas Design

4) IT'S A BANQUETTE NOT A CROQUETTE

They're back, well, have they ever really left? Banquette seating is so warm and cozy - it literally brings us close together, like sitting side-by-side in a private booth at your favorite restaurant. Banquettes are wonderful for a romantic candlelight dinner, or they can accommodate several rambunctious young kids, and sometimes they provide storage space



undereath. Banquettes come from the Germanic culture - they often were used as window seating in formal rooms and the word banquette derives from the German word "bank" for bench. Because they often get loads of use (especially in a kitchen), we always select durable, cleanable fabrics for the cushions and colorful pillows to cushion the back.

Photo courtesy of: homebunch.com

5) ONE WOMAN'S TRASH IS ANOTHER'S PRIZED



POSSESSIONS

Architectural heirlooms and remnants have been a "trend" for so long it's time to accept that they are part and parcel of the interior landscape. For years restaurants and homeowners have been embracing these timeworn, one-of-a-kind treasures for their rough-luxe look and connection to the past. There's almost no limit to what can be recycled and repurposed! We love fireplace surrounds and

andirons, leaded glass windows, antique doors, fence and furniture finials and iron brackets as well as shutters, pediments, corbels and tin tiles layered. Couple your architectural remnants with contemporary artwork. Fabulous!

Photo courtesy of: maireclaireremaiso.com

6) FLAT AND FABULOUS

Flat panel kitchen cabinets are back in style - with a new twist - a textural finish that you can really feel. Rather than creating the look of texture by glazing or antiquing, one of our go-to cabinet manufacturers Woodmode is using natural texture from rough-sewn Euro oak in a thick veneer that adds movement, too. They really hit it out of the park with the color palette for this line, and the style blends with contemporary and transitional. Just remember that with textured cabinets the countertops need to have simpler, cleaner patterns, such as one of the new manmade quartz countertops in a natural tone.

Photo courtesy of: domainehome.com



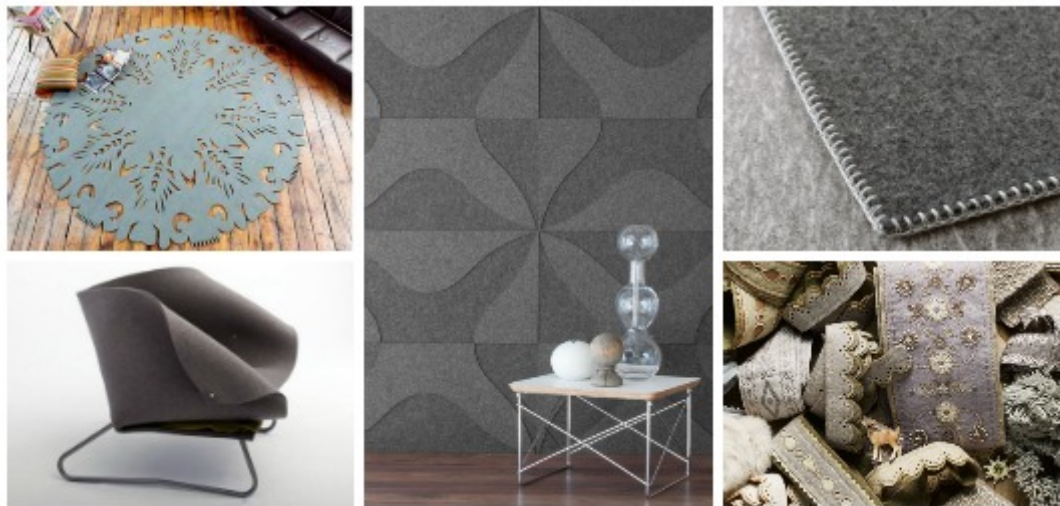
WHAT'S OUT

WASTED SPACE

Would you believe that virtually every home we've ever worked in has wasted space? It's true! We always find valuable, vacant "real estate" that we can put to work with some creativity and the right floor plan. Just call us the Space Makers!

1. **Front Entryways.** The space flanking the front doors is perfect for a bench or two where guests can sit to remove shoes or drop their keys as they walk in. Extra wall space works well for a chest, too, and it provides extra storage as well as a beautiful statement piece.
2. **Mud Rooms and Laundry Rooms.** Frequently we can squeeze in extra cabinetry, counters and shelves that keep these much-used rooms organized.
3. **Closets.** I highly recommend closet organizers no matter how big or small the space. You'll appreciate the efficiency when you're rushing to get ready in the morning.
4. **Master Bathrooms.** We often can increase the size of a shower and add more storage without changing the footprint, or by borrowing a little unused space from somewhere nearby.
5. **Lower levels.** How about a doggy shower for man's best friend?

FABU FABRIC

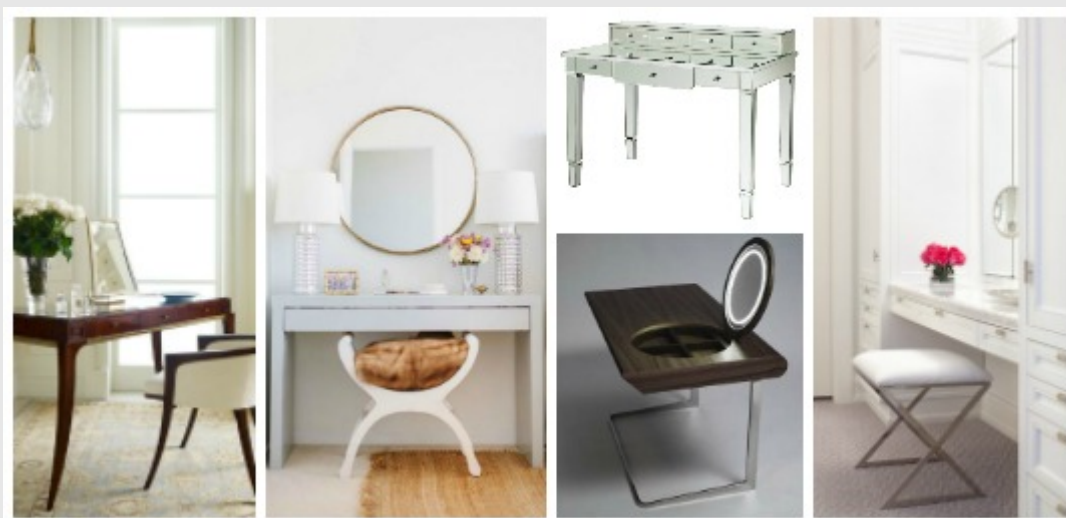


From upper left photos courtesy of: freshome.com, designmilk.com, archiproducts.com, contemporist.com, kravet.com

FEELING FELT

When most people think of felt they picture pool tables, children's craft projects and those little pads on furniture legs that prevent scratches on the floor. But felt is soooo much more - I'm really "feeling" it as a fabric for rugs and trims, and of course it has always been popular in fashion for hats and coats. But what is it, exactly? For five millennia, people have been turning wool into felt by matting, condensing and pressing fibers together with moisture or heat instead of weaving. In more recent days it is made of acrylic, too, but in either case the result is a textile that can be cut with a clean edge, that does not unravel or fray, can be water repellent and is very resilient - it doesn't wrinkle or crush. Right now I'm loving a new collection of felt trimmings designed by Barbara Barry for Kravet, and inspired by the Austrian Alps. They're a little rustic but refined in a soft color palette. Edelman, one of our go-to leather rug designers surprised us with their new collection of felt rugs in a rich array of colors and decorative finishes along the edges -think leather cross stitching or leather fringe. It's exciting to have a new rug "fabric" in our tool box!

SPOTLIGHT ON A FAVORITE



From left photos courtesy of: bakerfurniture.com, brit.co, bungalow5.com, pitut.com, decorpad.com

VANITY, OH VANITY!

Whether you call them vanities or dressing tables, these utterly feminine pieces of furniture have been a treasured part of ladies' boudoirs since late 17th century Europe. The New York Metropolitan Museum of Art curated an exhibit of them a few years ago, tracing their history back to European high society. Seated in front of the requisite mirror a woman (with help from her personal maid) could primp and preen at her leisure. And, of course she had an assortment of cosmetics and exquisite perfume bottles arrayed in front of her and little drawers filled with jewelry, brushes, combs and other tools of feminine beauty. Doesn't it make you think of Lady Mary and her maid, Anna, in PBS' Downton Abbey series? The earliest European vanities were elaborate pieces commissioned by the wealthy. During the early to mid-20th century Hollywood "glammed-up" the vanity in films featuring sultry starlets such as Helene Costello, Jean Harlow and Marilyn Monroe. Eventually the vanity became a matching piece of the master suite, but we prefer to mix things up in the bedroom with a vanity that has its own personality and style! The master bath is a different story - there we often match the dressing table to the other cabinetry and countertops and differentiate it with a pretty mirror and light sconces. Few pieces of furniture are so specifically feminine, which is probably one of the reasons we're drawn to vanities, and perhaps we agree just a little with Al Pacino when he said, "Vanity is my favorite sin."

WHAT'S UP

ZOO BALL 2016

It was all happenin' at the zoo last month during the annual Lincoln Park Zoo Ball. The "Penguins on Parade" event was high fashion, fun and it raised more than \$1.35 million. I was happy to help support the creation of state-of-the-art exhibits, including the addition of a dozen endangered African penguins to the Robert and Mayari Pritzker Penguin Cove this fall. In honor of the soon-to-arrive penguins gentlemen were encouraged to wear tuxes - a.k.a. penguin suits! - or just a tux jacket with shorts, which a few of the fellas rocked!

WEBSITE RENOVATION IT'S HERE!

Our newly redesigned website is up and running and we would be very happy if you could drop by for a peek - we're still at www.sweetpeas-inspired.com. From our new logo to our split-screen photos our updated look is sophisticated and friendly, streamlined and easy to use. Our menus and navigation are more intuitive so you can find what you're looking for in a click or two. We kept most of our existing pages - including the Portfolio, About, and Blog sections but we added a Seminars page to let you know about our upcoming design presentations, and the link to client reviews has been renamed Applause. While you're browsing, please consider updating your connections with us. If you would like to receive our blogs and monthly newsletter just click on the Let's Connect link on any page, fill out the brief form and you'll start receiving valuable design tips, trends and ideas with lots of fabulous photos, as well as our occasional "Go Guide" with places to visit and things to do in the Chicago area and beyond.



Clockwise from upper left photos courtesy of: sallyko.com,lpzooball.org, rivernorthdesigndistrict.com,Sweet Peas Design, christopherguy.com

RNDD GALLERY WALK

Mark your calendars for the River North Design District's Fall Gallery Walk on Friday, September 9th. You don't have to be an art aficionado to enjoy this popular event. Artwork from emerging and established artists will be exhibited from 5 to 9 p.m. in participating furnishings show rooms and art galleries. This is an easy, no-pressure way to see exciting new art and meet the artists in a relaxed environment. I'm particularly eager to see the work of Chicago's talented pastry chef Gale Gand, who will for the first time be displaying a selection of her colorful, sometimes playful abstract work, and we don't want to miss Sally Ko's exhibit <http://sallyko.com/home.html>. Sally is a Korean-born artist who grew up and studied art in Chicago - her work is wonderful! The event is free and open to the public. For information on the artists, their showrooms and related events please visit <https://rivernorthdesigndistrict.com/2016-fall-gallery-walk/>. I will be there!

DREAMING OF GUY!

Sweet Peas Design will be one of four studios participating in the Dream House opening early next year in the new Christopher Guy showroom in Chicago. It was fun to chat with Christopher himself during the red-carpet event at the showroom - he flew in from London for the celebration. We're planning to take his curvaceous, somewhat feminine designs and create a special bachelor pad as our contribution to the Dream House. A challenge to be sure!

GET THE LOOK



From left photos courtesy of: wayfair.com, Sweet Peas Design, southerndecorationblog.com, sketch42blog.com

TRADITIONAL + TRANSITIONAL = TRAD-SITIONAL

Tired of traditional but don't want to start over? Adding a few clean-lined transitional elements to a traditional room can give you the classic-but-fresh look you're hoping for! In fact, we just wrapped up a project like that for a recently retired couple in Libertyville entering a new phase of life. They wanted an update but couldn't part with some of their most-loved pieces, so we layered in sophisticated, simple furnishings and created a balanced, "welcome home" look. In the living room we introduced a pair of transitional sofas and pillows and a hair-on-hide rug to the existing traditional coffee table, side tables, lamps and chairs, and finished it with new lamp shades and accessories. In the master bedroom, we selected simple ivory bedding for the traditional four-poster bed, gorgeous embroidered linen roman shades and a transitional angled loveseat for the sitting area. Yes, heirlooms passed down from grandparents or even generations before can "play nicely" with the millennials or new kids on the block, if handled properly. The key to success with this TRAD-SITIONAL styling is to make it seamless, not funky-eclectic.

The individual pieces should appear as though they have lived together in perfect harmony forever.

SWEET TIP

WHAT TO DO WITH YOUR GENTLY USED FURNITURE?

So you are updating, right-sizing, down-sizing or just have too much stuff in the basement. What do you do with your gently used upholstered furniture and casegoods? You have a few options.

1. **Have a garage sale** - however, you will spend loads of time for little dollars
2. Take a photo and post it on Craigs List or e-Bay - again, not much money for the effort and who wants strangers coming to their home?
3. **If you work corporately, email all your young staffers** - it will be gone in a heartbeat.
4. **Donate it to a not-for-profit organization** (most will pick up pieces at your home as long as it is accessible) such as:

Habitat for Humanity Restores <http://www.habitat.org/restores> These are the nonprofit, home improvement stores run by the Habitat for Humanity organization made famous by President Jimmy Carter and his wife, Rosalynn, who helped build homes for impoverished people. There are 10 locations in the Chicago area. It accepts gently used furniture, appliances, home accessories, building materials and more and sells it at a fraction of the retail price. Proceeds are used to help build "strength, stability, self-reliance and shelter in local communities and around the world."

Love Inc. <http://www.loveinclakecounty.org/donate-goods/>

With two locations in Lake County, Love Inc. is a network of church volunteers helping disadvantaged people rebuild their lives. All items must be in good, usable condition. Pickups are made on Saturday mornings by appointment or furniture can be dropped off at the Waukegan office. Contact the at donations@loveinclakecounty.org or call at 847.782.8630 to make arrangements to donate your items.



*From left photos courtesy of: blog.zealousgood.com,
habitat.org/restores, loveinclakecounty.org*

UNTIL NEXT TIME!

susan



LET'S CONNECT

Studio

507 East Park Avenue
Libertyville, Illinois 60048
847.816.1296

Home Office

100 East Bellevue Place
Chicago, Illinois 60611
312.572.9090

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

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