

SCRIBBLES. POSSIBILITIES. DISCOVERIES.



SWEET PEAS DESIGN

susan brunstrum

FEBRUARY 2017

URBAN AND SUBURBAN



Photo courtesy of: Sweet Peas Design

"All our dreams can come true if we have the courage to pursue them." Walt Disney

Five years ago my dream of opening a second studio was born with a single word written on a piece of paper - Chicago - and now it is about to come true. In just a few days I will be opening a new, full-service studio at 1242 N. Wells Street in Old Town. You are invited to join in the celebration. We will host a Grand Opening party on Thursday, February 23, from 4:30 to 8 PM and an Open House on Saturday, February 15, from 11 AM to 4PM. Please bring a friend or two. This latest venture reflects my never-say-never attitude and my desire to tackle new challenges!

My journey began by moving myself from my Libertyville home to a condo on the Gold Coast, where I have been making friends and settling into urban life. At the same time, I focused on building our urban clientele, making connections, leasing space and furnishing it, with much help from Junior Designer Lauren Benditzky. In the meantime, Sweet Peas Design has been attracting more attention and awards from Chicago media, all of which convinced me the time was right for expansion. My highest priority is to provide the same level of client service and expertise downtown that we have always given to clients on the North Shore.

Lauren will be on-site in Chicago full-time with a new Senior Designer, while Financial Manager Caitlin Ridgeway and I will divide our time between Libertyville and Chicago. Senior Designer Angela LaVista will continue to bring her creativity and energy to the Libertyville studio full time, as will Studio Manager Lauren Brown and Senior Architectural Associate Jennifer Tarello, though all their skills will be utilized as needed in both studios. I will continue to be the "Chief Inspiration Officer" for the two studios - I will never be able to keep my hands off the design process - and I will have the best of both worlds, urban and suburban. Yes, dreams can come true!

Sincerely,

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

WHAT'S IN



From upper left photos courtesy of: highfashionhome.com, homebunch.com, amazon.com, turbulences.deco.fr, inanunguardedmoment.com, kwikset.com, decornpad.com, homecrux.com



1) SHADES OF GRAY

I'm willing to bet that gray tones are going to be with us for a long time! These handsome neutrals have gone viral in interior design because they are so versatile and varied. You can go warm or cold, soft or loud, casual or elegant. Grays pair well with almost any color, too. Here are a few of our go-to hues from Benjamin Moore.

- Revere Pewter HC-172 Light with warm undertones- calm and quiet
- Ozark Shadows AC-26 Imagine soft evening shadows in the mountains
- Kendall Charcoal HC-166 Rich, deep, luxurious color-it pops beautifully against crisp white trim
- Cinder AF-705 Prettier than its name, a sophisticated, medium-dark hue.
- Edgecomb Gray HC-173 Soft, stylish and timeless
- Squirrel Tail 1476 Perfect for trim and also prettier than its name

From upper left photos of grays mentioned above courtesy of: benjaminmoore.com

2) LAUNDRY ROOM LOVE AFFAIR

You spend a lot of time in this space, shouldn't it be efficient and look great? If there is a room to splurge on, make it your laundry room. Add better lighting, attractive storage and clever extras like a fold-down folding surface or drying rack, or under-counter space for a dog or cat bed. I'm all for anything that makes laundry day more enjoyable!

Photo courtesy of: Sweet Peas Design



sandwich to ruin the moment!
Photo courtesy of: elledecor.com

3) VA VA VOOM BEDROOMS

Sleep-inducing colors are perfect for bedrooms, but maybe it's time for a change. Add a little va -va -voo! A romantic color in the your bedroom could add spice to your life, and it's easy to turn up the heat with a couple of gallons of paint for the walls. Red is an obvious choice, but make sure it's warm and inviting versus fire-engine shocking. A sophisticated black-and-white theme may evoke hot scenes between James Bond and his latest conquest, and purple has its passionate qualities, but choose a soft grayish shade rather than grape jelly. Nothing like the image of a PB&J

4) LAMPS BE GONE

If your nightstand is like mine, it tends to be a catch-all for books, magazines, your cell phone, a water bottle and the occasional glass of wine. So it makes sense to repurpose that old table lamp and substitute a playful pendant light to make room for your must-have stuff. The options are endless and you will need an electrician, but I love how pendants flanking a headboard add height to the room. Just be sure to install it at the right height for bedtime reading.

Photo courtesy of: homedit.com



5) PLEASE TOUCH

Painted white or dark stained kitchen cabinets are still a go-to look, but textural cabinet doors are IT. These tactile finishes have a touch-me appeal that plays well against sleek countertops, shiny appliances and stained wood floors. You name it, we're seeing it... mirror-like finishes, rough-hewn woods, stainless steel and even leather inserts - our single guy clients love the leather!

Photo courtesy of: apartmenttherapy.com



6) MOTHER NATURE, IN THE RAW

I've been spotting raw materials such as geodes, selenite, rocks and minerals for a couple of years now and I see that trend heading in a more raw and rugged direction this year. While highly refined finishes are certainly not out, dark, tactile rocks, particularly lava stone, are emerging in such interesting applications. I'm so intrigued by lava stone benches and tables though I'm not wild about the extreme "Fred Flintstone" versions I've seen! Look for deep silver metals and other dark, textural stones as well in place of impeccably shiny metals. Yabadabadoo!

Photo courtesy of: weburbanist.com



7) CONNECTIVITY ON STEROIDS

There's no end in sight for the integration of technology at home to control our daily lives. Bluetooth-enabled home appliances allow us to set the



strength of our coffee and the crispness of our toast via a smartphone app. Voice-activated "personal assistants" such as Amazon's Echo answer all our pressing questions: "Alexa, what's the weather forecast today?" I can't wait for a robot maid like the Jetsons' Rosie to clean my house, do the laundry and cook!

Photo courtesy of: wired.com

WHAT'S OUT

SHARP EDGES

Disciplined, crisp edges are giving way to rounded and curvy outlines, which is perfect for me - circles are my favorite shape! Curves and circles are comforting and inviting, like a big hug, a curvaceous silhouette (not everyone is skinny) or an infinity scarf that keeps you cozy and warm. We like to mix sharp and curved edges for a well-balanced blend. You can get the look by just making a change or two - a shapely urn lamp or puzzle-piece nesting tables that form a coffee table.

AMATEUR HOUR

Mass produced art work and accessories aren't making the cut any more. Craftsmanship and one-of-a-kind, artisanal work is gaining ground for those who appreciate a high skill level. Charred wood doors - yes, they're really charred! - are a fascinating example that dates back hundreds of years to Japan. Custom chandeliers, original artwork and upholstered furnishing made just to your specifications are other ways to splurge on a meticulously handmade item.

"COW UDDER" LIGHT BULBS

The industrial-chic look is peaking, particularly the Edison bulb fad. They were fun while they lasted, but we're replacing them with different styles of retro lighting that work well and update your look. Watt a nice update.

FABU FABRIC



From upper left photos courtesy of: rakuten.com, creationsmetaphores.com, creationsmetaphores.com, sahco.com, creationsmetaphores.com

HORSEHAIR

Mr. Ed - Remember him? The talking horse? I've been thinking of the famous 1960s TV star lately because horsehair fabric is on trend. This widely used material has been valued since at least the 9th Century for its beauty, luster, softness, durability and versatility. During the 19th century it was popular for upholstery fabric, hats, shaving brushes and even women's undergarments. Up until the 20th century, fine art paintbrushes were made of horsehair, and for

thousands of years fishing lines were made of braided horsehair. I have chosen two horsehair-and-linen fabrics for the window treatments in the Master Bedroom that we are designing for the Lake Forest Showhouse, opening in spring. The main fabric is a delicate dark blue and taupe weave and the border is rich midnight blue. Simple. Elegant. Refined. Horsehair fabric is woven from hair trimmed from the tail of a horse, and it's typically blended with another fiber, such as linen. Many fabric mills contract with horse farms to collect the hair - it is a bit like gathering sheep's wool or llama hair, but more difficult. Today, horsehair fabric is used in clothing, jewelry, and home furnishings including wall treatments, pillows and upholstery. Neeeiigh!

SPOTLIGHT ON A FAVORITE



From upper left photos courtesy of: flickr.com, annsacks.com, decorpapad.com, martinmoore.com, alfker.com, Sweet Peas Design, shelterness.com, traditionalhome.com

NIFTY NICHES

"Everything in its place" is one of my die-hard mantras - so I'm all about niches. Or do you say nooks and crannies? Instead of a shower caddy, I prefer a shower niche to organize soap, shampoo, conditioner and shaving gel - it's one of our signature amenities - and they can be designed in a variety of shapes and sizes. Rectangles are popular, either horizontal or vertical, and so are squares, but I've seen arched niches too. You can build the niche with the same tiles as the shower walls, use accent tiles inside the niche, frame the niche with accent tiles or add a protruding shelf in a contrasting material such as marble. So many options! And how about his-and-hers niches for the shower? Kitchens and laundry rooms are perfect for niches, too. Instead of putting your dog's food and water bowls on the floor, we recommend a built-in niche at the end of an island or counter. It eliminates the chance of bumping into the water bowl and flooding the floor. And wouldn't you prefer a tidy niche, built into the kitchen and bathroom cabinets, for paper towels or toilet paper? We do! Maybe it's time to find your niche.

WHAT'S UP

SPD WINS "BEST BATHROOM" AWARD

What a great way to shake off the winter blahs! We just won "Best Bathroom 2016" from Modern Luxury Interiors Chicago for a complete master bath renovation in Lake Forest. We are thrilled to be included in the magazine's annual "Best in Design" awards featured in the current issue. Senior Architectural Associate Jennifer Cioni Tarello, Junior Designer Lauren Benditzky and I collaborated on this project as part of a whole-house update for a wonderful, 70-something widow who wanted a master bath with a decidedly feminine flair. Many thanks to Interiors Chicago publisher Becca West and editor-in-chief Andrea Mills for this recognition. We feel honored to be among such a talented group of Chicago-area designers - for the second time! We won "Best Living Space" in 2014 for our family room in the Gracious House Showhouse.

SHOW HOUSE TRIFECTA

We have been invited to design the Master Bedroom in this year's Lake Forest Showhouse & Gardens, opening Saturday, April 29 through Sunday, May 21. This will be the third straight time we have been chosen to participate in this biennial show house, sponsored by the Infant Welfare Society, which uses the proceeds to benefit Chicago-area children in need. It is an honor to be included and a joy to help raise money for such a worthy cause.

BEST OF HOUZZ 2017 AWARD

We are delighted to be selected again as a winner of the "Best of Houzz 2017" competition in the "Design" category. Photos of our work were among the most popular images chosen by the more than 40 million monthly users on Houzz. This is the fifth year that we've been recognized on Houzz. Thanks to all our fans at Houzz.com!



From upper left photos courtesy of: Sweet Peas Design, Lake Forest Showhouse & Gardens, Sweet Peas Design, Sweet Peas Design, Modern Luxury Interiors Chicago, houzz.com, Sweet Peas Design

STRIKING GOLD (AND BLACK)

Check out Dering Hall's recent slide show [20 Chic Spaces with Black & Gold Accents](#) featuring their favorite rooms with gold and black details by designers from around the world. Yes, we're in there - click ahead to the fifth photo, but don't miss all 20 gorgeous rooms. The editors called out our "Fashion Blogger's Retreat" from the Gracious House Showroom to illustrate how these swanky accent colors can be used in a fashion-forward home office. Thanks to the Dering Hall team @DeringHall.

WORDS OF WISDOM

I will be joining a lively panel of interior designers at the Woman's Athletic Club of Chicago (WAC), of which I am a member, from 5:30 to 7:30 PM on Thursday, February 16, to discuss design trends. The participants will include Jessica LaGrange, Joan Craig and Laura Barnett and will be moderated by Kathleen Mitchell, Publisher of Luxe Interiors+ Design Chicago Magazine. If you would like to attend, please contact me at susan@sweetpeas-inspired.com.

DESIGN TRUST, HOUSTON STYLE

I escaped the Chicago weather for a trip to Houston earlier this month to attend a board meeting of The Design Trust Ltd., an exclusive, New York-based think tank of interior designers nationwide. It's always an inspirational experience - we discussed branding and marketing - and the sunshine in the Lone Star State was pretty nice, too!

KKG-WHIZ!

Thanks to Kappa Kappa Gamma for spotlighting us recently in their national newsletter, The Key. They gave us a shout-out for our extensive update last summer at the local chapter sorority house at Northwestern University. It was challenge to create a living room and study area for 70 KKG women! But, as a KKG alum, I understood that flexibility

and functionality were as important as an approachable and comfortable style and that it was necessary to further the KKG goals of "tradition, leadership, academics and friendship."

GET THE LOOK



From upper left photos courtesy of: thedecorista.com, elledecor.com, felixforest.com, atlantishome.com, surya.com, feelitcool.com, Sweet Peas Design, aphrochic.com

GLOBAL CHIC

This exotic trend has legs, or should I say wings? Global Chic can be achieved by bringing back a piece (or two or more) from your travels abroad to create a sense of well-traveled je ne sais quoi and adventure in your home. Mix pieces from Africa, Asia, Europe - everywhere! You want your collection to tell the story of your travels throughout the years. The mix of textures, prints, colors and styles from around the world makes for an eclectic, layered, yet personal style. We love "worldly" objects of art and enjoy incorporating them in all rooms. We have clustered small carved pieces and hung hand-made pots on the wall from South Africa and Vietnam. We have placed vintage soccer balls (oops footballs) from England and I would never part with my ancient paint palettes and brushes, purchased on a trip to Paris and on display in my home office. You can also create or add to this global chic look with wallpaper, rugs, animal prints, tribal art, florals and fabrics. Restraint is always the key in design - too many African masks and you've got a museum, not a home!

SWEET TIP



From upper left photos courtesy of: Sweet Peas Design, jillsorenson.com, Sweet Peas Design, sheffieldfurniture.com, designmanifest.com,

NAIL HEADS

Traditional nail heads, lined up like little round soldiers all in a row, are facing some competition. Our favorite vendors are offering so many different types of nail heads that choosing and placing them is becoming an art form! Yippee, we get to be even more creative. More than ever we are "playing" with the size, spacing, location, style and color of nailheads. Sometimes we accent just the corner of the base of a sofa. Or we use really big nail heads and space them 6 inches apart on top of a trim. Then again, how about one big one with two little ones flanking it? And here's a heads-up: nail heads aren't necessarily round, anymore. Rectangles, hexagons, ovals, tear drops and pointy ovals, like teeny canoes are popular. Most nailheads have fairly simple patterns, others are carved with flowers or geometric shapes. In addition to traditional brass think black nickel, pewter, silver, copper, hammered silver, bronze and hammered bronze. Do you prefer matte or shiny? Sparkly or faceted? Choose the right one and you've got this nailed!

UNTIL NEXT TIME!

susan



LET'S CONNECT

507 East Park Avenue
Libertyville, Illinois 60048
847.816.1296

1242 N. Wells Street
Chicago, Illinois 60610
312.572.9090

CARE TO SHARE?

Most of our clients come from referrals. Please tell a friend about our studio and share my email address with them. susan@sweetpeas-inspired.com