



THINK LIKE A DECOR- ATOR

To Create a Comfortable,
Original, and Stylish Home

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Foreword by Alexa Hampton

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ARCHITECTURAL DIGEST

BRING YOUR STYLE

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92 ELLE DECOR

bedrooms in total through-
out is quick to note that they are
the idea was for family to come
the bedrooms," she says
want walls. I wanted it to be
gardeners, she has five
—there are three patios
—an immersive pool—will
and gold de noche,
the property with a heady
possible backdrop for
particularly in advance
ational friends (fashio
among them) who

In a second-floor sitting room, an Indonesian
bed is topped with batik pillows and an Indonesian
teak bench and cocktail table are Indonesian.
Art Deco armchair is Colombian, and the
and leather rugs are by Mamayana. **CLC**
ROOM LEFT: In Chiqui's son's bedroom,
and Indonesian, and the door is from
in Marrakech. In the stairwell, the bar
bed is Indonesian, and the door is from
Moroccan, and the tapestry is a Central
suzani. The bronze showerhead for
shower was handmade by Casa Cl
wall lamp is Moroccan. For detail

Love
Mixing
Colors

white
table
with
pops
of
color

color
combos

leisure
on cabinet

FEATURES A FIREPLACE THAT WAS INSPIRED BY
DESIGN BY CATER 1950s FLOOR FOR TABLE ON
AND HOLDINGS TAKE ORIGINAL TO THE RESIDE

CHAPTER 2

FINDING YOUR LOOK

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ow that you have considered the story of your home, it is time to figure out what it is going to look and feel like. It is time to look outward at inspiring spaces and build a vision that you can articulate to yourself and to others.

Start by finding photos of rooms and places that speak to you. Then, the hard work will be studying those photos and being able to say what it is about them that appeals to you. Spaces evoke emotions, such as calm, nostalgia, or energy, and being able to identify the look and feeling you want your new space to have is critical for getting the result that you want. This next step is to take the time to educate yourself and know what you like and don't like so that you then are able to communicate your vision as you dive into your project.

Finding the Words

As you collect images of spaces you like, practice deconstructing what you see and saying to yourself, or writing down, what exactly you like about the space. Is it calming? Is it fun? Is it sophisticated? It's hard to talk about

OPPOSITE: A sitting room/guest room at a house we decorated on eastern Long Island. The vintage wicker chairs, rattan, stripes, and straightforward design lend the room a beachy casual vibe. The painting is by Jennifer de Klaver, the sofa bed is from Joybird, and the striped rug is from Dash & Albert.



FOCUS ON: THE WORDS

“For each client,” says Katie Leede, “at the beginning of the project I give them an expandable folder labeled by layout with things like ‘lighting,’ ‘carpets,’ ‘colors,’ ‘couches,’ and a stack of magazines, two Sharpies, and I tell them to tear out sheets, open a bottle of wine, and use the Sharpies to circle things they like and write one word next to each about why they like it.”

visuals, and not everyone has the vocabulary. “I don’t know I just like it” is not enough. You need to be able to articulate what the photograph conveys to you. You might say: “This space feels sophisticated and serene—I like the clean lines of the furniture, the neutral and calming color palette, the texture of the shaggy rug, the shots of black that add contrast. I love the framed photograph on the wall of the beach scene, as I would think I was on vacation every time I looked at it.”

To create a similar feeling in your space as the one seen in an inspiration photo, you don’t need to buy the exact chair in the photo; instead you need to understand the vibe of the room and choose pieces and colors and textures that work together to be in sync with that feeling you want to create and the lifestyle you want to live. Dig deep, deconstruct the image, translate the feelings into words. Whether you are talking to a designer or designing for yourself, having a detailed description like this in hand is like paving the road to your destination.

Instagram Versus Reality

Kee in mind that there is a world of difference between seeing a space in two dimensions versus seeing it in three dimensions. The room you love in a photograph is a two-dimensional interpretation of the three-dimensional space. A good photograph of a room is about the interior design and decorating, but it also reflects the skill of the photographer and the styling. When you look at a photograph of a room, you shouldn't feel bad if your own house doesn't compare—that's like feeling bad if you don't look like you stepped out of a fashion magazine spread.

A small room may be incredibly cozy but virtually impossible to photograph, while another room might not be much to see in person but is transformed by styling and the angle of the photograph. During a photo shoot, furniture is moved around and tabletops are styled, and later things like light switches and plugs are airbrushed out. The photograph is itself a many layered work of art that conveys a dream and an ideal that you probably won't ever capture exactly, but that you can strive to capture in spirit.

The Power of the Past

I once asked an appliance salesperson how most people, if there's a choice, decide whether to get an electric or a gas stove. His answer was simple: People want what they grew up with.

Everyone is influenced by the house they grew up in. It may be that you want to recreate your childhood home, or it may be the complete opposite reaction—that you want something totally different. Maybe you have inherited pieces of furniture from your family and you have to decide whether you want to incorporate them into your space or you are ready to let them go. Maybe the

heirloom furniture feels like an obligation or something you're stuck with and letting it go will be the best thing you can do.

Either way, where and how you grew up will inform your point of view. When starting a project, it's worth thinking about this. Did you grow up in a simple house and long for something more luxurious? Are you proud of your Swedish heritage and want to incorporate that into your home? Was there a place you loved? Were your parents messy and all you want in this life is a clean uncluttered space? Dwell on this for a little while and think about how much of your past you want or don't want to bring into your space now. Go for a walk, take a bath, or just stare out the window and ponder it. Do you want your new space to look and feel like another place you've known and loved?

Building a Reference Library

Since my mother was a well-versed decorator, I have her rooms rooted in my memory as design references. However, anyone can build their own reference library of places that inspire them, whether they are memories of a friend's house, images on Instagram, snapshots from a vacation, or a visit to a museum. It could be a room from a movie; friends used to tell me that my parents' house reminded them in spirit of the house from the movie *The Royal Tenenbaums* by Wes Anderson: the closet filled with board games and the tent in the living room. It is important to look at rooms by iconic decorators and analyze them. Over the next few pages, I will walk through some examples of the work of designers, such as Ray and Charles Eames, Tony Duquette, Albert Hadley, Mark Hampton, Sister Parish, and architect Philip Johnson. We will discuss the look of each room and dissect what elements of the space go into creating that look.



Finding Your Look

Find your three favorite designers and study their work. Write down or say out loud what specifically you like about what you see. Choose three of your favorite photos. Start with broad strokes that address the feeling of the overall spaces, and then drill down to what the rooms contain:

1. How would you describe the overall feeling or vibe of the room?
2. Does the room look formal? Comfortable? Like a place in the country or a place in the city? Take time to really think about it. Who do you imagine lives there?
3. How do the elements of the room contribute to this overall feeling? If it looks like a place in the country, is that because it has pine furniture? Does the choice of fabrics contribute to it looking like a country house?
4. What materials do you see in the photograph? Do you see bamboo? Steel? Lacquer? Fur? Stone? Wood? Glass? Brass?
5. Is the furniture all modern or all vintage? Do you see brown antiques? Is the furniture a combination of styles? If so, are you drawn to a mix like that?
6. What is the palette of the room? Is it all neutral or all a saturated color? Are there white walls with colorful furniture or gem-toned walls with neutral furniture?
7. Are there patterns? If so, are they big? Small? Is there a combination of patterns at different scales?
8. What textures do you see? Are things shaggy or shiny? Or a combination of both?
9. Is the space cluttered or spare?
10. Are the lines of the furnishings straight or squiggly? Or a combination of the two?
11. Is there symmetry of furnishings? Or are things asymmetrical?
12. How many things are on legs and how many are solidly on the floor?

MAXIMUM MAXIMALISM

1 This photo of Dawnbridge in Los Angeles, which was interior designer Tony Duquette's house and now is owned by Hutton Wilkinson, the creative director of Tony Duquette Studios, is maximalism to the max. I love the shade of green with the black-and-white floor. The trellis on the ceiling adds texture. The molding at the top of the wall is over-the-top. The green of the exterior is part of the design of the room. The shot of red from the hanging birdcage gives contrast. The curtains and welcoming armchairs are of the same fabric. The chandelier and the plants all have similar narrow and squiggly lines. The collection of birdhouses is interesting, not something you see every day. This room looks comfortable. It has so many layers, colors, textures, and elements, yet they are balanced and work well to create a unique space.



STREAMLINED MODERN

2 In Philip Johnson's Glass House, I love how the outdoors is part of the interior. The furniture is spare and placed intentionally. The tufting on the chairs, the pattern and warm color of the brick, and the pile on the carpet keep it from feeling stark. The tree inside connects to the trees outside and brings life into the room. I like how this is so modern and yet not cold. It is tidy without any clutter. I suspect in the winter it would feel cozy and warm compared to the outdoors.



MID-CENTURY MODERN

3 The Eames House in Los Angeles is iconic modern design. I love how it's a little messy in the best possible way. The books in the shelf aren't perfect and the plants are a little akimbo. It looks inviting. I love how the outdoors is a part of the interior because of the big double-height wall of windows. I love those light fixtures and think they go in almost any space. The white floor keeps it light and feels modern. The layered rugs and mismatched pillows on the sofa contribute to the look, which is comfortable and not too polished or formal.





TIMELESS CLASSIC

4 Albert Hadley's apartment in New York has clean lines and contrast in color and feels to me sophisticated and playful at the same time. The shape and proportion of the sculpture over the mantel repeats the shape and proportion of the fireplace. The zebra rug adds pattern. The walls have subtle pattern. The chairs are mismatched. This room is graphic yet warm and inviting. It is modern and traditional at the same time. Just look at those two chairs next to each other. It is spare, yet the wallcovering adds quiet pattern and texture and looks luxurious.

COMFORTABLE ELEGANCE

5 Sister Parish's summer house in Maine evokes a feeling of comfort, easygoing elegance, and a sense of fun—note the cockatoo high on the wall. The coffee table, made with natural materials, has a country look. The curtains are full, with a ruffled trim, and made with a fabric that mixes floral with a blue stripe. It's not too fussy. There are multiple patterns and colors and yet they all hang together in balance.





“This is the living room in our family’s house in Southampton. The chairs originally displayed their patterned chintz and then my father slip-covered them in a white self-stripe for a more graphic look. This is where I grew up and my children grew up; it is our decorating mainstay.”

—Alexa Hampton

SOPHISTICATED CHIC

6 This room by Mark Hampton is timeless and so comfortably sophisticated. It will never get old. I love the contrast of the chocolate brown walls and the white trim and furniture. The busts are classical but the room feels current. I like how the upholstered chairs don’t match—because when you are confident you aren’t worried about everything matching. I like the sculptural side chairs and the shape of the bookcase, with the bust in it, makes it feel custom and distinctive. The proportion of the bookcase is perfect.



CASE STUDY

My all-time favorite space is the pale yellow living room in my parents' house in Southampton from when I was little. When you look at this room, you might think it looks dated. When I look at this room, I think of the slumber parties I had in there, the *Grease* sing-alongs, the ping-pong table that my parents eventually put in where that dining table is, and how I spent so many hours playing ping-pong that I am now actually quite good at it. My parents often had friends over for drinks in that room, which felt festive, and on rainy days I played Monopoly for hours on the white shag rug, which felt cozy. I think about how Peter Fasano hand-painted that fabric for my mom, and I remember, in about 1976, when my mom took me along with her to his studio in a walk-up on Madison Avenue and about Ninety-First Street and how I loved spending that time with her "on the job." I have a peacock chair today at my dining room table because of those peacock chairs. I have spent my adult life trying to recreate this space and the fun times we had there, whether it's for me or for my clients. It's not that space exactly, but the spirit of the space and how we lived there. I bet it has something to do with why I painted my first apartment yellow.

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OPPOSITE: The house in Southampton where I grew up had simple white slipcovers, Parsons-style coffee and console tables, and hand-painted fabric pillows and ottomans. The peacock chairs could be moved over to the dining table for extra seating.

ASK THE EXPERT

DEVELOPING A POINT OF VIEW

with Katie Leede

What advice do you have for people who are in the early stages of a design project?

KL: You have to develop a point of view, develop a voice. If you want to be a creative partner you have to understand who you love, what you love, and why you like things. People need to start with really studying first and foremost: Who are the designers that speak to me and why do I like them?

What should people ask themselves at the beginning of a design project?

KL: When you start a project you have to ask: Who is your ideal self? How does your ideal self live? What are the practical ways your best self lives? Is cooking important to you? Do you want to cook with your children? If so, what does that mean in terms of your kitchen and pantry? Do you want to play games, such as backgammon, chess, or poker?

How do you talk with clients about design?

KL: It's very difficult when people just say, "I know what I don't like." It's much easier when people know what they do like. Make it a fun game—ask them to look at something and say what they like about it. Talk about whether they have a favorite hotel that they have fallen in love with and why they like it. How do they imagine using the space? How do they live now and how do they want to live going forward? On the spectrum of traditional to modern, where are they?

What else is important when starting to work with clients on a project?

KL: Organization really helps. Where are the games going to go? How will you organize the games? People need to go into different spaces in a house, so will there be a workspace on the upstairs landing? You have to ask yourself how you will make every part of the space come alive and beckon. Asking the right questions is very important.

Where do you find inspiration?

KL: Traveling is a big source of inspiration for me. And books, especially books on old textiles. I am inspired by museums. I like the idea of taking yourself on little dates to think about what inspires you and what excites you. Go on artist dates with yourself—it could be to a fish store and you might be inspired by the color of the fish. You have to train your eye. Going out and looking and thinking about things gives you the input that you can use in your work and in your life.

What if something isn't working?

KL: Albert Hadley was known to take off his shoes and start moving furniture around a room. Sometimes just because you ordered something for a place doesn't mean it's going to live there. Hopefully it will be perfect, but it's important to be bold enough and brave enough to move it right around and see if it works better somewhere else.

OPPOSITE: In Katie Leede's SoHo loft, high and low intermingle seamlessly: a simple Prouvé light fixture hangs over a vintage Portuguese farm table surrounded by comfortable chic swivel leather dining chairs of her own design. A CB2 shelving unit houses an inherited collection of Royal Crown Derby china. **FOLLOWING PAGES:** Another view of Leede's loft. The night-blooming cereus sprang from a single cutting taken in the 1920s from her husband's grandfather's plant.

