

Strategically designed trim moldings and an art installation create an interesting focal point.



Design Strategies

for **STANDOUT SPACES**

by Deborah Martin, ASID Associate

How an interior design professional approaches the transformation of a space.

What goes into a successful interior design project? It is a challenging process that is difficult for many to quantify because it is equal parts art and science. However, nearly everyone can recognize a beautiful space when done right. Whether you're flipping through the pages of a magazine, touring a designer show house or checking out a friend's home improvement—you simply know superior interior design when you see it. Most often, a successful interior design is left to the discriminating taste of an interior designer skilled at envisioning stylish spaces.

In assessing what makes for a spectacular interior, designers must consider not just the things with which a space is filled, but also how the space is put together. The successful interior design revolves

around the ability to custom-create a living space that is decorated to perfection, while also purpose-built for a client's lifestyles.

The creative process begins with what will have the greatest visual impact in a space, ensuring that it is aesthetically exciting. Existing limitations of a space should serve only to explore all the possibilities. However, creative aspirations must be tempered by practical considerations, because a design strategy must also be implementable. This means the design scheme must be founded on a framework of both feasibility and financial viability.

With these considerations in mind, let's explore several fundamental guidelines that interior designers apply to transform ordinary spaces into extraordinary ones.

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Photography by Phillip Korte

BESPOKE

A thorough understanding of the unique aspects of a space drives the interior design professional's decision-making process. Introducing bespoke elements enhances a space and allows it to reach its full potential. This often requires an adaptation of design principles because every space is unique.

A designer must balance creative aspirations with practical considerations.

BALANCE

For an interior to have maximum impact, a sense of visual balance must be achieved. This affords an equal emphasis of all design elements. Going far beyond the concept of symmetry this involves giving equal importance or visual weight to each design element. This equilibrium delivers maximum impact.

FOCAL POINT

Another aspect of standout interior design involves creating a focal point in a space. In doing so, all other elements play a supportive role in giving the key focus of a room the emphasis it deserves.

HARMONY

Talented designers create a network of cohesive and complementary visual aspects to achieve harmony in a room. This unity is in direct opposition to the poor outcomes that result when competing design elements vie for attention in a space.

SCALE

The properly dimensioned interaction of furniture, lighting and accessories also determines successful outcomes. Correctly sized elements achieve unity and create visual balance. This is perhaps where the biggest design mishaps occur and nothing can destroy a room as effectively as improperly proportioned pieces.

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Photography by Phillip Korte



Photography by Tim Williams



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CONTRAST

Just as harmony plays a vital role in creating spectacular spaces, the creative use of contrast can prevent monotony. You can achieve contrast through the use of opposite elements of color, texture, shape, value and orientation. To be successful, the application of creating contrast must support the overall design scheme with design principles that connect and separate the elements.

FLOW

The final aspect of great design centers on the notion of proper flow. Our eyes deliver information to our brains as they travel across the space making visual connections between the various design elements. Create the perfect gestalt by applying the correct emphasis in flow or rhythm for exciting, standout spaces.



Photography by Rick Mander



Left: Marble water-jet inlay behind cook-top brings elegance to this kitchen.



Existing limitations of a space should stretch creativity, not constrain it.

Photography by Rick Mander

On a most basic level, an extraordinary interior design is a successful fusion of style and functionality. Aside from these basic design principles, there is no single formula for creating standout spaces. Best practice reliably leads to the desired result, but creative experimentation where the rules of interior design are broken can often deliver spectacular results. At Deborah Martin Designs, an imaginative approach to interiors enables us to develop the full potential of every space we transform and to create "Sensational Spaces for Beautiful Living."