

# CR

Chicago REALTOR®  
Magazine

Volume 26 | Autumn 2017

ON THE VERGE:  
Interior Designers  
Share Their Top Trends

HIT A LISTING  
HOME RUN

Navigating the  
Negotiation



# ON THE VERGE:

Several of **Chicago's top interior designers** spill their top trends



**TIFFANY BROOKS**  
Tiffany Brooks Interiors Inc.



**CHRIS ESKRA**  
CME Interiors



**ANTHONY MICHAEL**  
Anthony Michael Interior Design



**BETH PARTYKA**  
Homepolish



**DAN RAK**  
Dan Rak Design



**SUMMER THORNTON**  
Summer Thornton Design

All white kitchens. Plush upholstery. Shades of gray...everything. These trends have dominated interiors for years. But what makes an exceptional interior stand out from the rest? We talked with some of Chicago's best interior designers to see what you need to know about the trends that are on the verge.



# Embrace COLOR



Beth Partyka for Charlotte Williams Interiors and Homepolish by Dustin Halleck

Gray everything — from paint to upholstery — has been a safe go-to for years now, but its time in the spotlight may be fading, if designers have anything to say about it. "I think people are moving away from beige and gray and embracing a more colorful life," Summer Thornton, Summer Thornton Design, said.

Chris Eskra, CME Interiors, noted that those who are wanting more color are moving towards blues and bright greens, "which can brighten a room and make it feel fresh and new." Homepolish designer Beth Partyka concurs, citing blushy pinks, dusky blues and jewel-toned greens as ongoing favorites.

But even if you favor a more neutral palette, there are options for you. "Lately, I've been obsessed with finding the perfect shade of white to provide a neutral counterpoint for an exciting wallpaper or tile pattern," Dan Rak, Dan Rak Design, said. "It's a return to clean simplicity."

Chocolate browns, blacks, navy and bronze also remain in heavy use for designer Anthony Michael, Anthony Michael Interior Design, while Tiffany Brooks, Tiffany Brooks Interiors, noted that various shades of blue are emerging as the "new neutral." "It's hard to find a color that doesn't look great [with blues]," she said.

The all-white kitchen, too, is a classic that you may begin seeing less of. "People are definitely branching out, even if it's in muted shades of a color on cabinets," Partyka said. "Pale mint, to sage green and shades of blue paired with classic or modern lighting, fixtures and hardware will be right on trend for the next year."

# Add TEXTURE

With so many design possibilities, why even stick to plain ol' paint? Every designer we talked to cited "texture" as a must-have in interiors.

"I'm seeing more and more people move towards wall coverings with texture, whether that's a grasscloth, wallpaper or lime wash," Thornton said. And we're not talking about the chintzy wallpaper of decades past. Instead, there are infinite styles available now - including marbled, three-dimensional, and even scratch n' sniff. Plus, a wide variety of temporary solutions are a great way for tentative first timers or renters to get the same effect, with a less permanent investment.

If you've turned on HGTV at all in the past two years, shiplap has emerged in force. Brooks credits shiplap as helping entice homeowners to consider texture in atypical ways.

High-gloss lacquer finishes, too, are a great way to add new texture to a room - both on the furniture or on the walls and ceilings. Thornton used cerulean blue lacquer on a ceiling in a recent project for a calming effect

that still packs a punch. Eskra, too, likes the impact lacquer can have when combined with bold colors. And Michael has been incorporating lacquer with lucite pieces and LED accent lighting in recent projects for a bold, modern look.



# Layer in FABRIC & PATTERNS

Mixing in different fabrics and patterns helps a room to have a layered and collected feel. While Thornton mixes historic patterns from various eras to create timeless looks, Michael cites the 70s as his inspiration. "Think David Hicks and Dorothy Draper — big and bold, with an edge of glamour."

And patterns aren't just for accent pieces. "I'm advising my clients to make bolder choices for fabric patterns and colors in the upholstered pieces [too]," Thornton said.



Rak has been using cement tile to add both texture and pattern to his spaces. "It can be a bit of a splurge, but pair it with simple white subway tile to balance the look and save on the budget," he said.



# Rethink DESIGN

The open floor plan has reigned supreme — but it's not a be-all, end-all, by any means. "Many of our clients want spaces that have great

flow between rooms but aren't completely open floor plans," Thornton said. "In many cases we'll design cased openings to create a visual separation between rooms but maintain eyesight lines and easy flow. It's a great way to define each room but ensure the home doesn't feel closed-off."



Summer Thornton Design by Josh Thornton

**In the BATH:** For bathrooms, Michael cites trench drains and curbless entries as a must-have — "I hate standing on top of a drain." Brooks sources for both fashion as well as function, using smart products in a variety of colors, finishes and patterns when available to up the stylish tech factor, while Partyka notes the importance of really well-designed lighting. "There

are so many stylish options available now in a wide range of price points and it makes a huge impact on the look and uniqueness of a bathroom," she said. She also uses art to add unexpected personality and character to the space. And if you love a good bath, never fear: Eskra says that soaking tubs are still a huge hit. As for finishes, he's loving brass. "It's warm, inviting and adds a wonderful accent, especially in rooms that are monochromatic."

**In the KITCHEN:** We mentioned that color is starting to creep back into the kitchen. Michael continues to see a big demand for waterfall countertops, while marble reigns supreme over granite. Quartz, too, remains popular for its durability and low maintenance — Eskra says that in monochromatic colors, they can make a kitchen look timeless.

Another major new trend? A completely streamlined aesthetic. "The more things can disappear, the better," Eskra said. "Appliances with cabinet panel fronts, hidden cabinets for countertop appliances, induction cooktops that are flush with the counter — clean, uncluttered kitchens with lots of workspace; it's a seamless look with a futuristic feel." Michael concurs, adding that built-in seating is also making a comeback.

Adding to the futuristic feel is the emergence of smart tech for kitchen appliances. "People are not only wanting a refrigerator," Brooks said. "They want a refrigerator that's going to remind them of their next appointments, groceries that need to be purchased and any family notes."



Anthony Michael Interior Design by Jacob Hand Photography

**In the ACCESSORIES:** Light fixtures are finally getting their due. Long hailed by designers as a make-or-break it accessory, the wide variety of options available means that no matter your taste, from '70s to postmodern, there's something available for you.

Partyka encourages you to consider sculptural accent pieces, a sentiment echoed by Rak, who believes accent chairs give the biggest bang for your buck when it comes to giving a living room a fresh new look. "Keep it simple with your sofa - clean lines, narrow arms and an overall slim profile," he said. "Position an accent chair or two opposite the sofa and allow them to be the star of the show. Drape a wool throw over the back of the chair (only one chair, though!) and you're good to go. It's chic and fresh and has lots of 'wow' factor."



Tiffany Brooks Interiors © 2017 Scripps Networks, LLC

Artwork, too, is an easy option to add texture, color and interest to a room. "Art comes in such a wide range of prices. [so] you can totally change the look of a room with some beautiful prints, without spending a lot of money," Eskra said.

Thornton agrees. "Typically we'll find some cool sculptural art to put in bookcases, and we'll weave in a few fun

pillows to give the space modernity," she said. "Then, in a few years if you're tired of them, you can change them out without feeling guilty."

In the end though, every home should reflect its unique inhabitants. "If you love something, it will never be a fleeting trend in your own space," Brooks said. 📺