

By KATHY ANDERSON
Eklektik Interiors

Photography Courtesy of Eklektik Interiors

Design Economics 101

To live a cost-effective lifestyle in today's economy does not mean you have to sacrifice the interior of your home. Home furnishings are as essential to your home as clothing is to your body. Accessories are like jewelry for your home; they bring the 'bling' and personality to your look. Your home, like your wardrobe, is a reflection of you. Creating that personal atmosphere can be done on any scale and on any budget; all it takes is imagination and direction.



The interior of your home is an investment in yourself and your lifestyle. Like any other sound investment decision, you need to be well informed of all the potential costs and benefits. Kathy Anderson, owner and principle designer of Eklektik Interiors, located in the Champions area of Houston refers to this 'investment' information as *Design Economics 101*. Good interior designers will educate their clients on how to make wise design decisions. Following are a few proven fundamental principles when purchasing pieces or planning any size design project:

Principle #1: Buying more is not always better.

Impulse buying is actually a major problem for many who are looking to fill up space in their homes. Many 'trinkets' purchased over several months can financially add up. Having patience and perhaps saving that money until you are able to purchase that single 'statement' piece would have a greater impact on your overall look. Be realistic with your budget; sometimes you may have to wait for that 'fabulous' item, but it is worth the wait. If you are a collector, group your collection together to create a 'wow!' effect. A wide array of miniatures or disjointed pieces can overwhelm and clutter a good, clean space. Overall, remember that buying more is not always better.





*“Don’t do what everyone else is doing.
Do what you like.”*

Principle #2: You get what you pay for.

We’ve all heard it before: *there’s no free lunch!* This is especially true in the field of interior design. Whether you are comparing prices of contractor’s bids for remodels or comparing retail prices for fine home furnishings, similar products at dissimilar prices *will* have a hidden cost. Solid pieces that are classic tend to maintain a more timeless design that is not dated. Working with a designer who has product knowledge and understands interior trends can be crucial in this buying process. Updating accessories and small pieces in your room is a less expensive way to keep your look current.

Principle #3: Research is the key.

The process of home design should not be based on guesswork and experimentation. To minimize mistakes, take your time and do your homework. If you are unsure as to the look you prefer, designer, Kathy Anderson, suggests to her clients to begin by looking through design magazines, books, and websites. With the aid of an experienced designer, the education process involved in designing your home will provide you with the tools to be an active participant. Productive research and communication with your designer are essential to the success of any design project.

Principle #4: Plan Ahead.

New home buyers, as well as those looking to remodel their homes, need to look to the future. The concept of ‘Age-in-place designs’ accommodate for future accessibility necessary to some individuals as they get older. For example, assuring that the width of hallways will allow for wheelchair accessibility will save you in the long run from remodeling. Designing bathrooms with sufficient room for such accessibility will allow you to avoid having to move or remodel to allow for such impairments. ‘Age-in-place’ awareness will save you money in the long run and reduce any critical changes to your home when those times arrive.

Principle #5: Trust yourself.

Don’t do what everyone else is doing. Do what *you* like. Most of us are *eclectic* at heart. We like the best of all styles. Don’t be afraid to mix those styles. Finding ways to bring a person’s vision together by incorporating their whole range of tastes is the ultimate goal of a designer. Accent pieces and solid art can be particularly useful in accomplishing this; after all, they are the jewelry of the home. Art should move you! If you purchased an amazing Modernistic piece and feel you have to change your whole design concept for it to fit into your rustic cottage, don’t! Instead, use the piece for creating a different palette for the room. By changing up colors of upholstery, or adding a couple of transitional accessories the two looks can be married.

Home design can be an intimidating task: daunting decisions and daunting costs. But these decisions cannot be avoided if you are to create a warm and welcoming home. With the right tools and resources, it is possible to create a home of your dreams. By following the basic Principles of *Design Economics 101*, the vision for your home can become a reality. ■