

(small) size matters

PHILADELPHIA ARCHITECTS, INTERIOR DESIGNERS, AND A FORWARD-LOOKING DESIGN COMPANY EMBRACE THE NOTION OF MODESTY WITH MODERNITY. BY DAVID MASELLO

“**S**tarter” castles, McMansions—call them what you will: In the past 20 years, many homes across America were built to an enormous scale. But today even affluent homebuyers are rethinking the scale of the megahouse. “It can be seen as wasteful—not cool,” says Ian Baldwin, an architect who teaches the history and theory of modern architecture at the Rhode Island School of Design. “The new paradigm in consumerism is being a cutting-edge ‘green’ consumer. That’s cool, as well as being responsible.”

A smaller footprint requires smaller furniture. Designer Michael Simon, a Philadelphia native, who recently completed an apartment on Rittenhouse Square and another overlooking the Philadelphia Museum of Art, says that many of his recent projects in urban environments have involved smaller spaces, with lower ceilings. “That means I have to be very attentive to scale.

Nothing can look oversize.” Dana Angelucci, an interior designer based in suburban Springfield, finds that her clients are purchasing fewer grandiose pieces. “The way people work and where they work have changed, with more and more being done at home,” she says. “As a result, they want furniture that doesn’t overwhelm and take up all the space.”

Although Gary Friedman, creator and curator of Restoration Hardware, says he never follows trends, he’s the guiding spirit behind what seems to be a particularly well-timed new line at Restoration Hardware, called Big Style Small Spaces. The collection, which

debuted last spring, evolved so quickly that the company created a 156-page stand-alone sourcebook for it this past fall. As a way of proving the line’s versatility and effect, 15 interiors inspired by places around the world were created and filled with items from the line, in every kind of abode—from a Manhattan penthouse to a Paris pied-à-terre. “We chose the iconic residences typical to each of those places,” says Friedman.

The key to the collection, according to Friedman, is not only the proportion, but also, “the ability to place things beautifully in small spaces to create new drama and excitement.” He says a scouting trip to Paris with his creative team prompted a reassessment of how to design for small areas.

“[The key is] to place things beautifully in small spaces to create new drama and excitement.”

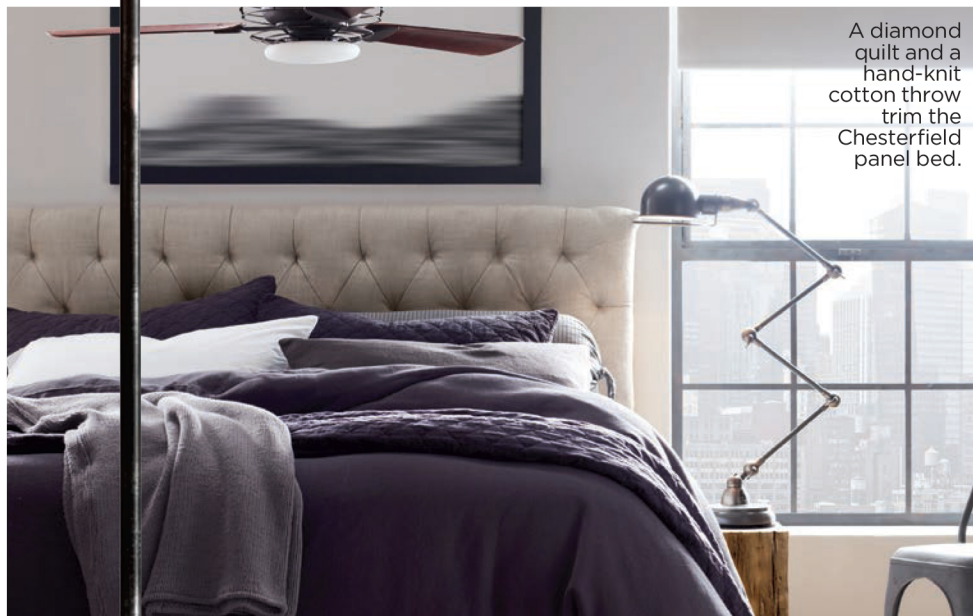
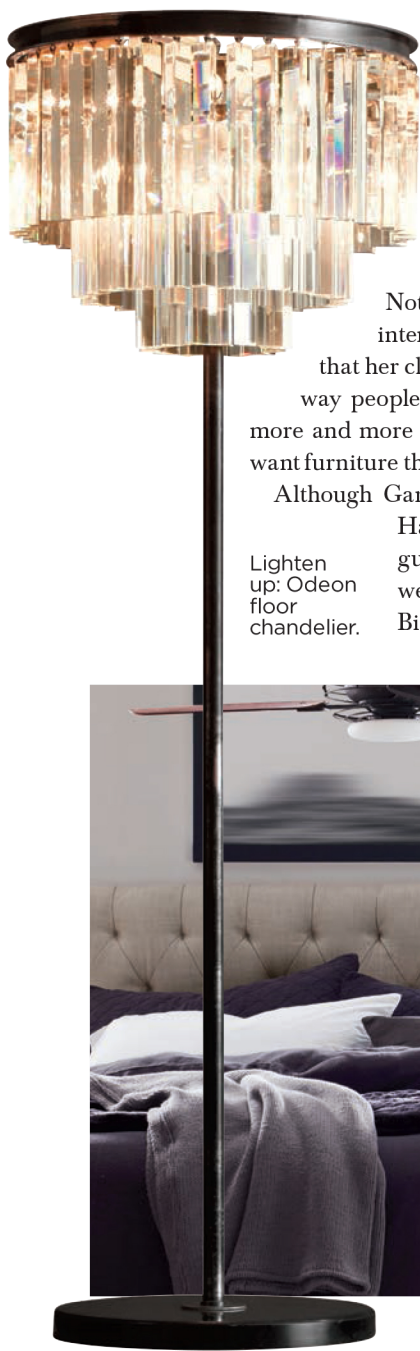
—GARY FRIEDMAN

Soon after the trip, Restoration Hardware designers began to fashion furnishings that, while scaled down, reflected a reinterpretation of otherwise traditional designs. For example, seating

inspired by classic Breuer or Arne Jacobsen chair design may now feature distressed wood and a variety of textures, and have a different scale.

By organizing the line around iconic settings, Friedman seems to be tapping into another trend—the renewed interest, after years of McMansion architectural mishmash, for structures (often in urban settings) with historic design integrity. Ian Baldwin points out that, “With all these interesting spaces people are now occupying, they need different furniture than they once owned. The furnishings are all part of the new ways many people are choosing to live.” **PS**

Lighten up: Odeon floor chandelier.



A diamond quilt and a hand-knit cotton throw trim the Chesterfield panel bed.



Vintage meets modern with the Aero round dining table, European factory pendant fixtures, and Remy dining chairs.