

H1

What happens when a designer's ideas are off-key?

BY JOSEPH PUBILLONES
Creators Syndicate

We all look forward to innovative and inspiring ideas for our homes. Some of us scour interior design magazines. Others snap pictures of designs they like when they travel. Some visit furniture stores and look at professional vignettes for inspiration. These are all great guides. However, sometimes, designs go awry.

If you are doing it yourself, there is no one to blame but — you guessed it — yourself. But what happens when a designer's ideas are off-key?

We all want the latest and greatest, but on occasion, this may take us down the wrong path. Designers always love to try something new — the freshest ideas, aka “trends” in designer lingo. These trends result in products and furnishings designed with a theme or other reference in mind. They create an impact in the marketplace and, ultimately, in your home. A few decades ago, Tuscan-inspired interiors and French Provencal designs were the trends to follow. It kind of



Art of Design

made sense. Who doesn't want their home to remind them of a wonderful excursion, whether a trip through Mexico or a seaside escape in the Mediterranean?

Thematic design and accessories are always important in most furniture shows and designer show houses. One can easily remember iconic design trends such as the pineapple motifs or, in more recent years, the red coral on everything from fabric to bed-sheets to lamps to eating utensils. Of course, every region has its preferred motif: antlers and ducks in the country, shells and nautical themes for beachside settings. But going overboard is easy — so beware.

It's quite common for homeowners and designers to get carried away with an idea and end up in a minefield. Some advocate collecting certain items to tie a home's individual rooms together, but it really depends on the item. For example, a large collection of blue-and-white Chinese pottery



Everything in a home should feel natural with the style of the place.

may exude a sense of luxury as an room's accent or featured piece. But on the other hand, a grouping of all-bamboo furniture in

one room may seem a bit contrite. Good design — regardless of whether the design is a version of modern minimalism or of

grand over-the-top maximalism — is based on balance and sensibility. Things have to make sense or they simply approach the absurd.

Don't make the mistake of doing something that is not appropriate for your home. Refrain from high-gloss lacquered walls or metallic wallpaper in an old home, as every bump and imperfection will show and these types of finishes go against the grain of the home. Similarly, layers upon layers of fabrics and window treatments are best left for traditional architecture rather than contemporary frameworks. Everything in a home should feel natural with the style of architecture and the kind of home. “Appropriate” should be the mantra of every design decision of any home. Otherwise, you may end up making expensive a design faux pas — whether you're a designer or not!

Joseph Pubillones is the owner of Joseph Pubillones Interiors, an award-winning interior design firm based in Palm Beach, Florida. His website is www.josephpubillones.com.

Does it make sense to update the whole bathroom or just repair the damage?

BY EDITH LANK
Creators Syndicate

Dear Edith: We bought a wonderful home in a desirable suburb last June. It was built in 1988, and it has been well maintained with a beautiful kitchen upgrade, but there are no bathroom updates.

We've discovered a leak in the shower in the master bath, which has slightly damaged the kitchen ceiling. We are weighing updating the master bath



House Calls

entirely versus just fixing the leak in the shower and the ceiling. It seems like baths are a relatively good investment.

The kicker is that when we bought the home, we thought we'd be here for 15 years or so, but a new dream job opportunity has come up, and there is a possibility we'll relocate in the next six to eight

months. Does it make sense to update the bathroom if we might sell so soon? — B.

While there are exceptions, improvements don't usually increase the value of a property by the amount spent. That would be particularly true if you're going to relocate soon.

Of course, I don't know how your home compares in price with its neighbors — whether it might be the least or most expensive one in the area. That would

make a difference, for it can be particularly difficult to recoup an investment in the most expensive house in the neighborhood.

Nor do I know how much you'd be spending on that bath. It does seem a shame, though, to have the house torn up with construction only to leave it.

I'd certainly wait until the job situation is settled. Then, if you want a new bath, do it for your own satisfaction, not necessarily as an investment.

AFTER A SHORT SALE

Hi, Edith: My house was not worth what I owed on the mortgage, so a short sale was the best option.

How long after a short sale do I have to wait before applying for a new mortgage? I've heard it is two or three years. — D.

For those who aren't familiar with the term, a short sale is one that doesn't bring enough to pay off the mortgage(s) and lien(s) on the property. In order to sell the property, the lien holders must agree to settle for less than is owed.

In the unlikely case that

you'd been making your mortgage payments right up to the date of sale and had not defaulted on the loan, you could immediately apply for a Federal Housing Administration-backed mortgage on another house.

More often, though, the unfortunate ex-homeowner does have to wait two years. After that time, with a 20 percent down payment, it's possible to qualify for a conventional mortgage.

Contact Edith Lank at www.askedith.com, at edithlank@aol.com or at 240 Hemingway Drive, Rochester NY 14620.

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Ines Hegedus-Garcia
2019 Residential President
MIAMI Association of Realtors

Miami Single-Family Homes Post Fourth Biggest Sales Year in History

Existing Condos Finish with Sixth-Most Annual Sales

Miami recorded the fourth-most annual single-family home sales in county history in 2018 as total dollar volume and median prices rose at year-end and in 4Q 2018, according to the MIAMI Association of Realtors (MIAMI) and the Multiple Listing Service (MLS) system.

Miami-Dade County registered 12,931 single-family home sales in 2018, up 1.1 percent from the year before. Lack of supply in certain price ranges and neighborhoods and higher interest rates impacted sales. Decreasing rates are expected to boost sales in coming months. Inventory and months' supply of single-family homes continues to drop, showing a strong demand and insufficient supply.

The only years that reported more annual Miami single-family home sales were 2015 (13,898 single-family home transactions), 2014 (13,508) and 2016 (13,164) had more annual Miami single-family home sales. MIAMI and the MLS have been tracking county sales since 1994.

Existing Condominiums Post Sixth-Best Sales Year
Miami existing condominiums posted the sixth-best sales year in history despite competing with Miami's multi-billion-dollar new condo construction market. A total of 13,863 Miami existing condominiums were sold in 2018, up 5.6 percent from 13,132 in 2017.

Miami real estate's top sales years for existing condos: 2013: 17,120; 2012: 16,383; 2014: 16,337; 2011: 16,187 and 2015: 15,897.

Mid-Market and Luxury Single-Family Sales Post Major Gains in 2018
The \$300,000 to \$600,000 proved to be the most popular price point for Miami single-family homes in 2018. The price sector posted a 15.7 percent increase in sales year-over-year, increasing from 5,448 sales in 2017 to 6,303 in 2018.

The luxury segment (\$1 million and up) also proved to be hot sector for single-family homes. Miami luxury home sales increased 15.9 percent in 2018, increasing from 878 to 1,018.

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