

APRIL & MAY 2015

HOME & DECOR

embark

BELGIAN
FARM HOUSE
REDONE

DESIGNER
HOTELS ON
A BUDGET

WHAT DOES
YOUR DECOR
SAY ABOUT
YOU?

16+
must-have
metallic
items

FEATURING
WORLD CLASS
INTERIOR DESIGNER

ERIC
COHLER

THE STYLISH LIVING MAGAZINE



WORLD RENOWNED, THE MIXMASTER OF DESIGN ERIC COHLER

PHOTOGRAPHY BY CAPEHART PHOTOGRAPHY | ART DIRECTION BY STEPHANIE ROCKWELL

Based out of New York, “Mixmaster” Eric Cohler and his firm have set out to redefine and change the way we see interior design around the world. For over 20 years, he has been transforming residential and commercial spaces into areas sought out by all. By taking in a variety of colors, textures and blending in different styles and elements seamlessly, he has received worldwide renown and praise for the work he’s completed. To ensure that each space he has engaged with is perfect, he also designs his own product pieces such as lighting, fabrics and furniture. Along with his design practices, he is featured extensively in leading publications, has many television appearances and often writes content for the New York Times.

We graciously had a chance to sit down and ask Eric some questions about himself and his career.



SULLIVAN STREET MODEL PHOTOGRAPHY: SULLIVAN STREET BUILDING HAS OPENED. THE ERIC COHLER DESIGN TEAM DESIGNED ALL ASPECTS OF THE INTERIOR FROM THE LOBBY, THE HALLWAY, THE ELEVATOR AND THE RESIDENCES THEMSELVES. THIS WAS A TWO-YEAR COLLABORATIVE EFFORT ALONG WITH ED RAWLINGS ARCHITECT, RAWLINGS ARCHITECTS A BROAD STREET DEVELOPMENT AND EDMUND HOLLANDER WITH EDMUND D. HOLLANDER LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS. PHOTOGRAPHY: DONNA DOTAN PHOTOGRAPHY



As a well-respected and much admired designer, your excellence in design taste and creative direction have often been sought after by many. Do you find yourself at times surrounded by bad interiors that just make you want to tear down everything and fix it for them? How do you handle giving your advice?

I have learned to "listen" while I "see" the interiors around me. What this means is that I take in both aural and visual clues from clients and rooms before commenting as the last thing that I want to do is offend anyone. People are very subjective about their homes, and I only offer advice or opine if asked. That said, I confess to cringing inwardly at times.

What are the common mistakes you find today with new designers? If not mistakes, what do you feel new designers today should avoid trapping themselves into?

Younger designers should avoid the trap of becoming "typecast" and becoming known for one particular style. I've tried to evolve with the times and constantly reinvent myself. Nonetheless, I'm known by the moniker "mixmaster" for my ability to take disparate styles and fuse them into a seamless whole. The one constant in my work is quality and attention to detail. In that way, I'm a bit OCD to put it bluntly. It's a blessing and a curse.

What is your worst design experience? Why?

My worst experience occurred my second year in business. I didn't think about checking the dimensions on a pair of custom sofas before they were made. Unfortunately the entrance to the apartment building where my clients lived was three inches too narrow for the sofas to make it through. I ended up hiring a specialized moving company to hoist them three stories above Park Avenue. This was baptism by fire or a lesson learned the hard way as most of my profit was wiped out by the cost of the crane. I now insist that every member of my firm carry a tape measure with them at all times. It's incredible how almost everything in life can be distilled down to numbers. Clearly math wasn't my forte.



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OPRAH SAYS
LIVE LIFE
DELICIOUSLY



What is your number one professional rule you never break? Can you explain how it's applied or the significance it holds?

My number one professional rule is to be completely transparent in my business interactions. On a design note, I never forget my grandmother's dictum to "edit, edit, edit."

Who may have inspired you and your design, or currently does?

I'm inspired by several greats in the pantheon of architecture and interior design. Specifically Andrea Palladio, Robert Adam, Thomas Jefferson, John Soane, Frank Lloyd Wright, Mies van der Rohe, Elsie de Wolfe, Dorothy Draper, Billy Baldwin, Albert Hadley, David Hicks, Mark Hampton, John Saladino and Michael Smith. On a personal note, one of the greatest influences on my career was my maternal grandmother. She had the best taste of almost anyone I've ever known. Her ability to pull fashion, art and interiors together is unmatched, and she wasn't a professional designer, merely an aesthete. I like to think that perhaps a little bit of her taste and style has filtered down to me.

Any design for causes, or charities you're involved with that you would like to share?

I'm intrinsically involved with a number of organizations that raise money through the field of interior design. The first is Kip's Bay Boy's and Girl's Club. They organized the first major charity show house in the country more than 40 years ago. It's a privilege and an honor to have designed multiple rooms to help them raise money for after school programs for inner city children. I also personally support a scholarship fund that affords a college student located in upstate New York and majoring in art or design, to have the opportunity to travel anywhere in the world to study their chosen field. The student then serves as an intern in my firm for a semester.

What advice can you give home owners starting out with a new project in their homes?

People redesigning their homes should take things slow at first and make sure that they've created a carefully prepared plan and budget. Not having thought through these building blocks from the get go may become a prescription for disaster. It's also essential to create what I call a look book or clip file before embarking on a project. Pinterest and Houzz are perfect tools as well as periodicals and design themed books.