



MODERN LIVING

**Sophisticated design
and decor for your
loft, apartment or condo**

By Karina Timmel

Minimalism and simplicity are standard elements in modern design. Additionally, a major component to this style is the use of elements of surprise and unexpected patterns and color combinations that stand out against the overall scene to create a thought-provoking effect. “Modern design is best achieved in a loft, apartment or condo by using a simple, streamlined approach as a backdrop and then adding interest by combining contrasting materials or unexpected color schemes to create something that feels energetic and fresh,” says Marni Ratner, owner of Studio M Interiors. “Modern design is eclectic because it can incorporate a mix of several earlier styles with a unique twist.” Here, the experts offer up some ideas to add an air of contemporary sophistication to your home. ▶

Photo courtesy of Habachy Designs Inc.



Lofty Aspirations

Both of these spaces are in the same loft/townhome complex, and while modern, each design has a very different approach. Loft A (above) incorporates warm, dark colors that evoke a nightclub-like atmosphere. There are several unexpected elements in the living room, such as the custom-designed swings and the metal screen window treatment (an oversized fire-screen material that slides on a track). The trim throughout is a dark chocolate brown to unify and balance the rich wall colors. Loft B (below) has a crisp, contemporary feel and is much more stark. Again, elements of surprise are incorporated with the 2-story textured wall panels, emphasizing the verticality of the space, as well as the funky, one-of-a-kind chaise. A neutral backdrop with subtle shade changes is offset by pops of cool blue and warm mustard accents.



Photos courtesy of Studio M Interiors



Photo courtesy of
Cucine LUJE of Atlanta

Modern Atlanta

Embracing the modern aesthetic in a progressively aspiring city

By: j.Tobin Mansfield, principal and showroom manager, SieMatic Atlanta

What is it about modern design that is so appealing (and sometimes so elusive) in Atlanta? Let's start with the people. Atlanta has seen a steady influx of transplant population since the 1996 Olympics, and has been influenced by professional athletics and the music industry for even longer. A younger, more urban flavor has regenerated the city's image and draw, providing an exciting new canvas for transplants from L.A. to N.Y.C. Cost of living is still relatively low while nightlife and culture are flourishing. Consequently, an increasing amount of interest and demand for modern design—from architecture to furniture to art—has arisen as it becomes more and more popular (and therefore acceptable) to see not just in Midtown, but Buckhead, Sandy Springs and beyond.

The energy of the modern movement in Atlanta perpetuates itself through the efforts of those who strive to make it relevant, attainable and understood, coupled with the edification and acceptance of the populous.

Residential architecture is one area of modern design that has much to offer and yet meets so much resistance, partly due to a stigma of "Southern equals traditional." This stigma can be broken by the public's desire to understand that modern is smarter, cleaner, more efficient and, most importantly, relevant. It is the goal of the modernists in Atlanta to help bring this movement to light. These days, there is a need to maximize value in every aspect of our lives. The appeal of modern design goes beyond the minimalist aesthetic—it embodies the vast need for a more efficient, more responsible lifestyle.

Fabrics, colors and shapes

Many people associate modern interiors with a cold and sterile feel. "I believe that this can be proven wrong by using the right materials to warm up the room," says Michael Habachy, owner and designer of Habachy Designs Inc. "My favorite materials are usually those with interesting textures, such as boucles, wool felts and tweeds, and I enjoy contrasting them with sleek surfaces like leather, wood and stone."

Also, Habachy encourages the use of natural materials that some people normally associate with a traditional interior, such as marble, limestone and dark exotic woods. Ratner enjoys adding oversized fabric patterns and stained concrete into modern decor.

As far as color is concerned, you have an array of choices. "I tend do more monochromatic, neutral color schemes, then punch it with an accent," Habachy says. He recommends not using too many colors in one space to make a bigger impact. "My preference is to allow the art, pillows or even area rug to make the bold statement with color; this way, you can even change the accent color in the room seasonally." ▶

Contemporary choices

Our experts have provided the following modern design ideas to help get your creative juices flowing in two of your most important rooms—bathroom and kitchen—and determine what's right for your home.

Bathing Beauties

- ▶ Silestone countertops
- ▶ Spa-like colors, such as fresh greens and blues
- ▶ Full-scale contrast from subtle to stark
- ▶ Cantilevered vanity cabinets
- ▶ Wall-mounted faucets
- ▶ All-natural materials like stone, marble and wood
- ▶ Shower with multiple jets and specialized showerheads
- ▶ Electric towel warmers
- ▶ Mosaic floor tiles to reflect light in an interior bathroom

Cook Something Up

- ▶ Glossy-finished cabinets
- ▶ Silestone, glass or stainless steel countertops
- ▶ Back-painted glass backsplashes
- ▶ Matching counters and full backsplash
- ▶ Thick countertops in a large room with high ceilings
- ▶ Flat-polished edges on stone countertops
- ▶ Very simple cabinet pulls and hardware
- ▶ Under-cabinet lighting

Tips provided by Barbara Guillaume, Designer Previews Atlanta; Michael Habachy, Habachy Designs Inc.; Marni Ratner, Studio M Interiors



Photo courtesy of Cucine LUBE of Atlanta



Photo courtesy of Studio M Interiors

The challenge of this design was to create a memorable space on a shoestring budget. For the den, the designers selected a bold and daring color palette with whimsical touches such as an oversized flower rug to give the space a fun yet sophisticated twist.

Furniture and scale

The main difference between designing a loft, condo or apartment versus a house is scale and the number of furniture pieces you can fit in the space. "With limited room (in most cases) in an apartment, the desired style impact needs to be made with a minimum number of pieces; whereas, say in a 5,000-square-foot house, several pieces can be used to communicate style," says Barbara Guillaume, president of Designer Previews Atlanta. Habachy adds, "Make sure you choose appropriately sized furniture for the space. Do not try to cram in too much or too-large furniture in a small room!"

The same rule applies when designing any space: always select a major focal point in the room. Whether it is the coffee table in the center of a furniture grouping or a painting over a sofa or the bed in the bedroom, let that be the most important feature, Habachy recommends.

If possible, order a custom rug that frames out all of your furniture groupings in a room. A shag rug adds warmth to a stark space. Sisal, jute or hemp rugs add a casual-yet-warm texture to a modern room. 🏠

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