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Palate pleasing
party appetizers p.81

This striking chaise from Urban Furnishings is part of a resurgent interest in contemporary design.



THE SLEEK

Today's cutting edge furniture takes its cue from past modern periods, with minimalist lines and use of the best available technology.

by Susan Everly Douze

No skirts. No ruffles. No ball and claw. No Duncan Phyfe. And definitely not your mother's Country French. Rebecca Joskey, owner of Urban Furnishings, knows exactly what contemporary furniture is not.

What it is, she says, is sleek, slender and straightforward—inspired by the best of the 20th century. And, increasingly, it's what 21st century consumers want in their homes to reflect the way they live, says architect Brian Freese, AIA, president of the Tulsa Chapter, American Institute of Architects.

"We're seeing an increasing resurgence in contemporary design in the Midwest, particularly Tulsa," says Freese, who designs his own line of cutting-edge furniture for WBTK, Inc., available at the Market at Walnut Creek. "People are tiring of replicative pieces. They want interiors that are fresh, clean and uncluttered. They want to simplify."

Basically, Freese says, contemporary furniture is traditional furniture on a diet.

"The pure proportions haven't changed much," he says. "They

The space-saving 2Morrow pivot desk provides an unusual office solution with its swing out side table from IQ.



LOOK

are slimmed to the essential lines that make furniture work.”

This minimalist look gives interiors openness. Materials of choice are aluminum and steel, glass, leather and interesting woods.

Today’s cutting edge furniture takes its cue from designs from the Modern period of 1925-40 and so-called Mid-Century Modern, the ’50s. Both periods were made possible by manufacturing breakthroughs, such as molded plywood and plastic and space age aluminum, from both world wars.

And current designs employ the same approach. “Design should

be a response to the best available technology and our technology today—what we can do with steel, plastic and glass—is remarkable,” Freese says. We forget, he adds, that what we consider venerable antiques today were once the best of that era’s technology.

Who buys new age furniture? Joskey says it’s obvious: “It’s not young or old, but people who like style. People are staying home more so they want to surround themselves with what’s really cool.”

Or as her design cohort **Joe Harp**, owner of IQ, says: “It’s about people who appreciate simplicity and functionality.” ■



(Clockwise, top left) This sofa has simple lines and moveable armrests for comfortable lounging. (Right) Tulsa architect Brian Freese, who designs for WBTK, Inc., built this elegant wall table. (Right) Pure, sleek luxury—a puffy mattress with mobile headboard, “tallboy” bureau and paneled dressing screen for the bedroom. (Above left) This chair is great under the kitchen table, the desk or as an extra in the family room.

(Top right) The contemporary glass-topped triangular coffee table is attractive, yet functional between two sofa styles. (Below) Sleek recliners like this one are becoming popular in many homes. (Bottom right) In a dining room, living room, family room, even a bedroom—this eye-catching chester chair can go anywhere.



Making it work

Like the look of sleek? Here's a duo of tips to make it work:

- Not ready to toss all your traditional furniture? Joskey offers her 80-20 formula. Add a few (about 20 percent) cutting edge pieces as accents. If you're ready to go further, do just the opposite: go sleek, but retain the very best of your traditional pieces, like that 18th century French armoire.
- Sleek begets sleek, Freese says. Contemporary furniture illustrates that less really is more. That means drastically reducing accessories. Toss, or at least store, those knickknacks, coffee table books, over-stuffed pillows and throws. There's nothing more relaxing, Freese says, than clean space.

Items photographed can be found at IQ and Urban Furnishings.