

Sheffield's Three Guidelines for Great Design

& Today's Top Six Design Trends



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We All Want Beautiful Design in Our Lives.

Everyone dreams of creating the perfect home, full of attractive decorations that express their unique personality. And everyone who gets married wants a wedding that people will remember for years as a joyful, stylish occasion.

However, despite the human desire to beautify our surroundings, few people truly succeed in their design efforts. We've all seen dreary, characterless homes. And we've all attended our fair share of cookie-cutter weddings. It's difficult to combine design elements in a way that pulls everything together perfectly.

That's why we've decided to share **Sheffield's Three Guidelines for Great Design™** with you. Our Guidelines are equally applicable to interior design, wedding design, and Feng Shui design—and we promise that they will help you improve your creative skills.

Sheffield's Three Guidelines for Great Design™

Guideline One:

A Successful Design is Functional.

To be successful, a design must fulfill its intended function. If a room is intended as a place for people to relax and socialize, then it needs to have comfortable furniture arranged in a way that promotes conversation. If a wedding reception will have small, intimate tables, then the centerpieces should be low enough that guests can see and talk to each other.



Can a space have more than one function? Of course. A wedding reception may have an area for eating, an area for mixing and mingling, and an area for dancing. A kitchen may be used for storage, food preparation, eating, and socializing. When a space has multiple functions, each of these must be carefully considered throughout the design process.

This guideline may seem obvious. Yet, many designers get so caught up in the fun of choosing beautiful furniture and decorations that the necessity of providing for a functional environment is overlooked.



Photo © Lais Williams; Design by Ike Klingerman Barkley Interiors.

Guideline Two: **A Successful Room Expresses a Mood.**

Before you begin the design process, decide upon the mood that you want to convey. If you're going for a sleek, sophisticated look, then every detail should work to express this mood. If you want to achieve a casual, rustic look, every aspect of the room should reflect this.

Stay focused on the mood you want to convey. Don't choose accessories simply because you like them—choose accessories that you like and that you are confident will express the intended mood. No detail is too small—every linen, piece of ribbon, and knick-knack is important. This attention to detail is what distinguishes professional designs from the work of amateurs.



Photo © Laís Williams; Design by Charles Pavarini III Design Associates, Inc.

Guideline Three: A Successful Design Has a Sense of Harmony.

The elements of a successful design work together in total harmony. Nothing feels out of place.

We've already discussed how important it is for every detail to fit the mood of a space—and that's one part of harmony. But it's not all. Let's look at a few other aspects of harmony.

Scale. Everything should be in scale to the size of the room. In a tiny space, giant-sized furniture will be overwhelming. In a grand space, tiny furniture will get lost.

Color. Carefully plan a color scheme—and stick with it. This color scheme should be in line with the mood of the room



Photo © Lais Williams; Design by McMillen, Inc.

Quality. You want the overall feeling to be that everything is of similar quality. You don't want to have a cheap, particle board set of drawers in a living room filled with expensive antiques. At the same time, you don't want to have something inappropriately flashy or valuable in a more subdued design. For example, an elaborate ice sculpture at a casual backyard wedding reception would be out of place.

Don't take this to mean that you can't combine different styles successfully. You can. But you need to choose styles that will work together in harmony.

Sheffield's Three Guidelines in Action



How does this wedding reception meet Sheffield's Three Guidelines?

Function: First of all, it's worth noting that the reception is tented—even though it appears to be a beautiful day. Every planner knows that a tent (or a backup, indoor space) is a must for every outdoor wedding—regardless of the time of year or location. It simply is not worth the risk. You'll also notice that the centerpieces are low enough that guests will be able to talk comfortably—without trying to peer at one another around the floral arrangement.

Mood: The mood of this reception is elegant, yet un-fussy. It's a perfectly appropriate mood for an outdoor, summer wedding.

Harmony: Notice how every item on the tabletops works together to create a distinct, casual style. The plates, napkins, and stemware are simple, yet the table design is livened up by the sage green linens. The olive dishes are a simple terra cotta that brings to mind the romance of Tuscany. The floral arrangement holds the flowers together in a loose, relaxed arrangement. And because all the items were so carefully selected, the wedding style comes together successfully.



How does this elegant bedroom meet Sheffield's Three Guidelines?

Function: The most obvious function of any bedroom is to provide a place for sleeping—and we can presume that this large bed is comfortable enough to allow for a good night's rest. We also see a large bureau that provides the occupant with storage space. There's an elegant bench at the foot of the bed that gives the occupants a spot to sit and tie their shoes, or lay out the next day's clothing.

Mood: The mood of this room is elegant, and romantic. The gold-and-cream color scheme that is reflected in every aspect of the décor gives the room a warm feeling that adds to the room's ambiance.

Harmony: This sophisticated room uses traditional shapes and fabrics, but gives them a modern spin. Let's examine how the different elements of the room work together to create this style. The space itself—with its exposed bricks—contributes to the modern feel; as do the lamps, with their tongue-in-cheek feathers. At the same time, the major pieces of furniture—the bed, dresser, bench, and nightstands—are all very traditional. In essence, this is a very complex design, because it successfully combines two different styles. This is a bit of a risk. Does it work in this case? We think so.



Now let's look at a bedroom in a different style. How does this room meet Sheffield's Three Guidelines?

Function: While we only see a small section of this room, it's obvious that careful attention was paid to function. The bed is low and close to the ground. This necessitates the low night table on the left side of the bed. (A tall night table would be difficult to use, and therefore not particularly functional.)

Mood: The mood of this room is both relaxing and lively—the sparse furnishings create a spa-like atmosphere. At the same time, the red walls give a jolt of life to this space.

Harmony: This room successfully creates a Japanese-inspired style. This is conveyed through the low, minimal furniture, the uncluttered style, and the fan on the bed. The color palette further contributes to the Asian feel of the room: Red is considered the color of happiness in many Asian cultures, and the black and white accents add to the minimalism of the décor. Again, it's obvious that each detail of this room was carefully thought out; and this gives it the hallmark of the professional designer who has an awareness of Feng Shui and Asian design elements.

Sheffield's Top Six Design Trends:



Photo © Laís Williams; Design by Boyd Interiors.

Trend One: Simple Lines

Ostentation is out and simplicity is in. This is reflected in this season's simple, clean designs.

Simplicity in Interior Design

We're seeing a lot of simple forms used in couches, sofas and other furniture. This includes a lot of molded, plastic furniture—with translucent plastic being particularly popular right now. Many of the designs in today's showrooms have obvious echoes of Bauhaus and other 20th-century styles.



Simplicity in Wedding Design

Wedding gown silhouettes this season are simple, sleek, and sleeveless. And the classic A-line skirt is more popular than ever. However, simple doesn't mean boring. While today's dresses have simple lines, they often feature elaborate embroidery or gems and sequins that add some "bling" to a classically cut dress.



Trend Two: Bold Accessories

Designers are spicing up this year's simple forms with bold, experimental accessories.

Bold Accessories in Interior Design

Bright colors and bold patterns are all the rage on throw pillows, beaded wall sconces, dishes, and vases. Light fixtures also feature large, loud, and eye-catching designs. This may include elaborate glasswork, as well as modern takes on traditional shapes.



Use of Bold Accessories in Wedding Design

There are a lot of wild headpieces on the market lately. We don't expect the traditional veil to disappear anytime soon; but there are a lot of alternatives these days—headbands, tiaras, pillbox hats, and lacy "poofs" that are sometimes decorated with flowers and birds. Wedding jewelry is also prominent this season—a chunky, jewel-encrusted necklace goes perfectly with a simple, strapless gown. In terms of tabletop design, there's nothing that says a wedding needs boring, white table linens. Instead, the most cutting-edge brides are choosing bright, patterned tablecloths.



Trend Three: Rustic

Casual, rustic designs are experiencing a resurgence—a sophisticated take on the “country casual” look. This look features subdued floral and nature-inspired motifs, modern takes on traditional designs, and the repurposing of vintage items.

The Rustic Style in Interior Design

Cutting-edge designers are finding ways to repurpose old materials. The designs they put together may include vases made from tea tins, wood flooring created from demolished buildings, and stylishly worn furniture (which may or may not be authentically vintage).



The Rustic Style in Wedding Design

Outdoor weddings are more popular than ever, and they often feature barbecue-style receptions that feature classed-up comfort. In such a comfortable environment, many brides wear romantic dresses with free-flowing skirts and ruffles that are strategically placed but not overdone.



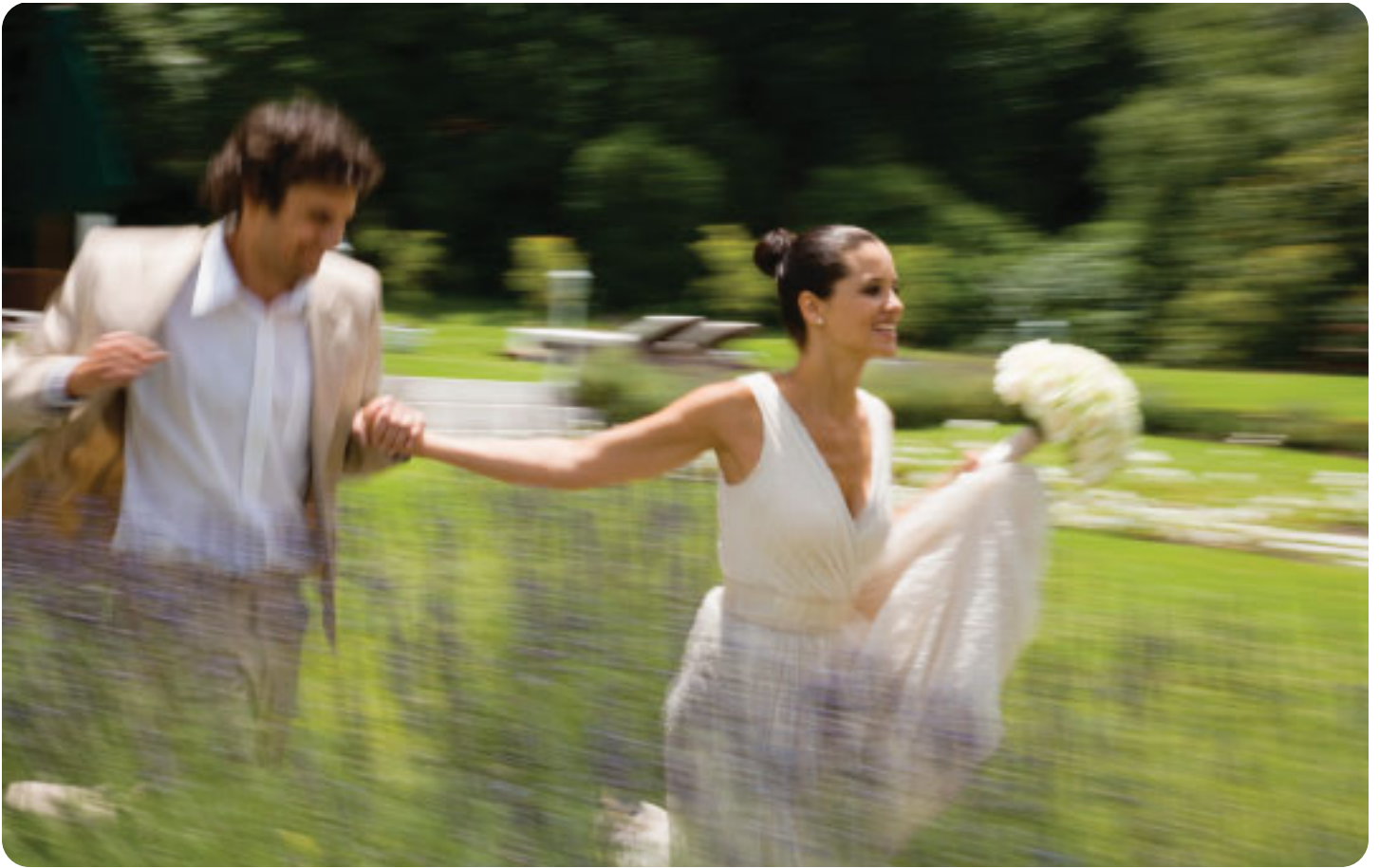
Chairs made from recycled seatbelts. Photo © Lai's Williams; Design by Phillips Collection.

Trend Four. Green Design

We hope that the current movement towards more eco-friendly design choices is more than just a trend. However, the prominence of eco-friendly materials is so significant in today's design world that we think it belongs on any list of design trends.

Green Interior Design

From bamboo flooring to low-VOC paints to recycled glass tiles, home design products using natural, sustainable, and repurposed materials are widely available. Because consumers are now so conscious of the benefits of using non-toxic, Earth-friendly materials, decorators must have a working knowledge of these materials and how they can be used to create beautiful homes.



Green Weddings

The environmental footprint of a large wedding can be significant. Therefore, many couples are going green as they make their way through every step of the planning process—from the proposal through the honeymoon. You can now buy organic diamonds, use recycled paper invitations, serve locally grown food, and go on “eco-honeymoons.” The idea of green weddings is a fairly new, but in just a few years it has grown to make up a significant part of the U.S. wedding industry.



Photo © Lai's Williams; Design by Kathy Abbott Interiors, Inc.

Trend Five: Eclectic, Multi-Cultural

There's never been a time when design wasn't influenced by cultures around the globe. Today's multi-cultural styles are unique because they combine influences from different cultures in distinctive, surprising ways. While this trend may encompass design elements from every corner of the globe, Middle Eastern inspirations are particularly in vogue, as are the bright folk patterns of Eastern Europe.

Multi-Cultural Inspiration in Interior Design

Upholstery fabrics inspired from cultures around the world are currently very popular. We've also seen a lot of lighting fixtures inspired by Asia and the Middle East. With "fair trade" crafts from countries around the globe becoming widely available, it's possible to decorate using authentic crafts that provide income to workers in developing countries. At the same time, high-end design houses are finding inspiration from styles around the world.



Multi-Cultural Wedding Inspiration

When a bride and a groom come from different cultures, they have a wonderful opportunity to combine their traditions in meaningful ways on their wedding day. At the same time, many couples are borrowing styles they admire from other cultures, regardless of whether or not they themselves come from those traditions. For example, Indian-inspired colors currently popular; as well as design motifs from Mexico and Asia.



Photo © Laís Williams; Design by Schermerhorn Interior Design.

Trend Six: Sage Green

There's no color more popular in today's designs than sage green. This pretty color goes well with today's rustic designs as well as edgier, modern looks. It is often paired with white, gray, and other natural, neutral colors. You'll also frequently see it paired with dusty rose, lavender, and other muted hues.

Sage Green in Interior Design

With today's color palettes often sticking to conservative, neutral schemes, a sage sofa, curtains or throw pillow adds a splash of color. This adds life and warmth to the room, while staying within a reserved palette.



Sage Green in Weddings

Sage green is a popular wedding color for outdoor receptions because it is harmonious with the natural setting and adds to the romance of an outdoor event. It can be used in bridesmaids' dresses, table linens, as invitation accents, or even as an accent color on the bride's gown.





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