



# St. Louis Park

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## Update your Home

Designer Anna Berglin shares  
creative ways to refresh  
your space



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# Refresh YOUR SPACE

LOCAL DESIGNER ANNA BERGLIN SHARES  
5 CREATIVE TIPS FOR UPDATING YOUR HOME.

St. Louis Park-based designer Anna Berglin knows how to achieve great style. Working in design for over 12 years, she's an expert in residential remodeling. Her upscale designs have been featured on Houzz.com and have won numerous awards. Sharing creative tips she uses with local clients and in her own home, where she lives with her fiancé, Fernando, and two sons, Berglin explains how to make small, medium and large changes that will refresh your space.

## 1 Consider Color

While most people know that a can of paint is a fast and easy way to transform a room, Berglin says many people often miss a crucial first step before picking paint.

"Number one, we have to look at what are the things, budget-wise, that are not going to change? Many people try to ignore what might be outdated

in a room, and that is a big mistake. There is always a way to find color that will make it awesome," says Berglin.

While trendier white trim is in vogue, maybe you have a darker wood trim that you don't want to paint, re-stain or change. Berglin says you have to think about that color and work with it. "With darker trim, you want to go very light on the walls. The last thing you want is tan walls with brown trim," she says. Berglin loves a creamy off-white, such as Benjamin Moore's Linen White. "It has enough yellow in it that it's bright," she says. "In every space, you want some contrast and texture. Let your walls breathe with a soft neutral and add color and texture in furnishings, flooring, cabinetry and wallpaper."

When coming up with a color palette for a room, Berglin proposes the following recipe for picking colors for walls, furniture and accents: "Let's say your base color is a medium gray. Then we like a strong teal color. I go to the

opposite of that color in the orange family, which is beautiful. I like to find a trio of colors—one neutral and two other opposite colors on the color wheel. It makes it much classier and more interesting."

## 2 Unexpected Art

Again, for a smaller budget, changing up accessories or finding new artwork is a great way to bring new energy into a space. Berglin enjoys having something whimsical in a room, such as an animal used in a decorative accent. "I have a bronze octopus in my office, and I just think it's super funny," she says. Berglin has found an inexpensive way to achieve this look by spray-painting her children's toys.

"I wanted something in the living room, but my boys were ages 3 and 5 at the time, so you can't put an expensive glass item on the side table. So I took a couple of their toy dinosaurs they

BY CHRISTIE DENSON | PHOTOS BY EMILY J. DAVIS



*"Where did you get that!?!"*

If you're not the artsy type, you might not have to look further than your own family for a unique and personal piece. Berglin made this canvas (left) out of her 3-year-old son's art project.

*+ Tip from Anna:*

"I wanted something in the living room but my boys were ages 3 and 5 at the time, so you can't put an expensive glass item on the side table. I took a couple of their dinosaurs they weren't playing with and spray-painted them antique gold."

*Color*

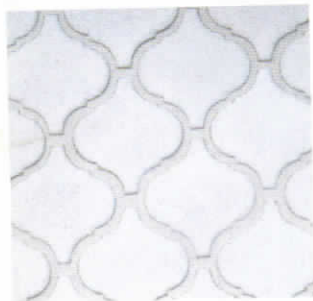
"In every space you want some contrast and texture. Let your walls breathe with a soft neutral and add color and texture in furnishings, flooring, cabinetry and wallpaper."





## Think Big!

Berglin recommends getting large light fixtures with a timeless shape or finish.



weren't playing with and spray painted them antique gold," she says.

You can also make an impressive statement with artwork in a room. And if you're not the artsy type, you might not have to look further than your own family for a unique and personal piece.

"I love the way children draw," says Berglin. They're so free. They see detail where we don't. When my son was about 3, he made this amazing drawing of an underwater scene. I bought a big canvas and painted a bunch of texture underneath, and put his drawing on a projector and copied his lines on the canvas and hung it in the living room. People always ask, 'Where did you get that? It's such an interesting painting,' Berglin explains. "I have had a few clients now that I've done it for."

## 3 Larger Lights

"Light fixtures are a great way to add art and an accent, and often I think people make things too small," says Berglin. "The bottom of your dining room fixture should be 30 inches off the top of the table. Before the table is under the fixture it looks ridiculous, but having the right scale of light and a good circumference is key. If your table is 36 inches wide, your fixture should be between 18 and 24 inches." She also encourages going bigger on fixtures and lamps in spaces like your bedroom.

One of Berglin's recent remodeling clients, Reiner

Otterlei, especially loves her light fixtures. "I love glitter and crystals, so we have crystal chandeliers. We also have a fun oversized fixture in our mudroom. Our kitchen pendants are these neat sort of nautical globes. It's kind of an eclectic mix, but they all work together," says Otterlei. "When people walk in, it's the first thing they comment on. I really wanted each to be an art piece."

Generally speaking, Berglin agrees that your fixtures should not match each other from room to room, and she also gives the green light on mixing finishes. "In general, I think it's important to choose a timeless shape or finish, something that is classy."

## 4 Timeless Tile

If you're wanting to take on a larger update, kitchen remodels can make a big impact. Berglin cautions against trends, especially in tile.

"With very few exceptions, I am completely over deco tile in the backsplash. Tile is not something you want to change out often. It's hard [to install] and something you want to hire a professional for. Generally speaking, I suggest forgetting that decorative stripe of glass tile running through your subway tiles. You will be sick of it and it will trend out soon enough," she says.

She suggests finding the right size and shape of tile according to the style of your house. "I suggest getting interesting with the shape of the tile, maybe



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BEFORE



One of Berglin's recent SLP projects maintained the look and feel of the original 1940s home. Renovation by South Face Creative Builders

a Moroccan-inspired arabesque shape. Or it might be diamonds. Don't busy it up with different colors. With one overall color and one overall shape, it looks like gorgeous wallpaper." Berglin also likes to carry a backsplash higher than the upper cabinets, around a window or above your range. "Suddenly your kitchen feels much taller," she says.

## 5 Rethink Renovation

Where Berglin's design talent really excels is residential remodeling to help homeowners improve the layout of their home with renovations that retain the charm of the original neighborhood. Whether it's rearranging layouts, adding dormers or an entire second story, she loves helping her clients stay in their homes.

"We had our second baby and were totally out of space, but we love our neighborhood," says Otterlei of her 1940s home. "To move anywhere else was so much more expensive and you get less space, so remodeling made the most sense."

Berglin says an addition isn't always necessary. "I am excellent at making very efficient use of small spaces. Sometimes I can

turn a kitchen around and remove a wall. It's very interesting how much more you can get out of a smaller space," she says.

If a dormer is called for, Berglin considers how it will look from the outside first. Even in her own home, she has renovated a dormer that was once unfinished storage, adding a window and making it into her office. "I put the window in, but I didn't want to mess up the way the house looks on the outside, so it's 6 inches from the floor, which makes it feel like you're in a tree house."

If a big addition is needed, Berglin works with a few select remodelers that she says are "the best in the business." For the Otterlei home, she worked with South Face Creative Builders.

"There are lots of companies coming in, and they tear down a house and rebuild on the foundation, but it looks too suburban and too much like a development house. I think the Otterleis' house is a great example. We've ripped a roof off and added a second story. Now they have three bedrooms upstairs with a master suite and laundry, and a kids' bathroom. Then we opened up the main level," says Berglin. "It looks timeless and charming."

"It feels like the haven we always wanted," adds Otterlei. //



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