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EDITOR'S PICK URGENT

IN HOME

Home design for nature lovers

Gina J. Grillo Apr 20, 2016

TRY 1 MONTH FOR 99¢



The rustic charm of this open kitchen and dining room, designed by Fredman Design Group, can be attributed to the stone used throughout the home as well as the reclaimed barn timbers incorporated both in decorative and structural elements.

Biophilia is a design term that at first may sound like a new strain of bacteria—but actually it is defined as a human love of nature, human attraction to other living species and to the living world around us.

Biophilic design is a term used to describe this brand of nature worship, fast becoming an important movement in contemporary interior design. Some believe that biophilic design can promote calm, reduce stress and foster a sense of healthful healing. Wendy Jones, head naturalist at Fernwood Botanic Garden & Nature Preserve, says, "Today people are learning the importance of caring for and protecting our natural world—plants, animals and the environment. That sense of well-being that we connect to nature actually goes back thousands of years to when people lived more closely to the natural world."

While exploring interior design ideas through a biophilic lens, we found local designers who are taking inspiration from the abundance of resources found in our Midwestern landscape—in prairies, meadows, forests, woodland, dunes, and the Lake Michigan shoreline.

Wood and Stone

Fredman Design Group, a full service design firm (Chicago and Union Pier), takes pride in educating clients on the value of incorporating natural elements into the home: their use of reclaimed wood to create interior narratives, telling stories through design uniquely tied to sense of place; an old tree from the property, cut and trimmed to find its final resting place in a foyer; or a giant oak, dried and built into an enormous bench. By giving special attention to unique characteristics and varieties of wood—maple, oak, and pear—one can ascertain and accentuate an interior palette and bring warmth, beauty and durability into a space.

"We're in the business of creating environments that nurture the human spirit," says Terri Crittenden, CEO of Fredman Design Group. "By incorporating the rich elements of wood and stone, we're able to bring nature into each aspect of the projects that we work on."

Fredman uses stone like travertines, limestones, and field stones, offered in a variety of hues and textures to bring warmth and rustic appeal to indoor settings, while incorporating the use of marbles and granites to appeal to the more refined palates. "We've used them all, in various areas of each home—our clients run the gamut with their tastes," Susan Fredman says. "We design with attention to materials that feel good. Stone is natural, it is real, and stone feels good inherently and provides a way to bring nature indoors and connects us to nature in any kind of décor style... traditional or rustic, contemporary or transitional."

Light and Vista



When Ed and Eve Noonan founded Tryon Farm in Michigan City in 1999, their mission was to save the land as habitat for the use of people, animals, and flora and fauna—and to create a sanctuary for those who would live there. Tryon Farm has become an important not-for-profit, providing stewardship of the land, maintenance, and design and education for those seeking a nature-centered lifestyle. At Tryon, their 120 protected acres are vast, boasting an array of healthy green spaces, community gardens, historical dairy barn, freshwater swimming, five miles of walking and biking trails, and forty acres of open grass meadows, with multiple creeks and ponds.

Tryon Farm Modern Country Homes has developed a selection of sustainable contemporary home designs that residents can choose from, based on the original vision of architect Ed Noonan. Or residents may also opt to custom design their own home within this pristine setting. According to Eve Noonan, "All houses, whether designed by us or by others, are sited to get the best view, the best exposure, while taking advantage of natural light and creating the most privacy from neighbors." Windows, skylights, upper floor decks, and two-story screened porches all aid in bringing the outside in.



Tryon residents like Geoffrey and Kristina Frankel of Chicago purchased a second home at Tryon, a place to get away from their fast-paced world of work, crowds, and schedules. "The first time you walk towards the house," Geoffrey Frankel says, "you walk across the deck, past the yoga studio and lounge, to find yourself on an elevated wood deck tucked into the woods. Then you ascend to a luxurious, modern house set atop the trees. Entering through the front door the vista allows you to see through the house, across the porch, and out onto the prairie. This inside-outside design takes us on a journey through the seasons, infusing insights that harmonize our work-life balance."

Water and Shoreline

The essence of beach, water and sky can be brought into an interior space as pattern, texture and color. Original artwork such as paintings and photographs can also create an interior window, giving entrée to the Lake Michigan landscape, sand, dunes and shoreline. Trinkets collected while beach-combing, like shells or driftwood, can also become interesting artifacts of the culture of coastal living.

At HarborTown Interiors in St. Joseph, one can find home décor items and accents that pay tribute to beach living, as well as a showcase of works by local artists and artisans that add originality and richness to the depiction of any watery environs.

Working with distributors like Pine Cone Hill (an Annie Selke Company), Company C, and Surya, HarborTown offers pattern selections that go beyond typical floral and leaf motifs to offer designs in fabric, wallpaper, and bedding that poetically mimic elements of water and shore: Pine Cone Hill's Thibaut fabric and wallpaper like "A Shore Thing," available in shades of aqua and green; rugs and pillows from Surya based on drawings of underwater coral, starfish and sea fan; or lamps by Lampworks that act as a vessel for holding natural artifacts with shells or driftwood at their base.

These creative interpretations add earthliness to our home décor, blurring the lines between inside and out to reflect the abiding resources of our home terrain, allowing our appreciation of nature to manifest itself through interior design.



Bright, beachy style brings a quaint bungalow to life



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