

Forever Contemporary with Mid-Century Modern Design



For the past two decades, interior design trends have included a comeback in mid-century modern (MCM) style and this trend has endured the test of time like no other.

Some attribute MCM's staying power to its simple, organic, functional and versatile nature – think tapered legs, curved shapes and smooth surfaces. Not to mention products available at every price point. Consumers can buy expensive vintage pieces or inexpensive mass produced knockoffs. *Mad Men*, the popular TV show set in the 1960s, made the movement even more popular with its classic “East Coast” MCM design sets.

The term MCM harkens to author Cara Greenberg, who says she made it up for her 1984 book, *Mid-century Modern: Furniture of the 1950s*. While modern usually means “of the moment,” in this particular case it refers to a 1947 to 1957 design style looking toward the future.

Millions of young GI's and their families bought small ranch homes in suburban developments and enthusiastically decorated the interiors with modern furniture of the day. Materials developed during the war—plastic, vinyl, plywood, glass—made it possible to mass produce minimalist, lighter weight home products families could easily move from house to house.

In addition to the 1950's furniture craze, Mid-Century also refers to a broader design movement spanning from 1933 to 1965 that included interior, industrial and graphic design as well as architecture. It replaced the lavish ornamental Arts Décoratifs (art deco) style of the 1920s.

Architects and furniture designers such as Mies van der Rohe, Le Corbusier, Richard Neutra, Florence Knoll, George Nelson, Eero Saarinen, Charles Eames and George Nakashima developed futuristic structures influenced by molecular chemistry, nuclear physics, space travel and science fiction.

New on the scene were glass skyscrapers, flat roofed homes with open floor plans, curved furniture, free floating mobiles as well as walls adorned with abstract expressionist paintings and stereos wafting the music of Elvis, Chuck Berry and Thelonious Monk. No to mention shows like the Twilight Zone and The Jetsons.

Consider taking MCD modern building tours in the cities you visit. Here are a few buildings to visit or admire.

- The Gropius Home, Walter Gropius, Lincoln, Mass.
- Glass House, Phillip Johnson, New Canaan, Connecticut.
- The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, Frank Lloyd Wright, Manhattan, NY.
- Gateway Arch, Eero Saarinen, St. Louis, Missouri.
- Seagram Building, Manhattan, Mies van der Rohe, Manhattan, NY.

Incorporating MCM into your home

Fortunately, MCM goes well with many other design styles.

Start with what your home needs. Maybe an armchair, a kitchen table, or a credenza. Blend it into the furniture you already have, be it Victorian, Art Deco, Rustic, Contemporary or even Shabby Chic. Materials include wood, veneer, plastic, glass, and lucite. You can add more MCM as you see fit.

Or, start with what your heart needs. Mill around some local antique stores to see what catches your fancy. Might be a funky clock, geometric patterned dishware or wall hanging with some fringe. Visit the various rooms in your home with your new prize until you find the perfect spot. To reduce clutter, consider removing one piece for every new piece introduced, giving it more room to shine.

MCM Color Palettes

Have fun with MCM earth tones and vibrant color palettes. Think mustard, umber, avocado green, pumpkin, turquoise, red, pewter gray and soft pastels.



Don't be afraid to let MCM items stand out and shout, "look at me." That's one of the reasons they continue to be popular. They want to be seen and admired.

MCM Patterns

The MCM designers went to town with fun geometric, celestial, circuit board and botanical designs. Curves, illusions and amoebas. None of them blend into the woodwork. They bring the woodwork alive.



Design Adventurer

Give yourself permission to explore and experiment with a mélange of MGM colors, patterns and objects to create unique rooms that reflect your personality and lifestyle. And if exploration isn't your forte, consider talking with us at 3W design to weave a Mid-Century Modern aesthetic into your home. We're easy to talk with and have all kinds of ideas. All it takes is a call to (603) 226-3399.