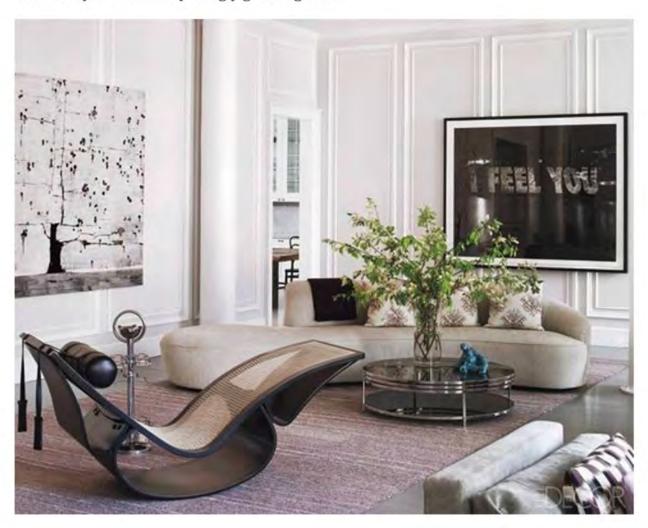


Mara Silber Shares Her Designer Hints: "I love a combo of a traditional butcher block island with a honed white marble countertop and backsplash"

Best statement pieces.

Mara: "Sculptural chairs. They are fun and surprising. Everyone prioritizes comfort when it comes to seating areas, but adding the extra layer of personality that comes with a sculptural chair, and maybe some art, provides a surprisingly great vignette."





Favorite materials for kitchen (quartz, granite etc)

Mara: "I love the classics – there is just something about the look of a well-worn, traditional wood butcher block that gets me. Even better, I love a combo of a traditional butcher block island with a honed white marble countertop and backsplash."

How to pick artwork for a client? Or for yourself?

Mara: "Oh my gosh - it's so fun.

Art is my favorite thing to buy for myself. I get obsessed with the works I buy and have difficultly parting with them!

There are three pieces above my desk that I look at everyday. Two are by Hugo Guinness and the other is from his wife Elliotte Puckette. They make me smile!

I don't limit myself to one style. I own a giant Christopher Wool poster that hangs in my entryway. It's a statement piece.

"Classic items require maintenance though, which tends to make clients wary, but I really happen to appreciate how these materials age authentically with use."

Art is much more personal than furniture – it travels with you from home to home. It goes where you go. That is why the art selection process is very collaborative when I work with clients.

I always encourage clients to be hands-on. I will organize a day for us to tour galleries and view work from artists that I think they will respond to.

In terms of placing art – I don't think there is one specific rule. I believe it's about what feels right. Sometimes I love how something oversized looks over a small nightstand or how a small photo looks over a big console table. As long is the art isn't hung too high (a pet peeve of mine), I can find a way to make it work!"



Favorite paint colors for living rooms, dining rooms, kitchens?

Mara: "Benjamin Moore's Affinity colors are always my first stop.

Steam is my go-to shade of white, especially for kitchens. It makes any room feel crisp and fresh.

I'm constantly drawn to versatile neutral colors. I often use "etiquette" and "wish". They're soothing and cozy which is why they often work well in living rooms and dining rooms."

Benjamin Moore Benjamin Moore Steam AF-15 Wish AF-680 Etiquette AF-50

How to pick a color scheme for a design?

Mara: "When designing, clients will typically start with some level of vision. Whether it's an existing piece of furniture, an inspiration image, or a color they like, this insight gives me a sense for who they are, their style, and what kind of space they want to live in.

Later on, when I'm shopping for textures or colors, I will know which ones "feel" right for them.

That's why I think one of the most important things a designer can do is see the space and meet the client first. I love getting to know clients."



Some practical tips:

Lighting is so important, too. Seeing schemes on-site at different times of day eliminates the element of surprise when it turns out that your white fabric turns pink at night under your recessed lighting.

When picking a color scheme, I love a good neutral base when it feels right. But I also enjoy starting with JUST a bold color. You can build a room around a bold color."





How to design your guest bedroom?

Mara: "A guest room is the perfect place to go bold. It's the same rationale for why hotels can be exciting to stay in – it transports you to a place that is completely different from your regular living environment. That's fun to do for your guests – create a retreat or fantasy that feels like vacation but is still welcoming and homey. That is what I work toward. You can pack a lot of personality in.

I feel the same way about powder rooms. They're my favorite to do, which sounds funny, but I read somewhere that powder rooms are one place in your home that every guest is likely to check out. I think about that all the time. I'm inspired to take risks in small spaces knowing that I can make an impression on a guest even if they only visit one time."



What is one item that is expensive but makes a HUGE difference

Mara: "Ok, I have two answers: right size carpet and window treatments! These are two things that clients always try to eliminate because they're usually the most expensive part of the project, but I believe they really bring everything together.

Some clients have new wood floors that they don't want to cover with carpet. In other cases it could be a cost issue. But without the right-sized carpet for the space, I just think the room can feel disproportionate.

I feel the same way about window treatments. Clients have great big windows that they don't want to cover, but to me it is all about layering. I thrive on the challenge of thinking through every component."

ROOMHINTS —Magazine—

Some of your favorite products. (Good quality and for the price)

"In a world where unique pieces can cost thousands of dollars - this table provides the perfect statement piece for under \$1,000. It's \$925 and I just think it is so versatile."





"I saw this oil and vinegar set while traveling in South Africa and instantly fell in love. This has become my go-to gift for hosts at parties. They're incredibly functional!"

"Just like the website says -durable and elegant and perfect for everyday! Emphasis on the durable!"





"This is such a cool take on the classic lantern. The listed price starts at \$2,435, but these fixtures can be a bold alternative to that statement chandelier that you are saving up for!"

Billy Cotton Glasses - \$15 - https://www.marchsf.com/store/billy-cotton-clear-glassware/dp

Souda - Kreten Side Table - Short - \$925

- https://soudasouda.com/products/kreten-side-table-short-grey -

Menu - Pipette Glass with Tray, Set of 2 - \$90

http://www.menu-design-shop.de/en/Pipette+Glasses+Set+with+Tray.html

Urban Electric - Doverbell Light Fixture - \$2,435 http://www.urbanelectricco.com/doverbell.html