

MODERN LUXURY

PHILADELPHIA STYLE

*Wyeth's
World*

AN AMERICAN ARTIST,
A PHILADELPHIA STORY

WHAT'S NEW IN
ATLANTIC CITY

THE RESTAURANT
RESERVATIONS
TO MAKE NOW

the SKY'S *the* LIMIT

OUR ANNUAL "BEST OF STYLE" CELEBRATES
WHAT'S HOT AND WHERE TO GO

PLUS: ALEX HOLLEY, YANNICK NÉZET-SÉGUIN, AND JOHN FRY
REVEAL THEIR PHILLY FAVORITES



Let there be light: Mixed textures like rich woods, linen upholstery, and suede wall coverings soften a great room designed by Freeman Interiors. INSET: Don and Renee Freeman. BOTTOM: FM79 contemporary two-tiered table, **Paul M. Jones Collection** (\$14,850). John Boone, Inc.; johnbooneinc.com

HIGH IMPACT

HUSBAND-AND-WIFE INTERIOR DESIGNERS **DON** AND **RENEE FREEMAN** TALK PARING DOWN, BUYING WELL, AND HOW CLASSIC FILMS INFORM THEIR AESTHETIC.

BY SARAH JORDAN

Design veterans Don and Renee Freeman are sitting in their chic home office on the seventh floor of the elegant Touraine Building on Spruce Street discussing their interior design firm. Partners in life,

they finish each other's sentences or look at the other when they're searching for just the right anecdote or detail, as though summoning the thought from a shared brain.

"What's our best

decorating advice?" repeats Don and looks at Renee, posing it as a guessing game. "It's one word."

"Throw it out!" says Renee with a laugh.

Don agrees: "Edit! One good piece is >



PHOTOGRAPHY BY JOHN ARMICH (ROOM)



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SPACE *INTERIOR MOTIVES*



A master suite becomes a personal retreat with its soft color palette. **INSET:** Simple (and simply comfortable): This Slipper chair from A Rudin mirrors the Freemans' design sensibility.

better than a bunch of junk. Don't clutter things. The biggest mistake people make is having too much stuff."

The couple has built up a loyal book of clients whose design aesthetic matches the high-drama, edited-down sophistication of the Freemans, who can be spotted around town in their signature all-black ensembles. The Freemans deliver a wide variety of looks—traditional, modern, minimalist—but all with a glossy finish. A mix of residential and commercial

work takes them from the city to the suburbs, as well as to clients' second homes in Florida, New York City, and along the New Jersey coast.

Not surprisingly, they say the key to happy designer-client relationships is their ability to understand what clients want and to give them a fully finished environment. "We're not dictators," says Renee. "We're collaborators. We take a client's vision and execute it properly. It's their home and they have to love it."

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JOHN ARMICH (ROOM)



The Freemans source lights, like this bubble chandelier, from Rittenhouse Electric: "It's lighting that really creates atmosphere," says Renee.

Though the couple attend the big furniture and designs shows, enjoy shopping trips in California and Europe, and keep up with the trends, they don't follow them—and are proud of it. They have been around long enough to be familiar with the cyclical nature of design trends and steer clients to more timeless choices. Buy well once, so you don't end up buying often. "I've seen so much money misspent," says Don. Renee adds, "Just because everything is gold doesn't mean it's stunning."

With the couple's predilection for classic style, it's not a surprise when they

reveal their downtime guilty pleasure is watching old black-and-white movies. Renee confesses recharging by looking at films—think the Myrna Loy-William Powell "Nick and Nora Charles" whodunits, Busby Berkeley's musical spectacles, and of course, the 1948 comedy *Mr. Blandings Builds His Dream House*. Renee says she likes to study the clothing, jewelry, and furniture. And the Freemans have made a name for themselves by reviving that cinematic glamour for their clients' homes. 1520 Spruce St., 215-772-9406; freemaninteriors.com ■

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