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# SPACE INTERIOR MOTIVES



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 >







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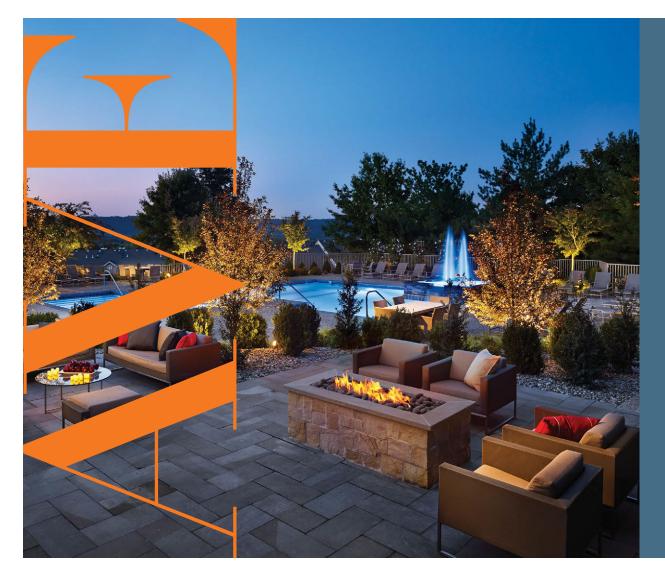
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**SPACE** INTERIOR MOTIVES



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, editeddown 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 designerclient 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."



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; freeman interiors.com

