

The FACES of DESIGN

In honor of this magazine's **10-year anniversary**, we are shining a light on some of the people who have established **Chicago** as the design destination that it is. It may be our celebration, but the toasts belong to you!

BY ANDREA MILLS

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HAIR AND MAKEUP BY RANDY WILDER FOR GIORGIO ARMANI COSMETICS

SHOT ON LOCATION AT WRIGHT

NATE BERKUS ASSOCIATES

Nate Berkus may have found fame and fortune (being close friends with Oprah never hurts), but it's the design cred of his firm based here that really impresses us. Co-design directors Lauren Buxbaum and Sasha Adler have been holding down the fort for the last 10-plus years, and judging by the quantity and quality of projects around the country it is managing, the firm Berkus started

in his basement in Lincoln Park is as strong as ever. With a team of more than 20 in its West Town space, along with staff in New York and L.A., Berkus is still closely involved, even maintaining friendships with clients well after a project has wrapped. "The reality is, in today's marketplace, there is no need to uproot everyone [from Chicago] because we work all over the country and meet where and

when we need to," says Berkus. Buxbaum credits the ease of their teamwork to the buttoned-up process they have: "The level of organization we have behind the scenes often surprises people," explains Berkus. Creatively, their strength comes from a genuine love of design from an aesthetic standpoint. And, perhaps due to Berkus' background in antiques, they care more about using their

knowledge to advise clients on starting a collection rather than pushing furniture solutions for the short term. "I don't come to Chicago that often," says Berkus. "But when I do, I get so much from the buzz at the office. It's a bunch of good people doing what they're good at in a joyful, supportive environment. I'm lucky to be at the helm of it." nateberkus.com

The trio of Lauren Buxbaum, Nate Berkus and Sasha Adler are the leading forces of Nate Berkus Associates, which is "fundamentally based here," says Berkus. Both women started as interns and "grew up as designers with Nate," says Buxbaum.





TOM STRINGER

As Tom Stringer explains in his first book, *An Adventurous Life: Global Interiors by Tom Stringer*, he was destined to be a designer from childhood due to his family's pair of cottages on Mullett Lake. They were the gathering place, the anchor of experiences, the keeper of memories and photos, and where so much life happened. That,

along with his love for travel, has informed his approach to design. He founded his firm, Tom Stringer Design Partners, over 20 years ago, and has been telling stories with his clients, creating spaces that are elegant but relaxed, inspiring and deeply personal ever since. Well known and beloved in Chicago, his name has meaning internationally as

well. "I often travel with my clients to see the world together and translate their interests and passion into their home design," says Stringer. His collaborations, such as with chef Grant Achatz on Alinea, Next and The Aviary, have resulted in many accolades, and he also has a product line available through TexStyle. Fifteen years ago, he made a decision with his

husband to dedicate at least three months of every year to traveling and exploring different parts of the world. "That decision not only transformed my life in general but had a huge impact on my work as a designer as well," says Stringer. "These explorations enrich and renew my creativity and open my eyes to the multitude of aesthetic possibilities." tomstringer.com



EVA QUATEMAN

Small but mighty is an apt description of both Eva Quateman and her namesake firm, Eva Quateman Interiors. She credits her start in window display and as an accessories buyer for giving her an incredible eye for detail, and it's the little things, according to Quateman, that make the biggest difference in a space. Her firm is a family-run business that works side by side with her husband's construction company so that "every little detail is addressed from the beginning, which creates a seamless end product," she explains. She has been a fashionable force on Chicago's design scene for more than 24 years, and what impresses us most is her boundless energy and ability to stay at the top of her game—in regard to interiors, and shoes. Many of her interiors are primarily furnished with custom designs, and she has a collection with deAurora, Eva Quateman Essentials, that showcases the impeccably timeless side of her taste. She is often surprised at the number of young, single clients she has, compared to when she first started, which makes us commend the next generation. Says Quateman on how she's evolved: "I'm braver now and more likely to take a visual risk. I'm not afraid to push clients out of their comfort zone." evaquateman.com