

MODERN LUXURY

# Interiors

CHICAGO

## The Kitchen & Bath Issue

Divine Design:  
Three Spectacular Local Abodes  
The Eat Sheet! Fall Fare From a Top Chef  
Trend Alert: Floating Cabinets,  
Dramatic Faucets, Sophisticated Surfaces,  
Cutting-Edge Tables and More!

PLUS:  
THE MCA'S NEW INTERACTIVE INSTALLATION  
A LOCAL MURAL ARTIST WAXES PERUVIAN  
SOURCING TRIP: ANDERSONVILLE'S BEST BOUTIQUES



**BEST IN THE BIZ**  
Posing in Ernestomeda's glamorous kitchen and bath showroom in the Merchandise Mart (the Ematico kitchen serves as backdrop), from left: Donovan Eckhardt, Gail Drury, Jill Salisbury and Scott Dresner

## ASK THE EXPERTS

Nothing adds depth to a project like a seasoned professional, and we locals are lucky to have some of the most experienced and innately talented individuals in the home design and development industries. *Interiors Chicago* sat down with a bathroom authority (Gail Drury), kitchen aficionado (Scott Dresner), sustainable design guru (Jill Salisbury) and an accomplished architect and builder (Donovan Eckhardt) to discuss how they got to the top of their game—and on everyone's go-to list.

By Rhys Hunding | Photography by Jacob Hand

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## SCOTT DRESNER

The Kitchen Aficionado

### WHAT IS YOUR DESIGN PHILOSOPHY?

I approach every project like it was my house. I take my global experience and use it in my vision for my clients.

### BACKGROUND?

I was raised in a modern style, starting with the house I grew up in. Before I moved to Chicago in 2008, I owned a Formica table business, then moved into cabinet manufacturing, then got into Italian cabinetry, but have been doing what I really love—kitchen design—since then.

### PERSONAL AESTHETIC?

Attention to detail. I like the sleek Italian look. I prefer tall walls, and I never put two appliances next to each other. I love marble for backsplashes and a Parsons style leg on an island.

### MOST MEMORABLE PROJECT TO DATE?

Yamasaki—the famous modern architect in the '60s who was commissioned to do the original World Trade Center—had this cool Asian-meets-American fusion feel. In 1997, I had the opportunity to redo the kitchen in his former house in Detroit. I tried to interpret the space as though he was sitting here with me—how would he want the cabinets to look?

### ANY ADVICE?

Hire a professional who has a lot of pictures of their kitchens that you really enjoy. There are a lot of designers who have you leaf through magazines and steal ideas, but I believe in original ideas that the designer has come up with on his own, working with the client.



## GAIL DRURY

The Bathroom Authority

### WHAT IS YOUR DESIGN PHILOSOPHY?

Everything should be cohesive. The client ultimately makes the decision of what the direction is, but it is my job (and my team's) to educate them and give options based on their preferences.

### BACKGROUND?

I started my career in high-end retail with a cabinet manufacturer; I traveled around the country designing commercial offices. I slowly got into residential design and went out on my own, doing kitchens, baths and beyond. I had a boutique showroom and moved recently to our current 7,000-square-foot showroom in downtown Glen Ellyn.

### PERSONAL AESTHETIC?

I don't like a whole lot of clutter; simple, but elegant, would describe the look I prefer. I like a combination of materials that is subtle and clean, but with a play on textures.

### MOST MEMORABLE PROJECT TO DATE?

A bathroom in the Midwest, where the shower is in the corner of the bathroom and all the walls are glass, floor-to-ceiling. The windows look out to a courtyard, so it feels like you are showering outside.

### ANY ADVICE?

Everyone has different needs and different goals, so to make the perfect bathroom you have to take it one step at a time. You have to gather information, put it together and set priorities. Start out with what is important and build the space around it.



## JILL SALISBURY

The Sustainable Design Guru

### WHAT IS YOUR DESIGN PHILOSOPHY?

There should not be compromise. You can have luxury, style and healthy, sustainable interiors all at the same time.

### BACKGROUND?

My career started in furniture and retail. I worked in commercial and residential interiors and then other aspects of design, including graphics, so my career has really come full circle. I have returned to my roots and am enjoying the journey.

### PERSONAL AESTHETIC?

It changes; right now I am really entranced by the idea of wabi-sabi; appreciating lifestyle patina, and pieces that have a story to tell. One of the things I love about designing with sustainability is there is always a great story about the life a piece had before it was installed.

### MOST MEMORABLE PROJECT TO DATE?

A non-profit project I did in Michigan. I designed and manufactured all of the workstations and private office furniture—everything from the locker rooms to the boardroom. It was great working side by side with them to accomplish their vision and bring environmental integrity to all of the furnishings. It was a LEED platinum project and won the AIA interiors award.

### ANY ADVICE?

Think of every experience, good or bad, as an opportunity to grow and evolve as a designer. Keep an open mind and think outside the box.



## DONOVAN ECKHARDT

The Accomplished Architect/Builder

### WHAT IS YOUR DESIGN PHILOSOPHY?

I propose ideas to my clients that are realistic and efficient. From there, it's easy for me to incorporate the client's needs and personality because I know that the core of the design is functional.

### BACKGROUND?

I have a master's in architecture with a focus on real estate development. My father is an architect/builder, so I grew up in the design/build world and was constantly on-site, learning hands-on.

### PERSONAL AESTHETIC?

I prefer a traditional-style home. When I watch *Downton Abbey*, what I see is what I want every house to look like. I understand that can't always be the case, so I try to design in a more transitional style—I just completed a few homes in Bucktown with a more modern style.

### MOST MEMORABLE PROJECT TO DATE?

The first single-family home I designed, developed and built in the city. It was the first project that I took from initial demolition to a fully finished, traditional home that has aged well with the neighborhood. Growing up, I listened to my father point and say, 'I designed and built that building' all over Chicago. For the first time, I was able to say the same thing.

### ANY ADVICE?

You can go to school for as many years as you want, but the best way to truly learn the industry is experience. I am constantly finding new, creative ways to solve design and construction problems.