



# HOME



## MAKING YOUR HOME A STAND-OUT

BY STEPHANIE WILLIAMS

Flip through the pages of national home magazines and you'll see spaces that are perfectly laid out and pulled together. The homes on those pages feature furniture, wall coverings, window treatments, rugs, and accessories that work together to create a stunning living space. And that's what we all want, isn't it?! A home that is functional, comfortable, and stylish, without costing a fortune. With the help of area interior designers, retailers, and stylists, you can achieve exactly that.

Whether you have tens of thousands to invest in a massive kitchen renovation or simply want to swap out heavy winter woollens for crisper summer decor, you have many area design professionals ready to help out.

### Building your foundation

A magazine spread, a vibrant color, a piece of furniture, a picture frame – all of these can be the inspiration behind a great room. At Creative Commercial Designs' Design Inspiration Studio, owner Shery Merkle hopes her destination will have exactly what you need to spruce up your home. She believes her studio is unlike

any other home improvement destination in Rochester, with a capacity to work her magic on projects as small as choosing the right new color to freshen up a child's bedroom to updating the palette, look, and feel of an entire house. Carrying binders full of samples for just about any piece imaginable, from hardwood floors to upholstery, bedding, drapery, and wallpaper, Merkle's Design Inspiration Studio aims to provide an encyclopedic destination unlike any other in the area.

### Inde Design Studio

The biggest status symbol in today's homes isn't a hold-lined indoor pool or a 10,000-square-foot wine cellar – though they would certainly be noteworthy – but a super stylish, up-to-date kitchen or master bath. Thankfully, Inde Design Studio specializes in exactly that – kitchen and bath projects. With the help of skilled designers, clients are guided through the remodeling process step-by-step, from design to delivery. Inde takes great care in breaking down the overwhelming, chaotic remodeling process to ensure peace of mind throughout, and to give you exactly what

you were expecting. Providing access to a nearly endless selection of cabinets, countertops, flooring, plumbing, tile, and lighting, Inde works with any size budget, to give you the kitchen or bath you imagined.

### Behind the scenes

To fund major home renovations, you may want to examine your current expenses to see where you can cut corners. Your utility bill is the perfect place to start and True Energy Solutions can help spot savings opportunities. True Energy's Home Performance Contracting services allow families to take a closer look at their energy consumption and pinpoint possible areas to reduce unnecessary usage. After a full audit, True Energy's certified experts suggest an array of improvements, ranging from installing stronger insulation or sealing attics, replacing windows and doors, weatherstripping, and HVAC replacement or tuning. True Energy Solutions can help you find cash you didn't know you were wasting.

### Make yourself comfortable

When you have guests visiting, do they

fireplaces into eye-catching heat sources that border on works of art. Today, home owners are leaning toward more contemporary style fireplaces, with Valor gas fireplaces being among the most popular. Many of Valor's models are sleek and efficient, combining clean lines with metal, glass, and stone for a truly up-to-date look. Another option for attracting attention to your fireplace is to surround it with built-in cabinets or to incorporate it into an all-in-one home theatre system design.

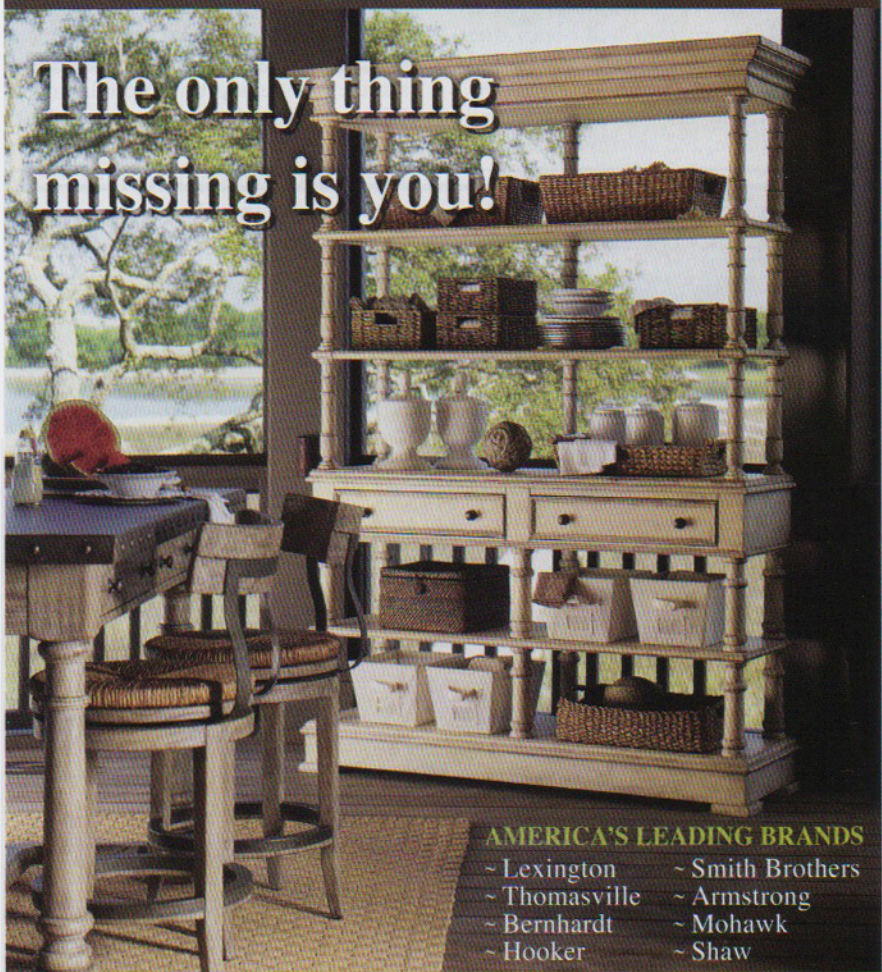
**The icing on the cake**

Leona Piro's Act Two Home Staging brings decades of experience as a property manager and real estate professional to Rochester. As someone with a wealth of expertise in the home staging arena, Piro is meticulous about bringing out the best in every property she's worked on. Whether you're putting your home on the market and want to present it in its best light or simply need professional guidance to update or upgrade its appearance, Piro is your woman.

Although furniture and flooring are some of the big ticket decisions to be made in designing a room, often the little touches can have the greatest impact. At Wisteria Flowers and Gifts, customers find an ever-changing selection of unique pieces, from colorful throw pillows, to one-of-a-kind sculptures, to decorative lighting, pottery, tableware, conversation pieces, and more. Of course, flower arrangements are always a tasteful addition – and Wisteria makes gorgeous centerpieces and bouquets – but their home décor selection contains pieces you won't see elsewhere. Mother-daughter team Rita Freling and Jennifer Ralph are always hunting for the extraordinary.

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