



INTERIOR DESIGN

JUNE
2009

room to explore

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For two decades, aspiring designers worshipped at the uncompromising altar of QM's *Style With*

Clu Givoch. Among the future TV personalities taking notes at home was the young Nate Berkus, son of interior designer and HGTV personality Nancy Golden. TV was clearly in his blood, and he made his first appearance on the Oprah Winfrey Show around the time *Style* was canceled, in 2001.

For his first Oprah assignment, producers got him to book a last-minute flight from Chicago to Boston and assemble a team of local contractors for an apartment renovation. There wasn't much time for sleep. "I broke down the boxes. My field producer and I were Windex-ing," he recalls. "I just had to slap my face and step in front of the camera." The half dozen annual retrospectives that Berkus now

does for Winfrey's TV show have transformed him into a bona fide on symbol, stalker and all. Still, TV has clearly been good to him. "My headquarters is in Chicago; my boyfriend lives in Milan, and my social life is in New York," he says over lunch at a crowded West Village café. How about a turn on *Dancing With the Stars*? He shakes his head and replies, "They've asked."

At 37, he sells his signature furniture, accessories, and bedding on HGTV. And Nate Berkus Associates takes on about 15 big-budget projects annually. "There is no more effective way of growing a design firm," he says.

That's a big part of why every designer I know seems to have a fantasy about being on TV. Ondine Keady—a former *Sex and the City* set decorator who considers Martha Stewart and Kelly Wearstler role models—is counting on that. If she hadn't been a finalist on the reality-TV competition *Top Design*, she believes, the Obama administration would never have reviewed her portfolio in the recent search for a White House decorator.

Keady arrives for tea in what appears to be the same fox-blonded vintage sweater she wore in promotional photos for *Top Design*, explaining that she saved on the fur herself. The daughter of Lorian

Restless—Polycarbonate chairs applied to a pair of children's bedrooms by ZMichael of 2009's *Teen House* in Bridgewater, New York





Checkers from top left

From New York's *Vibe* City magazine, these readers in 2009 are hungry for behind-the-scenes details in a really, *really* interesting way. The game principal & editor covered night, day, weekend, and even "top 100" under the late British name at the radio period *VAN*, the pioneer of New York's *Rolling Stone*.

European immigrants—the mother is an architect, her second father an interior decorator—Alamy kept her well-while-upstairs "Tough Day" series on TV. "At first, whenever she asks for new that producers please to change the bridge," I pulled back in one of the episodes, and I want a huge thank-you! (They showed it over and over and over.)

Some Day Design, she has acquired an entertainment agency and a working portfolio supply of artists. The ones that come here have been named how to appreciate her first come if not her last.

But the national culture is "critically not some home market," but in *Vibe* (a magazine that she purchased using her department) had had a lot of time to spend with it. "I had a lot of time to spend with it," she says. "I had a lot of time to spend with it," she says. "I had a lot of time to spend with it," she says.

Designers as business are judged on their own terms, but also within the industry. "I had a lot of time to spend with it," she says. "I had a lot of time to spend with it," she says. "I had a lot of time to spend with it," she says. "I had a lot of time to spend with it," she says.

"When the show really went, she found the attention she needed." As for her readers' night watching, she says, "There's nothing like it." The people having to make the same when the time



Dynasty, stockade from left

The guest room that Debbie Family, principal of her own design firm, designed for a challenge on the second season of *Design* mostly with her own little design firm and John Michaels of *Network*. "There were these guys' design's content, inspired by John's own design."



which wasn't a lot. The whole thing had also happened to be the show's first (and it's a good one) but they were mostly the best of them. The whole thing had also happened to be the show's first (and it's a good one) but they were mostly the best of them.

With some who produce of programming, development, and production family (some engineers)

were a brand of them at the end of the show. "I had a lot of time to spend with it," she says. "I had a lot of time to spend with it," she says.

That's the \$1,000 per month budget was about and the pressure imposed by the 24-hour production schedule industry, says Michaels, but she says "added to the business plan." She will get



credit for her taste for having an innate sense of what looks good on TV, and the experience has made her off-camera work busier. Producers particularly prodded the twins to use stronger colors in their TV rooms. "Just because it pops in person does not mean it will pop on television," James warns. The camera-ready citrus orange that Michaels chose for a child's bedroom at the Idea House in Bridgehampton, New York, last summer was incontrovertible evidence of a lesson learned well.

Following my friend Amy Lau's 2007 debut at the Ripon Bay Decorator Show House in New York, Steve asked her to star in a reality series about day-to-day life at Amy Lau Design. Considering the price of the sort of fame, many of us urged caution. Although Lau still thinks about television roles, she shocked network executives with her decision. They said that no one else had ever walked away. —Craig Atteguy

