

Divine Den

Designer Jessica Helgerson shares her formula for good design: Start with classic, durable fundamentals, then add fresh, modern touches.



PORTLAND, OREGON-BASED INTERIOR DESIGNER Jessica Helgerson designs uncluttered, beautiful interiors for her residential and commercial clients, guided by pragmatism (how should the space be laid out to flow and function well?) and creativity (what idea or feeling will focus the design?). Early in her career, Helgerson expressed her long-standing interest in green building and sustainability as an activist, sitting on boards devoted to environmental preservation and serving as president of the Sustainability Project, an initiative to inspire change in the built environment. Today, she lives sustainably day-to-day with her husband and two children in a 540-square-foot cottage she remodeled with almost entirely reclaimed materials, complete with a planted roof and a big front porch. She and her family raise chickens, turkeys and bees, grow almost all of their own food, and throw big dinner parties on their five acres of farmland. She designed this den—featuring a locally handmade sofa, reclaimed wood tables, a vintage animal-skin rug and low-VOC paint—in a southern Washington home.



Jessica Helgerson designed this Washington den for clients who wanted to redecorate with sustainability in mind. She chose substantial, grounding pieces and thick, cozy fabrics to create a contrast with the rest of the home, which is airy and light. For your own design projects, ask yourself the questions Helgerson asks at the beginning of any project: What's the best design for the client? What's the best design for the building or space? What will stand the test of time, stylistically and functionally? PHOTO BY LINCOLN BARBOUR