

DESIGN TREND WATCH: MOVE OVER, SUBTLE

IT'S TIME FOR SOMETHING SHINIER

Repeat after us: Shiny is good. At least, it's good again. In fact, the use of metal, lacquer, gold leaf, brass and other smooth and shiny surfaces in interior design is "blingtastic!" That's how Laura Antognozzi Peck describes the new – and yet old – trend. Metallic finishes have been popular before, and they're coming back again.

Peck, a designer for Martha O'Hara Interiors in Hopkins, has begun to see more interest in using metals, leaf, gilded surfaces and other shiny stuff in interior design. She's seeing copper sinks in bathrooms, silver or gold leaf on furniture and all kinds of opulence. We're not talking about gold toilets and gold wallpaper, or the overkill of a Versailles ballroom. Instead, the use of metal and other shiny finishes is serving as an accent in many different ways. "I haven't seen whole rooms done this way," says Peck. "One piece goes a long way, and I'm seeing multiple metallic pieces throughout the house."

But Peck gives the example of a chest that has been gilded all over, and says that this trend isn't for the faint of heart. "You can't go halfway with this," she says. "If you're going to commit to something that opulent, you should commit to it, and make that the focal point of the room."

This focal point might be a piece of furniture, such as a sideboard, that has been gilded. It might be a metal mantle on a masonry fireplace. Ethel Gustafson, lead designer for Minneapolis design firm Stylebook, has seen tin ceilings, wrought iron bases for sinks, hammered-copper oven range hoods, and even metal roofs on the exterior.

In kitchens, countertops, cooktops and backsplashes are featuring metallic tiles. Major manufacturers are starting to offer appliances with metallic finishes, too, such as refrigerators with copper finishes. The trend includes anything that's light-reflective, like mirrored pieces or even doorknobs.

Despite the shiny theme, many of these finishes are more subtle. Brass isn't the shiny brass of the 1980s. Instead, it has more of an antique finish or patina. Mirrors might have an acid wash so they look vintage. And in some sinks or other metal appliances, the finish is pounded metal or a distressed look.

"It's something that personalizes the house and makes it different from other people's," says Gustafson. "I think people like adding another dimension or layer or texture." ■



Baker, The Barbara Barry Collection
Diamond Chest



Holly Hunt, Milukan Chair