

(habitat)

designing mind) On the Case

When **Mona Ross Berman** found herself daydreaming about how she'd redecorate her law office once she made partner, she knew it might be time to retire from the legal profession and pursue her love of interior design. Soon after, in 2004, she founded Mona Ross Berman Interiors. Since then, clients throughout the Philadelphia area, Washington, D.C., Boston and New York have sought out her expertise. The Chestnut Hill resident is known for her fresh ideas, professional approach and close attention to client needs. "People should feel connected to—and inspired by—their environment," she says. "The best part of my job is helping people live better by making their homes more beautiful, comfortable and functional."



Personal decorating style: Classic and timeless, but always with a little twist.

Favorite room in her house: It has to be the kitchen. It's the perfect blend of form and function, and it's where everyone inevitably congregates during a party.

Most prized possession: A painting of my husband as a little boy that was done by his grandmother.

Victoria Hagan, David Hicks, Billy Baldwin and Kelly Wearstler.

Design advice she loves to give: Invest in the main pieces in a room. Buy well-made pieces with classic lines that you'll have forever. You can spend less on, and be trendier with, the smaller pieces of furniture and the accessories.

Color she couldn't design without: Chocolate brown. It's such a great anchor color for a room, works with so many other colors, and brings warmth and depth.

Design element she loves to incorporate into a space: Beautiful fabrics in rich textures and fun patterns. They make a space feel special, lively and inviting.

Biggest decorating faux pas: Sets of furniture. They really can make a space look dull and flat.

Her definition of good taste: Any space that reflects the personality of the owners. Authenticity is always in good taste. —Tara Beban

(expert advice)

question I want heated floors in my bathroom. Will this limit my flooring choices?

answer **Tami Derrick**, general manager, Volpe Tile & Marble, Chadds Ford and Paoli (volpetile.com) You absolutely will not be limited in your flooring choices. We use natural stone (marble, granite, travertine and limestone), ceramic, porcelain and even wood over heated floors. All these materials conduct heat, so the floor—and your feet—will stay warm.

Heated floors were once a luxury chosen by few clients. Now the demand is higher than it's ever been. I attribute their popularity to the attention they've received on the home improvement TV shows—and, of course, to the fact that people love not having to walk on cold flooring. In the past, heated floors primarily were installed in the master bathroom. Now clients are putting them in the kitchen, hallways, laundry room, sunroom, lower level—all over the house.

*Have a question for an expert?
E-mail tbeban@mainlinetoday.com.*

hot property Slice of History

Details: This Northside Haverford gem was once the historic stone gatehouse of the original Cheswold estate, home of Pennsylvania railroad president Alexander Cassatt. Designed by famed architect Frank Furness, it dates back to 1873 and was recently renovated to accommodate four bedrooms and one-and-a-half baths. Highlights include a dining room with built-ins and a fireplace; a modern kitchen; a large, sunny family room with skylights and a wet bar; 9-foot ceilings; and hardwood floors throughout.

Extras: Outdoor area features a flagstone patio and charming garden. An easy walk to the shops and train station in Haverford.

Price: \$1,495,000

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DESIGNING MIND: MICHAEL SAHADI