What was your first recognifion of great design? Think back as far as you can. Perhaps it was an amazing car? Or could it have been someone in your family with areat styve? for me, it was a chair. Chairs are often inane and obligatory, but when you see something that has a greater level of design intention, it stands out.

I was visiting the home of some family friends in Cape Cod, Massachusetts. They had a great post-and-beam, mid-century modern house right on the water. It was a beautiful glass box with windows from floor to ceiling and a floating staircase in the center of the living room up to the second floor. I sat in a black leather and wood lounge chair with an ottoman. Not only was it the most comfortable chair I had ever sat in-aside from the bean bag chairs on the floor of my best friend's rumpus room-but it looked like it had been designed by some evil genius in a (Sean Connery) James Bond film. Or perhaps I had seen something akin to it in that newly released film, "Star Wars." And it swiveled! I felt like Darth Vader reveling in the decadence of his authority over the empire or, at least, a lucky 7 -year-old left to his own imagination in a spinning chair. I also remember the sleek design of communal seating in an airport and a molded plastic side chair in the corner of my mother's office.

Ilater learned that all had been designed by Charles and Ray Eames and manufactured by Herman Miller. How interesting that one creative team, or one company, could hove such a profound and forceaching influence on the world around us. Addilionally, how wonderful is it to be able to recognize common threads or a cohesive philosophy behind multiple designs and forms. For me it was much like appreciating things in the natural world. l've always been interested in the biological sciences, especially fish, birds, reptiles, and fiowers, Looking at the work of designers like Charles and Ray Eames was like looking at a singular genus or family of animals or plants, all of which share a similar morphology yet are distinctively different in other ways, based on their habitats and habils. The Eames 670 lounge chair and the 671 ottoman-what beautiful eternal pieces of modern design.

Growing up, I wasn't always obsessed with design. I had other things to do, like putting fire crackers inside liftle volcanoes made of dit, and maintaining perpetually skinned elbows, and looking for newts under rocks in the brook nearby. My early memories of fine design lingered, but I didn't put them into any real context unfil l became an adult.

While working in fashion during my 20 s , I was in and out of European capitals frequently. I started occupying any free time, especially early mornings, at flea markets. I am a scavenger at heart and open to engacing anylhing of interest that possesses unique character. It could be an unusually shaped geode, a beauliful old textile, archaic tools, or...a chair. One day, going through a fiea market on the periphery of Paris, I found a chair that changed everything. I know that sounds like l'm projecting a lot on a chair, but it was so beautifully functional, represented all the great advancements in technology from the industrial revolution, and was elegantly restroined in its aesthetic. To most it looks like a chair from a school cafeteria, but for me it was a piece of history. It was one of Jean Prouve's standard chairs. I eeked out what I could in French francs, which later would be the equivalent of 1000 euros, and made a plea to the dealer in his stall at the Marché Paul Bert. Thankfully he accepted, which was the beginning of an obsession that would fuel the pursuit of a wonderful hobby, and later a transition out of the fashion industry and into the world of design.

Ihopeit's appropriate to assume thatifyou're reading this book, you probably purchased it because you are also interested in design. Alternatively, it could have been given to you as a gift by a thoughtful friend. No matter what your level of enthusiasm or interest might be in engaging these pages, you will most ilkely find something that really speaks to you here. The aesihetics are varied. Each designer has a unique point of view and visual language. Each home represents the interests and personality of its inhabitants. This is as it should be. If you have the interest and the wherewithal to define the way you live in detail, this is an opportunity not to be missed. Your home should be a representation of who you are, This may sound like a luxury. Certainly, some of the homes in this book represent a level of luxury that may not be accessible to most. The aforementioned opportunity, however, is not only for the wealithy. There is potential for design at every price point. There is potential for comfort and luxury in every space.

It seems like just about everyone I know has spent a lot more time at home over the last two years. Either that, or they have been away from home, especially if their primary residences were in large cifies. The pandemic has irrevocably changed our social and cultural landscape. It has caused us to consider our physical, financial, and emotional healih in more detail, and many of us are choosing differently than ever before. I think many of us have learned that we are more resilient and adaptable than we thought.

Others may have just gotten to know themselves and their true needs, likes, Oiners may have just goiten to know inemselv and aisisikes a litile better. We have changed the dynamics of how we live, Where we ive, and perhaps the style in which we ive. Indeed, we may have
never had time-or made time-to consider our homes so intentionally had never had time-or made time-to consider our homes so intentionally had
if not been for the pandemic. Something great always comes from change if it not been for the pandemic. Something great always comes from change if
you're the kind of person who might be open to it. We have created work-atyou're the kind of person who might be open to it. We have created work-at-
home spoces, made learning areas for our children, elevated our gardens, home spaces, made learning areas for our children, elevated our gardens,
adopted pets, and refined the way we spend time at home. I have been
fole fortunate to stay busy, yet I've had more time to spend with the people who are most important in my life. I've learned to be a better and more generous host. I've had the time and space for deep contemplation. Some of the most positive changes since the start of the pandemic seem to have manifested themselves in our homes. Our homes are more comfortable and we're using them more fully. Relationships with family and friends are more meaningful. I think our pets also couldn't be happier. Our homes are the settings for all these positive changes.

So why not put as much energy, intention, and love as possible into defining the way we live? Maybe you're handy and can tackle multiple do-it-yourself projects. There's certainly plenty of information online to learn just about anything if you're not naturally prealisposed towards ingenuity. Maybe you aren'tsure where to begin. There are wonderfulresources for vintage furniture and furnishings, contemporary manufacturers, auction sites, commercial sites, etc. Basically anything is possible to find online if you have a little time and energy. I would encourage you not to just look online, though. While I appreciate the convenience, I don't get a lot of satisfaction from pushing buttons on a keyboard to buy furniture.

When possible, I really like fo get out there and explore. Flea markets, vintage shops, estate sales, and private sellers all help me enjoy a sense of discovery while hunting for whatever I can find for clients and for my own home. I find that although online options offer immediate gratification, it's much more rewarding to take it slow and live through the process. You may find that you make better decisions this way, and the pieces you choose may have greater staying power. If you're hunting for something specific, be patient. You'll find what you need when you're meant to find it and hopefully at a great price.

Also, don't be afraid to blow a wad of cash on something you really love or feel strongly about. If you truly love it you'll have it for a long time, allowing vou to amorize the cost. Who knows, you may have even made a good investment that could beneit you down the line. Think of it as a process in collecting or curation. Find items that have meaning to you Maybe start collecting or curation. Find items that have meaning to you. Maybe start with one thing or a grouping that you really love and build an aesthetic around it.

This beautiful book is full of ideas and wisdom and design inspiration in a wonderful array of styles. As you design for yourself, I hope you're able to put as much love and intention into your surroundings as the designers whose projects are shownin the coming pages. If you indulge your interest, curiosity, and creativity, who knows where it might lead you! Happy nesting to you!









## about cliff

Interior design is not a singular expression for Cliff Fong bu rather a hybrid of many influences, experiences and ideas that he is able to seamlessly combine. Cliffs creative, multiffectec approach has garnered widespread recognition and afforded him such high-profile proiects cerrainly look impressive on a resume, Aliff says that what truly feeds his passion is the chance to create spaces that he finds interesting, with people he enjoys.

LA-based, Cliff has been a creative force for most of his life Born in New York, Cliff spent his reenage years traveling around Europe before studying att history at Califormia Sate University, Los Angeles.

After he began focusing on interior design full time, Clifflaunched Mart Blacke Inc., through which he docs primarily residential work atong with the occastonal commercial profect. In bringing his own terior design vision to light, Cliff says that there are basic industr rules and formats that he usually doesn't deviate from, bur when it me to crucial details like choosing and installing furniture, ar rother design features, every job is different, and he always strive to have a satisfying and cooperative creative experience.
"There are some people who want their home to look like a luxury hotel or a swanky nightdub, which is grear, but that's not where my passion lies. I want to work with clients who see therr home a an extension of their personality and interests. That is what enables me to create something truly unique and special."


