

DESIGNERS

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Queen of Toile

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Dwayne Bergmann

Campaigning to
liberate the kitchen





Since interior designer Dwayne Bergmann was a boy growing up in Paris, Mo.—drawing, baking, riding horses, creating imaginary scenarios, and dressing up in costumes—fashion has always had a role in his being. In high school, he remembers laying out his outfits the night before only to have his brother steal his selections and put them on while Bergmann was in the shower. Bergmann says his combinations were much nicer—and they were ironed.

Growing up he wanted to be a professional equestrian. He competed nationally and won several championships. Part of the allure, besides the competition, was lifestyle. He says, “The equestrian lifestyle opened my eyes to a whole new world, and I was drawn to ‘fancy’ houses, fashion, and design in general.”

Whether a blatant reference or inferred, fashion has become part of the Fort Myers, Florida-based Bergmann’s brand, and he believes everything should be tailored from his personal uniform—classic blue blazer, dark indigo jeans, to crisp button downs, specifically white, blue, pink and purple—which changes per season to the high-end custom interiors, cabinetry and furnishings he creates. “Most of us are not fortunate enough to look our best off-the-rack,” he says. “But, with just a little tuck here, a stitch there, and a hem we can look totally couture!”

Bergmann refuses to compromise style to accommodate function and is passionate about liberating the kitchen. In Florida,

especially with the abundance of open floor plans, Bergmann furnishes and dresses each kitchen so that it can be its own masterpiece inside of the larger environment. By treating cabinetry faces as canvases for art, he creates geometric designs and contoured patterns that invite the reflection of light and can make silhouettes more masculine or feminine.

“My quest to redefine these utilitarian spaces by seamlessly integrating them into the designed home is what fueled my desire to develop my own custom cabinetry line,” says the kitchen revolutionary. “I believe you can have it all.”

Whatever he is dreaming up, fashion flows freely into his mind and shapes what he creates. He’s currently studying the lines and cuts from fashion of the 20’s, 30’s and 40’s, as well as Tom Ford and Armani. “The cut of a gown or a suit can spark an entire creative process,” says Bergmann as he continues to work on his own namesake collection of furniture and custom cabinetry, and solidify plans to open his second showroom in Naples later this fall. —J.D.

Opposite: Fluted kitchen islands and a wall of hammered brass cabinetry in polished gold lend a contrast metals vibe; Bergmann’s basic wardrobe calls for classic combinations typically with a fun pop in shirts, shoes or scarves. This page, left to right: A modest-sized galley kitchen is treated to a big impact entrance; a hand-painted refrigerator is a whimsical compliment to glamorous Hollywood Regency-style cabinetry designed by Bergmann; the spacing and direction of fluting can be customized. **Photos:** interior shots: Werner Straube; portrait: Brian Tietz.