

Charlotte

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HOME

DESIGN & DECOR





Hearst Tower lobby designed by Atlanta-based architecture firm Smallwood, Reynolds, Stewart, Stewart; Photo courtesy of Paul Warchol Photography Inc.

ART DECO GRANDEUR

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A closer look at the rich history and iconic architecture that make Art Deco one of the most enduring international design styles.

With its gleaming lacquered surfaces, geometric shapes, and glamorous black-and white color palette, Art Deco is one of the most iconic design movements of the 20th century.

Born in the Roaring 20s, when silent films became talkies, dance clubs were in vogue, and women gained the right to vote, Art Deco conveyed strength and industry. It influenced the architecture, interior design, fashion, graphic arts and films of the era, and continues to inspire designers and artists today.

The style first received global attention at the 1925 World's Fair held in Paris, the Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes, from which its name was coined.

Though Art Deco reflected modern technology, it was partially inspired by artifacts discovered in 1922 in King Tut's tomb, and by the repeating designs and vivid colors common in Egyptian artwork.

The style was a reaction to the whimsical floral motifs of the Art Nouveau movement and the forced austerity imposed by World War I. The trapezoidal, zigzagged, and triangular shapes, chevron patterns, stepped forms, sweeping curves, and sunburst motifs are all characteristic of the style. As well, modern materials were essential to the movement and included jade, linoleum, steel,



Clockwise from top left:

Pierre Frey "Eventail" Velvet Fabric / trade only / www.pierrefrey.com

Timothy Oulton "Rex" 27 cm Diamond Chandelier / \$475 / www.timothyoulton.com

Made Goods "Callum" Nesting Tables / \$1,850 / www.madegoods.com

Kelly Wearstler "Hillcrest" Tiles for Ann Sacks / starts at \$55.13 per sq. ft. / www.annsacks.com

"Euclid" Mosaic Tiles by Sarah Baldwin Designs for New Ravenna / price upon request / www.renaissancetileandbath.com

Jonathan Adler "Vertigo Swivel Chair" / \$1,950 / www.jonathanadler.com

Jayson Home Coffered Inlay Trays / \$175 - \$295 / www.jaysonhome.com

High Fashion Home "Moon" Bench / \$349 / www.highfashionhome.com

style | art deco

plastics, chrome, and Bakelite. Metal was used to represent the industrial strength of the machine age and fabrics were exotic and included sharkskin and zebra. Its appeal lasted until the 1940s, when it was seen as too ostentatious for wartime.

Art Deco projects produced dynamic collaborations between architects, painters, sculptors, and designers, which resulted in environments like Florida's Old Miami Beach and the skyline of New York City.

The American Radiator Building, built in 1924, was the first Art Deco skyscraper in the United States, with others including the Chrysler Building, Empire State Building, Rockefeller Center, and Radio City Music Hall. These buildings are richly embellished with hard-edged, low-relief designs, geometric shapes including chevrons and zigzags, and stylized floral and sunrise patterns.

North Carolina's Art Deco lovers can enjoy its beauty much closer to home. Charlotte's Hearst Tower and the Durham Life Building in Raleigh are beautiful examples of the style and worth a visit.

Built in 2002, the 47-story Hearst Tower, with its strong bands of glass and solid vertical stone, is a contemporary translation of the Art Deco aesthetic. The building's College Street lobby entrance features brass railings, which were original metalwork from Parisian department store Le Bon Marché, and handsome black Chinese granite that makes a statement on the building's exterior, lobby floors, and elevator cabs.

Designed in the late 1930s and built in early 1940, Raleigh's 15-story limestone-clad Durham Life Building is topped by parapets, which crown the setbacks of its upper floors. The style is continued in the building's three-story entryway and lobby, which feature polished pink marble, terrazzo flooring, glistening brass fixtures, and mirrors.

Although the movement was short-lived, the striking and dramatic ornamentation of the style period has experienced a revival in today's home furnishings that extend into textiles, case goods, décor and other decorative arts. To incorporate the Art Deco aesthetic into your home, stick to a few small pieces – a cocktail table, sunburst mirror, or tray. Like jewelry for your room, these pieces are the easiest way to add a hint of glamour. ♦

Clockwise from top left:

Nest Fragrances "Corsica" Reed Diffuser / \$75 / www.net-a-porter.com

Fabric and wallcovering from the Metropolis collection from Catherine Martin by Mokum / trade only / www.mokumtextiles.com

Global Views "Sunburst" Floor Screen / \$6,247.50 / www.shopcandelabra.com Arteriors "Ellory" Sconce / \$900 / www.arteriorshome.com

Made Goods "Lisa" Greyhound Statuettes / set of two \$350 / www.madegoods.com

A. Rudin "748" Chair / trade only / www.arudin.com

