

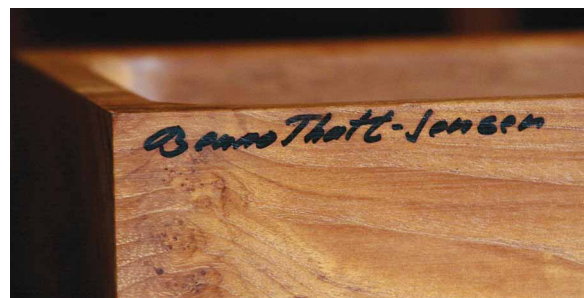
# ranchdressing

House parts ...  
midcentury collectibles ...  
the inside scoop on  
what's what  
and where to get it

**q:** Can you help me identify a Danish modern desk that I purchased used a few years back? It is beautifully made and I only see a handwritten name on the back of one of the small drawers, 'Benno Thatt Jensen,' which seems to be a common name in Denmark; two smaller drawers have numbers only. The woodworking on this piece is



Debra Montalbano's desk



amazing, and I am curious if it was handmade by someone who only made this one—or perhaps this was from a plan for the home enthusiast? Any knowledge you can pass along to me would be greatly appreciated.

**Debra Montalbano**

**a:** Lorin Hesse, of [Danskmoderne.com](#), who is fluent in Danish and buys her vintage pieces in Denmark, has the scoop: "Debra's desk is a '60s to early-'70s Danish design by the Dyrlund furniture company. According to Christian Jørgensen at Dyrlund, hers is a model that has been out of production for a very long time. Christian asked the old-timers at the still thriving furniture company, but no one can remember the



Jane Connor's desk

designer, and the records have unfortunately long since been lost.

"The company, which began in 1960, is known more for exceptionally high quality craftsmanship than for iconic designs. A sideboard and a china cabinet (models 7865 and 7896) that match Debra's desk are still in production today ([dyrlund.com/?page\\_id=904](#)). The handwritten name on the back of the drawer is most likely the craftsman who finished the piece in the factory.

"I confess, when I looked at her photos, I could not remember ever having seen such a desk for sale anywhere in Denmark, or for that matter, in America. And research through my Danish furniture index was

unfruitful. It did, however, spark a memory of a desk I saw while delivering items to one of my favorite clients here in Boston. I emailed collector Jane Connor and asked her to send me a photo of her desk. Eureka! It was the very same one. So, we can thank Jane for steering us in the right direction!"

**q:** My wife and I have toyed over the years with painting one or more rooms in our house in pure white, top-to-bottom. We love this look, so often associated with MCM, but have been afraid to give it a try. Until now, we've merely painted baseboards, door/window trim and ceilings in white. For baseboards/trim, we have used Benjamin Moore CC40, also known as Cloud White; for ceilings, we have used standard ceiling white paint.

My question is, if we opt for painting our walls white as well, what specific white colour do you recommend? Should it be the same white for walls, baseboards/trim and ceilings? Or different for each? Stick with semi-gloss for baseboards/trim and matte or eggshell for walls? How is this look best done?

**Robert MacNeil**  
Ottawa, Ontario

**a:** Portland, Ore., interior designer Erin Marshall ([kismet-design.com](#)) replies: "When you find yourself pining for the clean, simple elegance of all-white rooms, consider these factors. Lifestyle: Do you have pets or kids? Cats and dogs tend to rub up against walls and moldings so their body oils and fur can make for a lot of extra work. If your kids are small, little handprints, not to mention toys with wheels that scuff, bang and chip paint can make for a less than easy-care existence.

"If all those warnings leave you undeterred or you are past worrying about such things, other considerations should be the orientation of your rooms—are they south facing? East facing? How big are your windows? White



A Wexler home in Palm Springs with a white-on-white palette

rooms shift color hugely, depending on the kind of light that suffuses a room. If your room receives soft morning light or bright sunlight, certain lamp-lit rooms can feel pink, gray, blue or yellow depending on surrounding elements. White is highly reflective, so the carpet or flooring, even the colors outside will inform your color perception.

"Next consideration, wall and trim condition: Are they smooth? Textured? Dented or scarred? That will drive sheen choices. The more distressed the surface is, the flatter one should go. Typically I like semi-gloss woodwork, flat or eggshell walls and flat ceilings, depending on condition. But to add a glow to the walls, consider a slightly higher sheen like semi-gloss and then use a low-luster, washable trim instead.

"If you are doing white trim, walls and ceilings, I think it is a good idea to mix your whites. Cool white walls like Benjamin Moore's Affinity Frostine AF-5 with a warm white trim in Mascarpone AF-20 is nice. Paint the ceiling the same as the walls, as the two planes will make the paint read differently anyway. I like the Affinity line because it is tough, washable and easily retouched. The application takes a bit of getting used to, though, as it dries fast and it tends to be a heavy paint, so watch the drips.

"For a true painterly experience, try the Donald Kaufman line ([donaldkaufmancolor.com](#)), a small proprietary palette developed by the colorist for the Getty Center and other public works. Kaufman is a fine artist who mixes custom colors so that the result feels very much more alive with depth and subtle shifts than standard paints that are mixed with the same four dyes no matter what. Those paints run quite a bit more per gallon but the results can be spectacular!"

**q:** In the 'Mission Accomplished' article from your Spring 2011 issue, there is a picture of the homeowners' den.