



**NATE BERKUS**

# **HOMIE RULES**

*Transform the Place You Live  
Into a Place You'll Love*





## introduction

“making your home your greatest pleasure is a luxury we all need to indulge”

**There's no greater pleasure than to love the way you live.** A home should be a reflection of your lifestyle and tell the story of the people who reside there over the years. As our lives evolve, so should our interiors. Like getting a new haircut, waking up your wardrobe, or working up to a new workout routine, redecorating is about making a change. Even the smallest update or organization idea can result in R&R (renewal and rejuvenation). It should be your pleasure to walk through the front door each evening—home to a house filled with meaning and memories. The idea of living well has always been important to me. It's the best investment you can make in your well-being. Oprah always says your home is the place to invest your money and energy. Your home is where you live, not just physically but spiritually and emotionally as well.

**While I haven't had formal training in the field,** my passion for travel, exploring cultural arts, and furniture design—along with an interior-decorating mom—has made design an integral part of my life. In September 2002, I found myself in the very bright spotlight of *The Oprah Winfrey Show*. Oprah gave me the opportunity to share my decorating ideas with you and show how they could improve the way you live. Through my work on television and a few makeovers later, I began to see how my ideas and enthusiasm made people want to make changes both small and large—the kind that made them feel better about their homes and themselves.

**I'm overwhelmed and moved** by the thousands of letters filled with your stories and the inspiration you found after one of my decorating experiments caught your eye. I'm able to connect on a personal level with my firm's clients, so I wondered how I could better connect with you, the viewers and audience members out there, who I may never have the chance to meet. (Who knows, maybe your makeover moment is next?) Your inquiries and interest made me want to answer all of your questions and help decorate all of your homes. You made me want to give back. I hope you will consider this book the biggest thank you note I've ever written.

**I started to think about what I have to share** with you and realized I actually live by a fairly firm set of design ideals. With practice, experience, and a few mistakes, I've developed guidelines that I call *Home Rules*. This isn't math; there's no right answer for every space

but rather a mix of what I've learned works best. At the end of the day a room should be a beautiful reflection of who you are and what you love. I'll just give you a frame to work within, for every decorating challenge and room in the house.

**Think of this book as an appointment with me.** Let's experiment together, hit the flea market, head to the paint store, and even clean house with some organization revelations. Each chapter will help you decide the way you want your home to look and feel, one room at a time. I'll teach you how to ask yourself the important questions that get a project started and how to take the first steps. We'll go behind the scenes to some of my favorite makeovers (wish there was room for all of them) and share before-and-after secrets, sources, and shops. I'll even take you home with me. Along the way I'll give you design ideas and talk about how to twist a few of the rules to make them your own.

**Take in your surroundings,** respect where you've been, and get excited about where we can go. Remember, it's your home, and you have to decide what you can live with, live without, and really love having around. So put the coffee on—I'm coming over for a visit. I hope you'll be at home.

Live well,  
**nb**



Turning a closet full of opportunity into a colorful collaboration

## o is for organize



After I'd done several makeovers on the show, Oprah asked me to step into her closet. Actually, it was three separate rooms of racks that had more than a few hang-ups. She asked me to think about a way to organize her wardrobe that would make it easier for her to get ready for the show each day.

**THE CHALLENGE** Organize on a grand scale | Create a space for everything | Brighten the morning routine | Make it easier to find exactly the right outfit

Many questions came up along the way—some you can ask yourself if you're thinking of customizing or organizing your closet: How would the design make it easy to see every selection? Would there be space for packing? Where would accessories go? What overall design would represent beauty, quality, and functionality—and be fun to use every morning?

We decided to organize the closet by color and occasion (work, formal, etc.) so that all the contents could be seen at a glance. I wanted Oprah to feel as if she were shopping in her own boutique every day, so we created a large island in the center of the room to house all of her shoes and boots on open shelves. We kept the room's original leather floor and used a millwork style based on old English paneling that Oprah had chosen. The finish on the wood was kept light so that the clothes could take center stage.

Oprah's reaction? She turned to the camera and said, "America, this is a great way to live!"

**SHELF LIFE** | Glass-front cabinetry allows easy viewing while protecting bags and hats from dust at the same time (opposite). Open shelving makes for quick access, and closed drawers are divided to contain accessories organized by category.

MAKEOVER  
MAGIC

