



Ample and comfortable seating in earth-tone linens with cashmere pillows and throws creates a serene setting, while sheer curtains keep it light and easy. Fabrics from Clarence House, Colefax and Fowler, Classic Cloth, Henry Calvin, and Loro Piana. The coffee table is an antique plank top on a contemporary metal base, the ottoman is a 1970s Milo Baughman design, and the rug is a 1940s composition of vintage kilims. Digital print behind sofa is by Edward Burtynsky.





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**MAKEOVERS**

**FROM  
SPEC  
HOUSE  
TO  
SHOW  
HOUSE**

Turning empty  
rooms into  
inviting rooms

*Interviews by*  
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*Photographs by*  
JULIAN WASS







THIS PAGE: Stilin likes objects that are elemental and natural, like these antique wooden bowls and the horn magnifying glass: "They add history to a room, but can also be functional. I look at them and they make me feel good." OPPOSITE: A family room cries out for a TV, but Stilin didn't want one above the mantel. Instead he made a simple but dramatic piece of art: He covered a board with Madagascar cloth and attached 1950s French sconces and a Mark Wilson landscape.



## DESIGNER **Robert Stilin**

*For this family room open to a large kitchen, what were your guiding principles?*

My rooms are all about function, comfort, and living your life. I don't do show houses to create big drama, and my work isn't fashion. I want people to say, 'I want to live in it,' and 10 years from now still love it.

*Not a bad thing, given the state of the economy.*

This room is totally comfortable for one person alone reading or for eight people talking and laughing, with children running in and out. People want to be in a circle so they can look at each other and talk to each other and make a connection.

*Sometimes a mix of styles looks confused, but here you've achieved a good, decisive mix of traditional and modern.*

I like traditional pushed a little modern. When you have a new house, as this was, an effective way to create comfort is to put a little history into the room. Adding layers of age creates warmth and patina. The coffee table has a new metal base, but the wood is 100 years old. I don't want everything new, new, new.

*You laid a great foundation with strong furniture silhouettes and soothing neutrals. Then what?*

And then the art and objects can take it in any direction—they can totally change a room. And you don't have to spend tons of money. You can remix what you already have from one room to another.

"For me, it's really about comfort. I want all the fabrics and textures to be soft, like linen and cashmere. I always run a fabric across my face to see how it feels. If you're going to take a nap on the sofa, you want it to feel good."

ROBERT STILIN