

Designers banish ceiling fans with abandon, but we can't imagine not having one whirring above our bed in August. Are they ever defensible in the design world?

Spin Zone

By Lisa Martin

The purported bane of designers everywhere, ceiling fans nonetheless remain a must-have for many homeowners. Generally speaking, design gurus curse them for marring the lines of sophisticated, clean and elegant interiors. But a particular target of their collective ire is the '80s-era eyesore sporting shiny brass hardware, faux wood blades and a fussy light kit. Don't even get them started on clanking pull cords. Wondering whether the humble and ubiquitous fixture ever finds allies within the design community, we asked a trio of local luminaries for their spin on the great ceiling fan debate.

Lisa Martin has written about interiors and the arts for national and local publications for two decades.



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Spare the rod

Southlake-based design consultant Julie Walsh estimates that as many as 80 percent of her clients wind up with ceiling fans, so she long ago made peace with choosing the most attractive options.

"Four blades? No," Walsh says. "But you can now find ceiling fans with drum shades that don't look bad — as well as fans where the blades go sideways instead of parallel to the

ceiling. Those look okay, too."

She used the latter type in a project for her son, who is a pilot. "It looks like an airplane propeller," Walsh explains, adding that she does not have a ceiling fan in her own bedroom. "I'm very allergy prone, and ceiling fans stir up the dust. If I sleep with a ceiling fan, I wake up the next morning with itchy eyes."

For her clientele, Walsh draws the line at using overhead fans in rooms with towering ceilings; "I really prefer fans close to the ceiling, and those long



downrods are pretty awful. The fans can get wobbly when they run at higher speeds. I can usually make the case to my clients that a short rod is the way to go."

Because so many clients do opt for ceiling fans, Walsh appreciates the ever-growing assortment of design options on the market. "Everybody is starting to do things more contemporary and clean lined," she says. Among her favorite makers are The Modern Fan Co., Fanimation and Minka-Aire. 🇺🇸

Julie Walsh

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To combat steam from the shower, Julie Walsh of Southlake-based Sterling Renovations installed a sleek, three-blade fan in a master bathroom. "No one likes feeling hot and sweaty when they're putting on makeup," Walsh says.

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