

LUXURY HOME

quarterly

FRESH & CLEAN
Bright, crisp designs for spring

HOME OFFICES THAT WORK:
Craig Steely, Shane Inman & *Esquire*

+ A PEEK INSIDE *John Finton's*
Contemporary Bel Air Masterpiece

WHITE COLLAR

Shane Inman's monochromatic home office doubles as an effective promotional tool

As a child, Shane Inman sketched in his notepad and built homes out of Legos. He eventually took those talents to Michigan State University to study interior design. In 2006, Inman opened his own shop, The Inman Company, based in Traverse City, Michigan, where Inman practices interior and exterior design in both Michigan and Chicago. When designing his own home office, Inman was careful to communicate the right message to potential clients.

LHQ: How has designing your own home office shaped or changed your design perspective?

Shane Inman: The biggest goal for my home office when I first started my company was to save money. I started my business on sweat equity alone, and the thought of having an office outside of my home was not an option. Now, my vision of a home office has changed significantly as my work space has become an extension of my personal space and they both flow together seamlessly. After almost five years, I have been fortunate enough to relocate my home office to a larger and more sophisticated space.

Should the space change often?

With everything in life, flexibility and versatility are a must. Even our clients are demanding this in the designs they require. At our office, we incorporated these ideas, too, especially in our conference room. Our 10-foot-long conference table has only 6 chairs so we are able to use it as a work surface to organize design projects throughout the week. Should the table be needed for a meeting, we just add more matching chairs from the adjacent resource room.

What challenges and solutions have you discovered to creating a good office space?

A good office is one that allows you to work and get things done while being profitable. A great office is one that is meticulously organized, motivates and inspires while allowing you to maximize profits and reduce losses by working smarter—not harder.

What did you build into your own office?

There were two definite must-haves for our new office space. One was a conference room that had



a professional image (cork boards and ledges for displaying samples, white boards for sketching and writing, and a real conference table) and for it to be large enough to accommodate our clients and their families. The second was a resource library that could house the thousands of product samples and literature that we need in order to specify goods and materials for both our commercial and residential projects.

Please describe the space.

Our office is minimalist in design and monochromatic in style. 100 percent of the office is painted white with white floors, white furniture, white fabrics, white cabinets and cubbies, and white Carrara marbletops mixed with a lot of glass and chrome. We take the approach that less is definitely more. Not a lot of people have ever been in an all-white space so when they come into our office they get a striking impression of our design capabilities.

How does the design of a home office differ from a more traditional workspace?

Our office is on the main level and my residential space is on the lower level. From the main level you wouldn't know that anyone lives there, and

that is what I wanted to achieve. With a home office, I feel that the division of professional space and personal space is very important. In this particular case, a successful flow in your home office would be one with a clear division of professional and personal space.

Do home offices that host clients have other special requirements?

Every home office should have an area where you can offer your guest a beverage. You need a clean restroom and a large enough space where you can interchange thoughts and ideas effectively without feeling rushed or cramped. For me to close a deal, the client needs to be next to me feeling my excitement and energy about their project, and that happens best around a conference table. I see more start-ups and small businesses working themselves out of the back room and into open floor plans where open communication can inspire themselves as well as the client.

Any final thoughts?

A home office needs to represent the company you are relying on to pay your bills. As the age-old saying goes, first impressions are everything! —ZB