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Good design. Two simple words with a whole lot of meaning.

The definition of this word coupling seems to be the pursuit of our industry, as designers earnestly seek the ideal, whether creating spaces or product. Sometimes successfully. Sometimes not. In fact, good design is so critical to not only the professionals but to the consumers that it's not just the lexicon of the pros, but it has entered the vernacular of the all-important end user: your hotel guest. We all want good design. It's everywhere, and we want some of it. Flip on the TV and, in one night, you'll find everything from "good" home design to "good" restaurant design. I purposely place the quotation marks because, let's face it, what's put out there through mainstream media is not always good, desirable or achievable. But, that's where you—the design professional—comes in.

What does good design mean? There are multiple websites devoted to the topic, various renowned competitions judging it, an abundance of quotes relating to it—but, at the end of the day, some would argue that good design is somewhat subjective. While likes, dislikes and tastes can vary from one person to another—Modern or traditional? Color or neutral? Desk or no desk? Functional or social?—and the preferences of the one creating the space can often inform the outcome, most would agree there are basic universal truths and principles to consider when designing "good." Beyond being innovative, sensible, useful, aesthetically pleasing, straightforward, discreet, durable, detailed, relevant and, nowadays, earth-friendly—the words that come to mind when I try to define good design—good design is good business. And common sense. As Dr. Ralf Speth, the CEO of automotive giant Jaguar, noted, "If you think good design is expensive, you should look at the cost of bad design."

Why all of this talk about good design? This is our annual "people issue" and in it, we've interviewed 12 design professionals—from brand executives to artists to purchasing folks—about their career choices, inspiration, current and dream projects and passions, and decided to tie their diverse backgrounds and portfolios together by asking a common question: What is good design? And, they each, from their own perspective, provided a response (see profiles starting with our cover subject on page 18, Tristan Auer). Whether basic or elaborate in answer, these drivers of design all weighed in on what good design means to them.

We want to know what it means to you, too. Let us know in 140 characters or fewer by Tweeting out your definition of good design. Make sure to tag us—@HBDChristina—and use #gooddesign.

With all of this talk about good design, why stop there? Let's take it up a notch and go for greatness. I'm not sure who said it, but it's a mantra I've often heard repeated and it's pretty clear: "Good design is obvious. Great design is transparent."