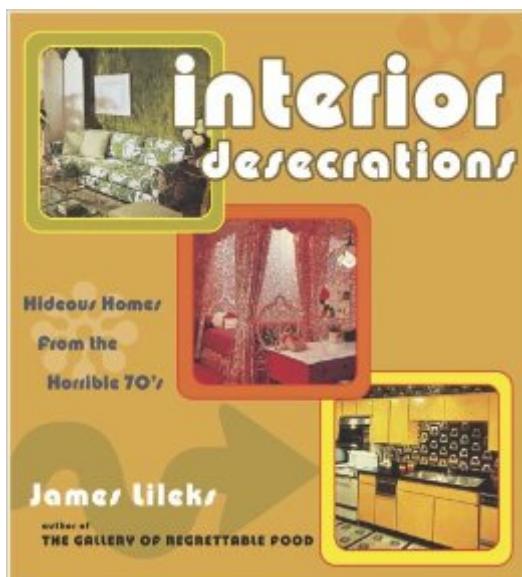


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# Interior Desecrations: Hideous Homes From The Horrible '70s



## Synopsis

Warning! This book is not to be used in any way, shape, or form as a design manual. Rather, like the documentary about youth crime "Scared Straight," it is meant as a caution of sorts, a warning against any lingering nostalgia we may have for the 1970s, a breathtakingly ugly period when even the rats parted their hair down the middle. (Please note that the author and publisher are not responsible for the results of viewing these pictures.) James Lileks came of age in the 1970s, and for him there was no crueler thing you could inflict upon a person. The music: either sluggish metal, cracker-boogie, or wimpy ballads. Television: camp without the pleasure of knowing it's camp. Politics: the sweaty perfidy of Nixon, the damp uselessness of Ford, the sanctimonious impotence of Carter. The world: nasty. Hair: unspeakable. Architecture: metal-shingled mansard roofs on franchise chicken shops. No oil. No fun. Syphilis and Fonzie. *Interior Desecrations* is the author's revenge on the decade. Using an ungodly collection of the worst of 1970s interior design magazines, books, and pamphlets, he proves without a shadow of a doubt that the '70s were a hideously grim period. This is what happens when Dad drinks, Mom floats in a Valium haze, the kids slump down in the den with a bong, and the decorator is left to run amok. It seemed so normal at the time. But this book should cure whatever lingering nostalgia we have. So adjust your sense of style, color, and taste. beware! You've been warned.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

If you thought home decor from the '70s was all about shag rugs and lava lamps, think again.

James Lileks, who brought readers a look at tasteless foods from the 1940s through the 1960s in "Gallery of Regrettable Foods," now turns his critical eye to outrageous interior decorating schemes of the 1970s. This "labor of hate" will have you simultaneously laughing and wincing as Lileks introduces you to atrocities designed by decorators run amok and purchased by people who were seemingly in a drug-induced haze at the time. These decorating no-nos were gleaned from interior design magazines, books, and pamphlets. They depict entryways, living rooms, bathrooms, kitchens, dining rooms, and family rooms. Within the covers of "Interior Desecrations" are infectious pattern viruses that spread like a malignancy from couch to rug to drapes to wall covering. There are bedrooms that defy a good night's sleep and kitchens that cause indigestion. There are photos of vertigo-inducing reflective wallpaper on walls and ceilings. There is a parade of startling psychedelic patterns, nauseating colors that run the gamut from blinding to "downer browner," bad art, and unidentifiable coffee table sculpture for you to ponder. I found a birth-canal shaped bathroom of particularly horrifying interest. As incredible as the photos are, their impact is enhanced with sharp-witted and hilarious commentary. Lileks throws in such comments as "The Invisible Man would clash with this sofa" and "Visual equivalent of granulated glass in your eyes." He labels especially hideous decor with such designations as "the Taj Mahell" and "Funhouse dining room." Baby boomers beware. If anything will cure you of nostalgia for what you thought of as the hip 1970s, this book will. But buy it anyway - it's wickedly funny. Eileen Rieback

A few years ago, when I was dating my now husband, I spotted Mr. Lilek's Interior Desecrations web site. I sent the URL to my beloved, and we spent a long evening on the phone, howling with laughter and spluttering with tears in our eyes and stomachs hurting from the funny. And then the site disappeared, and a book was promised. Now the book is here, and oh it is wonderful. The husband and I spent a couple of hours curled up on the couch together, sputtering and laughing at horrifying bedrooms, astoundingly bad bathrooms, and terrifying entry ways. Just like the Gallery of Regrettable Food, you really have to see some of these things to truly believe how /bad/ they are. And just when you think you've covered how bad it is, Mr. Lileks has a snappy comment that puts the awfulness into even sharper (and funnier) relief. Exceedingly witty writing as always from this author. My only complaints are that a couple of my favourite jokes from the web site seem to have disappeared, and that there are some fairly obvious typographical errors. Nothing that really takes from the readability though.

Ah, we teens thought we were so cool in the '70's. That new TV show about the '50's, "Happy

Days"?? Hilarious! Those clothes, that music, those decorating styles! No one, we were sure, would EVER make fun of the '70's.... no, we were too "with it," too "where it's at." Fast forward thirty years, behold the excruciating microscopy that is Interior Desecrations, and be ashamed. Be very ashamed. Did we ever really beg our parents to buy plastic chairs and shag carpet for the "rumpus room"? Did we ever really think no one could possibly get tired of harvest gold, avocado green, and orange-red as decorating colors? We did. And James Lileks is more than happy to remind us. This sequel to his hilarious "The Gallery of Regrettable Food" had me laughing out loud yet glad no one was around to see me flinch as I saw interior desecrations that our family actually had in our home in the '70's. While there is not as much text to read as in TGORF, there is still plenty to digest. Wait, don't use the word "digest" when you see some of these nausea-inducing photos. I do think there could have been a bit more homage paid to shag carpet, homemade macrame plant hangers, and space age design, but hey, you can't have it all. The pop culture references are also priceless -- take it from someone who ate Quisp cereal every morning and had a crush on Bobby Sherman. If you lived through, ignored, loved, hated, or merely tolerated the '70's, you have to have this book. If only to remind yourself that while beauty may be temporary and fleeting, UGLY is forever.

When I was growing up in the '70's my parents eagerly awaited the annual "100 ideas for under \$100" issue of Better Homes and Gardens. My brother and sister and I knew that this meant a summer of "projects" to "update" our 125 year old home. This book brought back memories of orange plastic contact paper on the kitchen cabinets, patchwork carpet samples on the stairwell wall, macrame plant hangers...(shudder.) The house burned down not long after we moved out. I think it was suicide. I'm glad James Lileks has documented such crimes against taste in the current climate of 70's retro craze.

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