



What is Carolina Modern?

By Lee Tripi

Candidly stated, it's a style that is conceived from an awareness of how we want to live. Carolinians that inhabit it's largest cities, Charlotte, Raleigh, Greenville, SC and Charleston are now a 50/50 mix of natives and transplants. What has emerged from this migration is a fusion of classic modern standards and organic elements utilizing materials in their natural and intended state, like wood, metal, glass, tile, and stone. Even better, these natural materials discovered locally like native cypress wood and glass and metal works by Carolina artisans is favored.

Carolina Modern style has an understated simplicity and purity that considers purpose and intention over adornment and decoration. The spirit of Carolina Modern is an approach at living a more relaxed, stressless, comfortable existence. It's an amalgamation of sensual elements that are both new and old. A blending of classic modern icons and textural, "character" components that don't imitate or ever become cliché'. This is a thoughtful style, and when composed well, is timeless and rooted in substance over trend, function over status. This genre promotes longevity and even though designed to have the flexibility to change form occasionally, will never be dated.

The important thing to remember is that Carolina Modern not just a style, but a way of living. Every attempt at bringing Carolina Modern into one's home or commercial space should be unique to its dwellers and not seek to duplicate something previously wrought. Everyone's experience is personal to them and the space should reflect one's true nature. Everything about our environment has an impact on how we feel. Take time to reflect on how you want to exist in that environment. Interior spaces can be calming or stressful, based on how it affects our

senses. Creating Carolina Modern is to be mindful of the composition of the areas elements. Restraint of quantity of “stuff” is encouraged. Bear in mind that harmony and balance are the underpinnings of Carolina Modern. No one element seeks to make a statement of “hey, look at me”.

Some basic tenets involve the use of color and texture. Specify neutral earthen hues that juxtapose smartly with a small amount of primary color. Large wall areas painted white, and shades of gray should recede and act as a backdrop to original art.

Structurally, built-ins like cabinetry and shelving and fireplaces are void of embellishment. Flat slab doors and drawer fronts are preferred. Countertops and fixtures should have a plainness and solidity that blends well with nearby elements.

The qualities of Carolina Modern can be achieved by combining new, custom made, clean and current with old, re-purposed, patina and distressed is also an important practice in developing an appreciation for what is and what was.

A keen awareness of what makes us comfortable and content in a space and also **why** it does is integral to this way of living. If those questions can be answered with reflection and honesty, then you’ve achieved the Carolina Modern style.