



MY CRUSH ON NATE

A celebrity crush rarely leads to a chat on the phone, but this one did. A dream come true.

It all began innocently enough. A friend of mine asked “Who do you really admire that you would like to interview?” Now, I don’t know if I saw something recently that he had done, or whether my simmering crush on Nate Berkus was in the forefront of my mind, but I immediately blurted out “Nate Berkus.” Not Meryl Streep, Obama, Madonna, or any others on the “A” through “D” list celebrities or dignitaries. It was without a hesitation – Nate. “Why?” my friend asked. “Because I had a crush on him from when he first appeared on the Oprah show in 2001. He is absolutely dreamy. His smile is disarming, his eyes piercing yet friendly and I covet his thick curly hair.”

As an interior designer, I find Nate extremely gifted and his stylistic approach appeals to my design aesthetic. Nate’s charm is that he isn’t caught up on labels and is as happy with a flea market find for \$2 as he is with an expensive rug or piece of art. You can see in his design work that everything he uses means something. Nate has mastered the art of branding himself since he first started his interior design business at age 23. He came to national prominence in 2001 at the beginning of the home make-over craze on television when Oprah saw one of his interiors and suggested a segment on her show. His trajectory ever since has been nothing short of stellar. Nate has gone on to develop a line of home linens and accessories for Linens ‘n Things, his own line sold through the Home Shopping Network and a now a new line of bedding, linens, and home accessories for Target that launched October 21. More recently Nate has had his own show aptly titled *The Nate Berkus Show* which aired for 2 years. He was also a producer of last years Oscar-nominated *The Help*.

In the end, it all boiled down to my crush on my “Mc-Dreamy.” Ultimately this was a challenge to summon the courage to speak to him. How can I make this happen and speak to him? Through some connections from living in Los Angeles, I was able to email his publicist and request an interview. I felt like a

school kid asking someone out. “Will it be ok? Will he like me? Will he say yes?” His associates couldn’t have been nicer. When I contacted them I found out Nate is also writing a new book, *The Things That Matter*. Jeez Nate, is there nothing you don’t do? So with a little faith and perseverance I was able to speak with my man-crush on the phone.

Jonathan Hopp: Your book, *Home Rules*, was such an inspiration for me and many people. It was and still is a great guide on how to develop a style. *The Things That Matter* feels very different. Was your intent to speak to a larger issue than just design?

Nate Berkus: You know, it really was. When I wrote *Home Rules* the point really was meant to be sort of a design 101 to get people started to understand my perspective and what sort of ideas that I had around assembling a home. It was really meant to be a more technical “how to” and a guide for people who were starting out. What *The Things That Matter* is about is a new way of looking at design. It represents the journey that I’ve been on the last 6 years since I wrote *Home Rules*. And it was about, for me I think, the most successful interiors I’ve ever seen are the interiors that truly reflect the people that live inside them and it was a way of looking at design as a whole. All these people are trying to make spaces be beautiful, be functional and also be interesting. It was me saying to everyone, “Look, let’s everybody stop, take a beat, take a breather. Let me show you 12 interiors plus 3 of my own that represent the absolute best of what’s out there, not with regard to how expensive something is, not taking into account what we think we need to be living with. These are people who are very interesting people who I’ve picked from around the country who live in a space that reflects the stories that they want to share with the world. And so I photographed the spaces and interviewed the people and my main question was, “Why have you decided to surround yourselves with these things as opposed to other things and how did it make you feel to walk into your home every day?” All the interiors, in the book, reflect beautifully the individualism and the personalities of the people who occupy the spaces.

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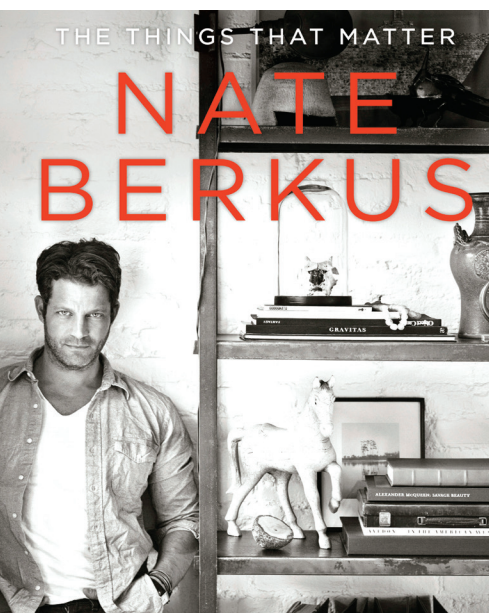


Photo Courtesy of Random House

Nate’s Chicago-based design firm, which he founded in 1995, continues to design interiors across the country and around the world. In addition, Nate’s line of home products continue to be sold through HSN and he debuted The Nate Berkus Collection at Target, a line of home goods and accessories sold exclusively at Target and Target.com in October 2012. Most recently, Nate has enjoyed a new role as executive producer on the Disney and DreamWorks film, *The Help*.

Based in Portland, Jonathan Hopp has worked as a residential interior designer for over 25 years designing homes all over the US. In 2011, he published *Interior Bliss: How To Decorate Like A Pro Without Breaking The Bank*. A regular personality on Portland’s *AM Northwest*, Jonathan shares tips and trick of the trade to create a home that you will be a delight for years. jonathanhopp.com
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