



a consideration of art and mechanics

BY LIAN NOVAK

CREATING A SPACE THAT IS UNIQUELY YOURS

“Does your home rise up to greet you?” As fans of Oprah would know, this question is at the heart of all her design shows. If the answer is no, it’s time to start looking at why and what you can do to make the answer “yes.”

Lois North, of Vancouver-based Lois Interiors, certainly has an idea or two of how to make one’s home more functional and inspiring. To start with, every space, just like every individual, is unique. Having an initial consultation with a certified interior decorator (CID), like North, will help determine one’s ultimate vision. Whether one is a first-time home buyer who is daunted by the task of furnishing and decorating a whole house, a homeowner who is downsizing and not sure what to bring, leave or

discard, or simply someone who is tired of coming home to a bland living space, Lois Interiors can help.

North, who started decorating at an early age — she recalls her father putting her in charge of designing her younger sisters’ room — feels that interior decorating is in her bones. She notes, “The key for me is to really feel into the space, the home, the people who will use the room[s]... The objective is to provide a plan that is uniquely theirs.”

TO BEGIN WITH...

To start the design process, North will discuss with her clients their “preferences, their personalities, the things that they cherish and want incorporated into the new look,” and from there sketch out a rough plan. More discussion,

feedback and modifications follow until the homeowner is entirely satisfied and comfortable. North likes to keep these consultations informal and encourages homeowners to participate in the process. At the same time, if the homeowner wants to take a more hands-off approach, that is fine as well. Either way, Lois Interiors strives to make re-designing one’s home — perhaps an intimidating task for some — as enjoyable and stress-free as possible.

IT’S ALL IN THE DETAILS...

Having the right furniture in the right places is the backbone of a successful room. It is at this point that moving, replacing or eliminating furniture and items will be discussed, along with what specific, favourite pieces, such as a



✎ family heirloom, one may want to highlight.

North believes in spending more on furniture — focusing on good quality, durability and neutral colours. These are the investment pieces that will last a long time, while the less expensive pieces, such as pillows, throws and artwork, can be replaced more frequently to keep one's space looking bright and stylish. Another important factor to remember, she notes, is that “sometimes too many furnishings simply take away from the potential of the room... Having an independent eye, a professional, can help with identifying which pieces to keep and which are no longer adding value to the room.”

Colour, proper lighting, flooring, window coverings and cabinetry are important (and sometimes forgotten) design aspects to consider. North believes that colour can make or break a design. Whether one wants bold or muted colour, Lois Interiors will help you pick out the right shade for every room.

“UNEXPECTED MOMENTS OF ‘BLING’”

Art and accessories, according to North, are the icing on the design cake. They are what can take your room from looking old, tired and dated, to new, fresh and current. However, just because one has a lot of artwork and accessories doesn't necessarily mean they are helping a space. Too many, too few, wrong colours or sizes — all can diminish the look of any well-designed home.

There are a few trends at the moment that North particularly likes. One, she says, is “adding unexpected moments of ‘bling,’ like rhinestones on the edge of an accent bowl or embedded into the fabric of a cushion.” She continues, “Sometimes an oversized vase in a ‘splashy’ new finish is the right touch to update and bring some interest into a room. Wallpaper is gaining popularity again and can add a bit of splash to a room in need of a ‘face lift.’ If wallpaper is a little too daring then maybe an interesting paint colour could work for the client.”

HOME STAGING

Lois Interiors not only helps with making your space uniquely yours, but with its polar opposite — home staging. The important difference, North notes, is that the purpose of home staging is to “sell your home; it is *not* about what you love and who you are but is about appealing directly to the market for your property.” She continues, “Staging is the removal of personal items to the point where the space still feels decorated and beautiful but has... enough items that the potential buyer can easily see themselves and their own furniture in the home... In home staging, the home is no longer about you — you're leaving.”

So whether one is leaving or staying, the thought of re-decorating, re-arranging or removing your furniture and possessions can seem daunting at first, but with the help of an experienced professional, it can be easy, enlightening and even fun. Your home should reflect not only who you are today, but who you aspire to be in the future. **LM**