

Eye on design: Loving the ‘Cinderella moment’

BY PAULA MCCOOEY, THE OTTAWA CITIZEN March 6, 2014

 <p>LINDA NOLAN Photography by: Julie Oliver</p>	 <p>Nolan's favourite project was the Habitat Gift Home where, among other things, she turned the sunroom into a music room. Photography by: Julie Oliver</p>	 <p>Nolan also designs model homes for Richcraft. This contemporary model in Kanata leans more toward her own personal style. Photography by: Miv Photography</p>	 <p>Nolan also designed the dining room in the Habitat for Humanity Gift Home. Photography by: Julie Oliver</p>
 <p>Richcraft Jade Riverside South 'Space designed by Linda Nolan'.</p>	 <p>Richcraft's Addison model, designed by Nolan, was an award winner.</p>	 <p>Richcraft Navan Road by Linda Nolan.</p>	 <p>And Nolan designed the living room in the Habitat for Humanity Gift Home. Photography by: Julie Oliver</p>

OTTAWA — Linda Nolan wears many hard hats.

As a designer, decorator, and project manager, she has been creating award-winning spaces since 1975. Nolan's experience stretches beyond her business, with many community contributions, including a four-year stint as an on-air design contributor with CJOH, past judge and chairwoman of the Housing Design Awards put on by the Greater Ottawa Home Builders' Association and past president of the Ottawa-Carleton Home Builders' Association (forerunner to the GOHBA).

She says her design philosophy is simply to guide the client, whether residential or commercial, to the best possible choices for their space while encouraging them to embrace new concepts.

Q: What is your style?

A: I actually like to work in several different genres that usually range from transitional eclecticism to clean and contemporary. That said, I am presently working on a more traditional space and find it very gratifying. Good design can be found in any style, but I personally lean toward a clean minimalism while still maintaining a warm, cosy feel. I usually choose a neutral colour palette and then layer on pops of colour and texture to create a visual flow and keep the eye interested.

Q: What is your focus?

A: Complete design and decorating services ranging from hourly design consultations to complete home renovations. I provide detailed plans and specifications and also manage the projects from beginning to end. I also do a large number of model homes every year and commercial spaces such as lobbies for condo projects.

Q: Your inspirations?

A: As a young designer I was influenced by Mies van der Rohe, Le Corbusier and Michael Graves. They were actually architects who also had tremendous influence in interior design. I generally look to architectural trends but also to other designers. These past several years (interior designer) Candice Olson has been a favourite and has really made me “up my game”.

Q: Why did you get into design?

A: I had always wanted to be an artist and actually lived in Greece for over a year to paint full time. I soon discovered the romantic ideal proved wanting and I did not like to be poor and hungry. In this field, I satisfy my creative talents but also my love of business.

Q: What's your favourite project and why does it work?

A: The Habitat for Humanity Gift Home was a very special project as it went to a good cause. It was also a rare and enjoyable opportunity to work beside other designers and architects. I was given the living room, dining room and sunroom, which I turned into a music room with a beautiful baby grand piano. Many local trades and suppliers donated their time to help me finish and furnish these spaces and it was a delight from beginning to end.

Q: What is your dream project?

A: Most designers would say an unlimited budget and a free hand. Personally, I love to do renovation projects and breathe new life into a tired, old space. I love the process of transformation. It still amazes and delights me to walk on site every day and see the changes that good design can

bring to an older home. It's basically a Cinderella moment. Renovations also make good economic sense.

Q: What trends do you see coming?

A: Trends come and go so I always try to balance staying current with being “timeless”. That said, colour will be making a comeback. We will be seeing a lot of pastels as the new neutrals and also pure, bold pops of colour. A growing furniture trend is the industrial chic, which combines natural and reclaimed wood furniture pieces with modern elements. Also big are vintage pieces, mismatched dining chairs, interesting accent pieces that reflect your own tastes.

Q: What's your best advice to homeowners when it comes to design?

A: Stay with a neutral palette for the large, expensive pieces and add your pops of colour with paint and accent pieces such as throw cushions, area carpets, drapes and pictures. It makes it easier and more cost effective to change as your tastes evolve over the years. This especially holds true if you are renovating. Stay away from strong colours for your ceramic tiles, cabinets and other “fixed” elements. You are likely to tire of them at some point and these are things that are very expensive to replace.

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