

Stylish Solutions

Leave space for who you will become

By Ann McDonald



Color has a huge impact on our lives. If the thought of a complete removal or overhaul is daunting, consider using simple, smaller elements. We see side table/stool, pillows, artwork, and even a bench used here. Practice in children's rooms or family rooms to ease yourself in. Photos provided

How are you, Lamorindans? My heart hopes well. This spring has been such a precious time in Lamorinda, all the rains bringing blooms before their time. I am loving it.

This is my last regular column for our beloved Lamorinda Weekly as my team and I are transitioning into other design work, most notably, diving deeper into manufacturing for our Bespoke Holiday Collection as well as expanding our library of online Design and Decorating classes. For more information, you may visit www.couturechateau.com.

For now, know I have reached out to a dear designer to who will take precious care of this column space in the months to come.

In transition, I felt like sharing the most important piece about designing your home spaces, from almost 30 years on the front lines of true luxury design.

If you were a longtime client, you and I would have shared many discussions around this topic. It feels so close to the heart, and yet many miss it. Because you are wise enough to live and thrive in Lamorinda, I'm certain this will resonate with you.

1) Your designed home should be a place you BECOME, not a place you store.

Let me explain by way of an exaggerated example:

One of the keys to successful luxury design is movement. To move, there must be

empty space. What is missing is as important as what is included. We are constantly designing with an eye to a future incarnation and legacy, of an individual, family, community or business.

Imagine if we did interior design for a business and installed antique dial up land line phones, instead of Wi-Fi. What sounds preposterous for a business is often de rigeur for home design.

Think about it: We reach the stage where we can afford to decorate or reconstruct, and the first thing we do is pull out our magazines of dream rooms past. Proverbially, we are installing landlines in the forms of sofas, pictures, accomplishments.

We pile up memories and have them framed. We line our halls and shelves with what happened, and rarely leave empty space for what will.

One of the exercises I recently had a client walk through, and then did myself (ouch!), was to go through their home and tag everything that was given, inherited or chosen for them by someone else. Then we tagged everything that was centered around a memory older than seven years.

Do you know what was left? Very little.

And here's the kicker: It's a stunning home! Spectacular inherited pieces, museum-worthy art, blue and white for miles, gorgeous framed art from children, photos from precious trips. However, very little was directly a result of the homeowner's true heart for what was ahead in their life.

Without even thinking, they had become a "luxury store house" with no room for movement.

A strong example to be sure, but one worth recalling when we put our homes together.

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