CANADA'S CHECK OUT OUR BIGGER & BETTER SIZE!

RITCHENS STATE OF THE PROPERTY OF THE PROPERTY

editor ERIN
MCLAUGHLIN'S
KITCHEN
REVEALED!

\$250 KITCHEN MAKEOVER

WARM UP WITH HOMEMADE SOUP



STYLE AT HOME Tell us about your involvement in Toronto's Interior Design Show (IDS) this year.

AMY LAU I'll be lecturing on my inspiration and approach to design. My motto is "curate to decorate." You want your home to be edited but to turn on the flair when you need it. So I'll break down what that really means in terms of colour and pattern, scale and shape, concealing and flaunting, place and purpose.

Have you attended the IDS in Toronto previously?

This will be my first time, but there's quite a list of designers involved! I love Canadian design in general -I was blown away the first time I visited the Design Exchange (DX) museum in downtown Toronto!

Do you have a favourite Canadian influence?

Emily Carr is an artist who has really inspired me. She was such a vital force in that she took off and spent most of her time in the wilderness. As a result, she really captured nature in a unique way. Emily Carr was so passionate and, in a sense, committed her life to Canadian culture, heritage and landscape. She saw beauty in it and embraced it.

How would you describe your design sensibility?

Individualistic, expressive and timeless. My interiors are also very edited, in that everything has a purpose. They're memorable but livable.

What is the key to achieving that sort of look?

Ensuring that my designs reflect my clients - who they are, their interests, desires and lifestyles. I look for heirlooms because it's important that the pieces I choose are timeless, so I often work with artisans to create unique bespoke pieces.

How do you choose pieces that make a statement but don't overshadow a room?

It's about balance. I'm now working on a project the biggest I've ever worked on - and the artists and artisans are doing incredible things: One is working on a 10-by-28-foot frieze, another is working on the biggest chandelier she'll ever create, and I have Vladimir Kagan commissioned to do a pair of sofas. Making them all work together is about ensuring that your pieces have a dialogue in balance and scale rather than outshining one another. It's a real fine line, and it's constant editing, editing, editing. Sometimes I think of it as being more of a design director.

What are your guidelines for commissioning work from artisans?

Whether you're commissioning an artist at a gallery or one from Etsy, think of timelessness instead of trends. Objects outlast us, so really consider what it is you're trying to create. It's important to work in collaboration with artisans - they need to have their own voice to make sure that their work is really a reflection of what

Amy referenced nature

throughout this home

surrounded by gardens,

polo fields and a beach.

inside design



they do best. Giving them a commission is also giving them the confidence that you believe in them. You want them to think out of the box but then really try and make something that shows they understand who you are.

What's your advice for buying designer antiques?

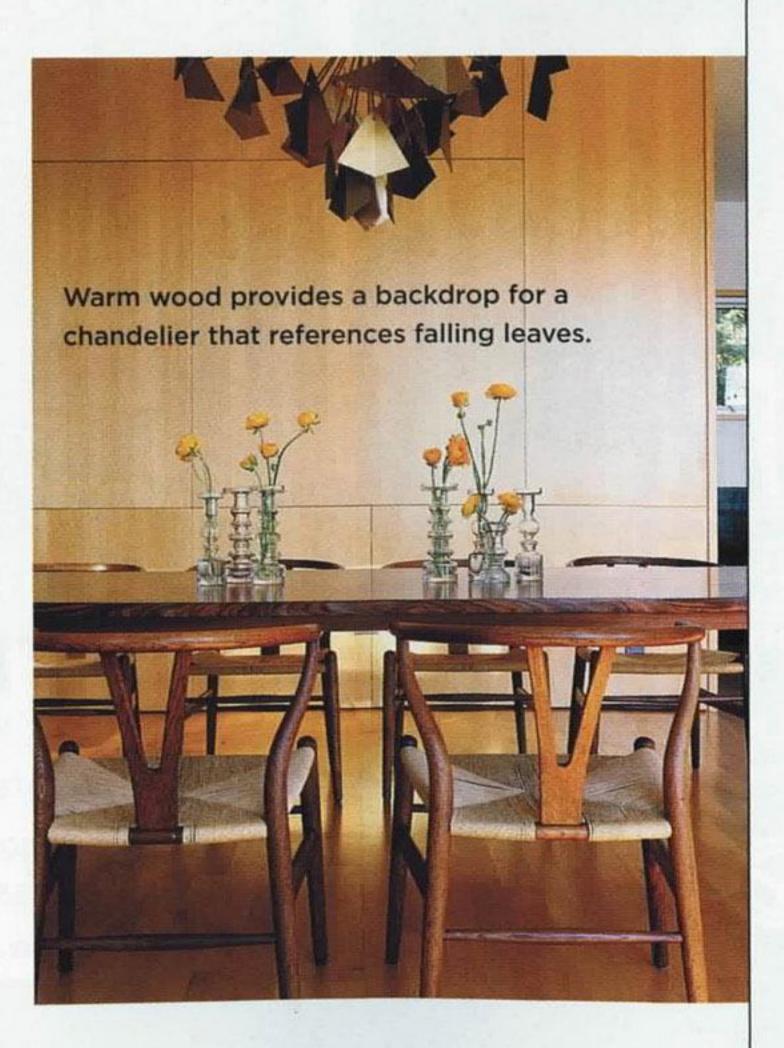
Be sure you're using a reputable dealer. If you're buying on 1stdibs, the dealer has already gone through a vetting process so, in a way, you get guaranteed authenticity. Beyond that, look for books that show an artist's oeuvre. If you're looking for something by George Nelson, for example, go back to the Herman Miller catalogue to compare and contrast with what you

This West Chelsea, New York, loft is an example of how Amy can go global without being

find. Also consider a piece's provenance - how many times was it reupholstered, and was it done correctly? Did upholsterers follow the original lines for welting and button details? Does it still look like the original?

Tell us about your new book, Expressive Modern.

It was fantastic because I collaborated with Linda O'Keeffe, the former creative director of Metropolitan Home magazine. She has a divine eye and she really gets it. It was her idea - which I love, love, love - to have my inspiration boards at the beginning of each chapter. It was nice just to sit down and see how my work has unfolded over the years.





piece of architecture

"One of my favourites is Antonio Gaudí's Casa Batlló - it's to die for! My life kind of transformed when I saw that one."

Amy's A-list

kitchen favourite

"I recently bought some Carrara marble kitchen gear in Italy, so I'm interested in unique salts and exotic peppers that I can hand-grind."



Amy Lau for Maya Romanoff Anniversary Collection Crystal WALLPAPER, through designers, Télio, telio.com.

next home project

"I just moved, and in one room, I'm dying to do the ceiling and the backs of my bookshelves in a wallpaper I designed. It's soft, so the wallpaper will just lend the ceiling more depth, giving it the look of a specialized finish."

first big design purchase

My first

upholstered chair - a Heywood-Wakefield piece. I bought it at a flea market. I don't think I even reupholstered it.



must-have accessory

"In the kitchen, a good soap pump! I can't stand to see houses that don't use a soap pump or a paper towel holder! I really like Simplehuman's accessories - the purity in the way in which they do things is beautiful."

too literal.







Want to achieve Amy's signature style?

Here are 15 Lauisms from her new book, Expressive Modern: The Interiors of Amy Lau (The Monacelli Press), to live and decorate by!

AMY'S

1. INTEREST-**ING SHAPES** AND FORMS

An aficionado of fine and decorative arts, Amy doesn't limit artwork to merely canvas on the walls. Art can be found in sculptural elements like the base of this reading lamp.

2. BOLD COLOUR

Amy's interiors never shy away from colour, but never feel too loud. "A room's colours should work with adjacent rooms, hallways and neighbouring spaces," says Amy.

3. UNIQUE ART "Art provides the hierarchy of colour and pattern in a room: A motif or graphic element from a painting can be blown out of scale to inspire pillows, rug design, even a mural."

4. UNCLUTTERED SURFACES "A love of order often naturally leads to design with straight lines and a simple palette."

5. WARM WOOD

"Nature is a friend and teacher who continues to inform my interior design work every day."

6. MID-CENTURY MODERN **FURNITURE** Amy is drawn to the style's clean, low lines, as shown in this room's T. H. Robsjohn-Gibbings chair and Paul McCobb dresser.

7. RESTORED AND REFURBISHED CLASSIC

PIECES Amy added "abstract upholstery" to update this classic Mid-Century Modern find.

8. CURVES AND EDGES

"Soft-angled, curvy furniture offsets rectilinear elements to give a room extra dimension."

9. PATTERN PLAY

"Colour and pattern instantly alter our perception of a room's size, shape and personality."

10. EDITED COLLECTIONS

"Displaying any collection, large or small, calls for editing and restraint."

11. ART GLASS Amy is drawn to the appeal of art glass - it introduces colour that can be amplified by natural light.

12. TEXTURED WALL TREATMENTS Amy often includes bespoke artwork like this ceramic pinchedpetal wall sculpture.

13. NATURAL LIGHT

"Calculating the amount of natural light that seeps into a room is important because light is the vehicle for emotion."

14. STATEMENT LIGHTING

Breathtaking light fixtures often take centre stage in Amy's rooms.

15. COLOUR BLOCKING

The clean white slate of the floor, walls, ceiling, dining table and three of the chairs manipulates our spatial perception (read: bigger!), while blocks of red (in the flowers), black (on the chairs) and colourful geometric art guide our eyes through the room.