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NATURE-MADE

A Laguna designer uses outdoor inspirations to transform inside spaces. *By Somer Flaherty*

PHOTOS BY CHRISTIAN HORAN



▲ STUDIO DC



THE BEACHES AND THE STRONG ARTIST community are what first brought Lisa McDennon to Laguna Beach nearly 20 years ago. The interior designer studied art at the University of California, Irvine, and then worked in architecture. Once she realized her true passion was in developing interior spaces and finishes, she never looked back. Now, Lisa celebrates her 10th year in business in Laguna.

The area creates a stimulus for Lisa's nature-inspired projects, and also provides the down-to-earth friendships she cherishes. As Lisa says, one of the most important things about your chosen environment is that it's connected to your well-being.

We recently talked with Lisa about Laguna Beach home design.

LAGUNA BEACH MAGAZINE: What's a simple design change that people can make in their homes for a big impact?

LISA MCDENNON: The most obvious change is the wall color. Talk about instant gratification. In a matter of hours, your entire space can be transformed. Just imagine if you took an all-white room and painted the walls a deep cerulean blue and



popped the moldings with a pure white? You have automatically created a mood. What if the same room was painted a bright yellow? It's dramatic, impactful and can evoke a mood the room was probably lacking.

LBM: What's the hardest room in the house to design?

LM: It really could be any room, depending upon the challenges presented.

Master suites are often challenging because this is an intimate space shared by a couple, and as a designer we need to address both individual's requirements and wishes so that we are creating a place that both of them will enjoy. Other rooms can present difficulties due to their size and layout and the needs that the clients may require within the space. Here in Laguna we are faced with that quite often since rooms are smaller and space is limited. I have become an expert on creative space planning and creating unique storage solutions that are both functional and aesthetically pleasing.

LBM: How is your design philosophy influenced by Laguna Beach?

LM: I definitely look to nature to find inspiration. I can be strolling on the beach and find a rock covered

in moss, snap a photo and refer back to it when developing a color scheme. Over the summer, my family and I were at Rockpile Beach, and I found the most gorgeous bright red sea sponge and some amazing sculptural pieces of dried seaweed. I immediately started snapping photos, and would love to use them as artwork for a client.

LBM: What was the most interesting project you've worked on in Laguna?

LM: I really loved designing Studio DC, the modern hair salon on Ocean Avenue. A majority of our work is residential, so getting to develop a commercial project was really fun. The owner of the salon allowed me total artistic freedom, and we had such fun with the project.

LBM: What is a trend you are seeing in Laguna home design?

LM: I love the mix of modern elements for the interior blended with a traditional or more historical approach for the exterior. I am starting to see cottages re-painted with a thin strip of black trim casing around windows, doors and garages, and I love it. It adds a crisp and subtle pop of color, and looks tailored and elegant without the fuss.

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