



DESIGN TIPS for SUMMER for EVER

BY WENDY SCHLESINGER

DIANE ROSEN IS A WISP OF A WOMAN WITH A PIXIE HAIRCUT THAT BOTH DEFIES AND DEFINES HER BOLD, FORWARD-THINKING APPROACH TO DESIGN. HOPING TO GLEAN A FEW DECORATING TIPS FROM HER TWENTY PLUS YEARS OF EXPERIENCE, I GOT, IN ADDITION TO SOME GREAT IDEAS, A FASCINATING, BRIEF EDUCATION ON THE FUTURE OF DESIGN.

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

If you're considering any sort of renovation, building out, or rehab project, Diane will mention incorporating "Universal Design" principles into the plan. It's smart planning that plays directly into your ROI. "Universal Design," Diane says, "is the industry standard term for creating a home environment in which you can remain in your home [should you have reduced mobility like the need for a wheelchair] while maintaining your quality of life and daily routine. In practical terms, it's the ability to navigate and operate the kitchen, bath and upper levels of your home with ease and comfort." Diane is one of the few designers in the area to have earned the Certification for Aging in Place (CAP)

conferred through the Home Builders Association.

Even with young couples Diane will address the issue because you never know when a parent may need to move in with you, or God forbid something should happen to a child or even yourself. These principles are especially pertinent when considering kitchens and baths. Diane explains "The design elements include but are not limited to: flooring, space mobility, lighting and depending on the impairment, ease of entry in and out of the home." She adds "there are wonderful products on the market that are sophisticated and beautiful to own that can be incorporated to function for everyone in the household."

KEEPING UP WITH CHANGING CODES

Another design aspect Diane focuses on is the area of "sustainability". "Creating an environment for your home that is not only beautiful for all to enjoy," Diane says, "but a healthy approach in eliminating toxic materials and finishes keeps the entire family healthy as well." She explains "most of our CO2 is exuded from commercial buildings - not just cars and busses - but by all the 'off-gassing' by carpeting, furniture, and fabric." Consequently, come 2030, commercial buildings will have a goal of 'net zero energy' meaning "we're dispelling and replacing gas. What goes out is going to come back in. So the carbon footprint is zero." Residential property codes will follow. If all this eco-talk leaves you cold, keep in mind, that when it comes time to sell your property, if your home has been updated to meet current and near-future building codes, your property will be among the most desirable of listings.

While this may seem futuristic, there

are simple ways you can accommodate these changes today. Diane, who is a LEED A.P. (Leadership in Environmental and Educational Design, Accredited Professional) recommends, for starters, using low or no VOC (Volatile Organic Chemicals) paint. Found in all major brands and big box stores, low or no VOC paint has removed all the toxic and formaldehydes, so you can paint even during the winter months because that noxious paint odor has been removed as well. The cost point, Diane says, "may be a little more expensive but it depends on what you're comparing it to. The quality is much better."

Diane's other recommendation is to "use recycled carpet, made from all those plastic bottles we've tossed into the trash for the past 25 years - but will never disintegrate." Available at all major carpet and department stores, there are endless colors and patterns to select from and the softness is still there. And "the price points are comparable and you'll have the satisfaction of helping your planet."

QUICK TIPS FOR SUMMER

With all this talk of net zero and Universal Design, we still wanted to address some of the more fun aspects of design. For summer Diane suggests adding slip covers to your favorite chair and fresh flower bouquets where ever you need a splash of color. Diane advises, "Area rugs can be seasonal" so consider changing those out as well.

For the outdoors Diane says "Definitely if you have a porch of any size, it doesn't have to be big, you bring the inside outside. [Use] planters with fresh flowers, get yourself an outdoor area rug, put your chairs out and make it closer to a true living space. An outdoor area rug [is especially helpful] because they're so inexpensive and it basically pulls the whole act together."

Whether you're simply repainting or contemplating a major renovation, the key is to think of your favorite things with an eye to the future. It will be beneficial to your family, your pocketbook and the planet will thank you as well. **UT**



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