

Priceless

OCTOBER 2008

Guilford WOMAN

Celebrating the success of women



Jessica Dauray
Elements of Style Interiors

A Woman of Design

by Alice Garcia



Jessica Dauray and Anna Hilliard Smith

Photo by Tim Talley Photography

Jessica Dauray's home at Lake Jeanette seems paradoxical. First of all, it is beautifully designed with black hardwood floors, flowing lines, interesting textures, a combination of neutral and warm tones highlighting classical and contemporary elements all with fun little twists that give visitors a good feel of who she and her family are. On the other hand, her home is also pet-friendly (she has two pugs and a cat), kid-friendly (she has two children, Peyton, 9 and Gavin, 5), and it is perfect for entertaining and finally, ideal for relaxing. Impossible, right? But, no, I saw it and you can too through the Greensboro Symphony Guild's Tour of Homes, October 31-November 1. However, perhaps the best way to see Dauray make a design impossibility into a reality is to contact her through her interior design firm, Elements of Style Interiors (EOS), and to schedule a consultation.

Ten years ago, Dauray started in her hometown of New Canaan, Connecticut, but her interest in interior design began much earlier. "As a little girl, I was constantly rearranging my bedroom," she recalls. At a young age, Dauray had shown a strong artistic aptitude and she had an amazing understanding of how to use space. In college she studied art history and business

followed by a period of living abroad in Italy. There, she began to formally study design. She returned to the states where she completed her degree and then went to work in the design industry.

Eventually, her own individuality beckoned and she decided to venture out on her own. Thus, EOS was created. Having her own design firm allowed her to take a new approach to working with clients. She wasn't looking to create cookie-cutter rooms, but instead, she wanted to create the kinds of living spaces that were sophisticated, functional and unique to each individual. She quickly picked up both residential and commercial clients in the Metropolitan New York area, and she later did some consulting in Rome, Italy. Much of her work up north was with renovation and redesign, but she also taught seminars and led workshops on interior design and holiday decorating.

Then, four years ago, she, her husband Doug and two children moved here to the Triad.

While still maintaining an office in Connecticut, Dauray went about building a client base for EOS in the area. At first, it took some adjusting, but before long she was busy helping local residents and businesses to discover their own signature style. In the process, she began to work more and more with clients as early as the development stage. "There are a tremendous amount of details to consider and decisions to make when embarking on a large project; having a well thought out design plan in place is invaluable. A lot of clients don't know what's going to be successful and are concerned about making mistakes" she explains, but by having a designer there, she, or a member of her team, is able to offer specific suggestions on things that are oftentimes overlooked by builders and architects. "We focus on designing a room that functions and works for your entire family." They are there to evaluate such things as window placement (Will there be a glare on the television?), room size or shape (How will this function best for this particular family?), in selecting the right finishes and fixtures to assessing how the clients are allocating their budget. Dauray says, "The earlier we get involved, the more money the client saves."

Dauray's ultimate goal continues to be "to create spaces that 'wow' people." And, in case you are worried about cost, know that she is accustomed to working with a variety of budgets, whether it's a high

end project, or hourly consulting. In fact, Dauray says, "It doesn't take a huge budget; it's about making the right choices." She points out that sometimes clients get too caught up in trends, or they become fixated on making everything match. Another common mistake clients make is to choose furniture and accessories that are not the right scale for a particular space. With the right kind of guidance, clients can avoid these mistakes, make good choices and



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still keep to their budget, she advises.

As a full service firm, EOS designers offer other services. "We are there to help you [the client] reach your design goals. If a room or space is attractive but not practical and user friendly we have not done our job. We create spaces for real people who have kids and pets, but still want to have beautiful, classic and sophisticated decor." After the initial

contact, she or another EOS designer will come to a perspective client's home to evaluate the space/spaces. She says, "We want to see how they live." Don't be surprised if they come toting an assortment of fabrics and colors either. They are prepared to look into new ideas, to try something unconventional, and to work with any style. This is all part of the process of discovering that signature style.

When considering a redesign, many clients focus on their kitchen or bathroom. For this, Dauray turns to an EOS designer that she calls simply a "genius", Anna Hilliard Smith. Smith special-

izes in kitchens and bathrooms and she has created an assortment of design packages to accommodate most clients' budgets. Since moving to the Triad, Dauray has been able to establish good relationships with local craftsmen and distributors. These connections have enabled her to offer an even greater array of design options to her clients.

Even though Dauray is somewhat of a recent transplant to the Triad she has grown to call it home. Her fondness for North Carolina even inspired a few of her Connecticut designers to move down as well. One now resides in Asheville and

the other in Wilmington, and Dauray now enjoys working with them on projects throughout the state. Also, she continues to work, or to consult on projects up North, and this January she will begin work on a residence in the Los Angeles area.

Along with EOS, Dauray also writes a bi-weekly column for the News and Record called "Design Wise." If you haven't already seen her, you can catch her on TV giving out design tips. On November 6th, Dauray will lend her design talents to an event benefiting the Chordoma Foundation called the "All Decked Out" Holiday Luncheon at the Greensboro Country Club where they will auction off some of her beautiful tablescapes and holiday décor.

Dauray will admit that she is lucky because she loves what she does. "Few people are able to do what they love." Of course, I believe that there aren't that many people out there that can do what she does, as well as she does. She can see a space, whether as a sketch or in person, get a design in mind while taking into account the client's lifestyle and needs, obtain the materials, and then, make it happen. ■

For more information:

<http://www.elementsofstyleinteriors.com/>

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