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ADDING *Character* IN A BIG-BOX AGE

by Melissa Davis

I'm often asked about design trends. Enquiring voices looking for some version of the canned replies, such as "pink is so hot right now" or "big bold patterns are really in." As a designer who prefers longevity over trendiness, both philosophically and environmentally speaking, these of-the-moment trends don't do much for me. I find as with all trends in life, on a grander scale, they are cyclical. Trends repeat, and tend to come out of an emotional need in the market. We feel the need for more connection in how our kitchen links to our living space, or we need our interior furnishings to offer a uniqueness that offsets the sameness offered in our big box homes. The trends respond to how we 'feel' about our homes.



Anand Rectangular Dining Table

Imperfection in design has become a sought-after feature for designers and homeowners alike. Reclaimed barn board, vintage finds and a celebration of all things organic and singular, remains at the forefront of popularity. It can be a tricky balance to strike between the individual craftsmen, offering made-to-order custom pieces, and the mass-market reproductions, offering two dimensional facsimiles with forced distressing, mock character and sometimes lacking soul.

However, there are products for those of us in need of available retail options that still appease our thirst for what could be uniquely ours. I look for collections where the imperfections in the wood are embraced and celebrated; exposing and highlighting the unique qualities of each piece. After all, no two pieces are identical, made different by virtue of the shape, grain and measurements of the wood. One great go-to source for such finds is Artemano, which has stores in both Toronto and Québec.

For me, the way to strike a balance in my design plan is to opt for minimalistic, straight-forward furniture designs, as they allow for an easy application in almost any home or style.

These are my top three pieces at Artemano. They could easily incorporate a little character into your home.

DINING ROOM

The Basant dining table, with its quality detailing and craftsmanship, is a solid wood table with stunning beauty. Available in eight sizes, this classic dining table

Recycled Wood & Metal Coffee Table



Melissa Davis Images Artemano

is constructed with quality exotic suar wood. Each has its own unique cracks, knots and markings, making each one different from the other. Elegant, unique and exotic, the Basant table is a great conversation piece.

FAMILY ROOM

Meticulously hand-assembled, Artemano offers tabletops and shelves made with pieces of durable wood once used in the construction of old fishing boats that worked the Strait of Malacca. Having endured the natural elements for decades, each coffee table has unique paint flecks, cracks and holes that were carefully preserved.

BOOKCASE

With its clean lines and contemporary design, the handmade Tan Tan bookcase from Artemano is a piece of functional art that can work in multiple spaces like a loft, a child's playroom, a den or a home office. Crafted out of resilient Indian rosewood, it exposes the natural colour and beautiful variants of the wood. Its multiple shelves are stacked in a playful, modern pattern and are ideal for storing and showcasing books, collectibles and accessories.

Visit artemano.ca



Toronto-based celebrity designer and contractor Melissa Davis is known for her appearances, creative design and reno work produced for various HGTV shows. Her work has been profiled nationally in print publications. With almost two decades of reno and design experience her firm continues to service clientele throughout Ontario and Greater Torono Area, specializing in value-adding ROI and resale consultations.
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