

CANADIAN BUILDERS QUARTERLY

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2010

AVA Interior Design

Owner's respect for artistry leads to uniquely elegant designs for luxury homes

NICHE INTERIORS

The future of design is in specialty sectors





This room features a stone fireplace, natural walnut flooring, a crystal chandelier, and grand furniture and accessories that add colour, keeping in mind the light and serenity that fills the room.

AVA INTERIOR DESIGN

Designer of fresh, timeless interiors trusts the creative process to guide business growth

BY ZACH BALIVA

ANIA ANNA MATERNICKI TURNED A LONGTIME passion into a thriving business when she opened her own company, AVA Interior Design, just a few years ago. Since then, the Toronto-based designer has achieved considerable success, quickly moving from working with a few small spaces to designing interiors for multi-million-dollar luxury homes.

The key, Maternicki says, has been allowing herself the time and space to be creative while never letting go of her zeal for design. By running her own business, Maternicki is free to do her best work at any time, rather than being ruled by an office clock. "I might be doing something with my family or friends, and I know I can go right to the drawing board when inspiration strikes," she says.

Independence is important to Maternicki because a forced artistic process often diminishes creative results.

Maternicki approached builders and negotiated deals to design interiors for several model homes to help build AVA's name in the industry. While residential clients might refer only friends and family members, thousands of people walk through a model home each year. Those people, Maternicki explains, formed a client base that helped launch her fledgling business.

Today, the bulk of her business comes from referrals and clients who already know her style, which she describes as "fresh, elegant, and timeless." Maternicki partners with clients and consultants to learn their goals and to ensure her designs will satisfy their functional needs.

Maternicki now works on multiple projects at a time, including luxury homes, hospitality spaces, child-care centres, office spaces, healthcare facilities, and educational institutions. The company provides complete consultation, planning, project coordination, interior architectural design, exterior and interior design, and decorating services.

Although her business is still young, the designer has over a decade of industry experience. Maternicki, a graduate of the Ontario College of Art & Design, is a registered interior designer. She has intern membership in the Association of Registered Interior Designers of Ontario (ARIDO) and has completed study in the National Council for Interior Design Qualification (NCIDQ).

A technical knowledge of building codes and other architectural features helps Maternicki contribute to every aspect of a project. "I collaborate directly with architects, engineers, and other consultants who introduce their

AT A GLANCE

LOCATION:
TORONTO, ON

AREAS OF SPECIALTY:
HOSPITALITY, RESIDENTIAL, AND COMMERCIAL DESIGN



This dining room features gold leaf beveled large mirrors, a crystal chandelier, and his/hers custom upholstered hore chairs



A good interior designer must be aware of the newest materials, products, and trends but still be familiar with and appreciate what is truly timeless and not dated.

—Ania Anna Maternicki, Owner



space to me and either impart their project entirely or unite with me to select exterior and interior finishes," she says. Those items include masonry, stone, flooring, trim work, carpentry, lighting, mouldings, and many other elements.

This approach is important because it helps all disciplines communicate to successfully merge the interior and exterior spaces. "An effective interior designer has to be conscious of environmental surroundings, client needs, and ultimate function," she says.

AVA collaborated with many trades to create the interior of The Bellfontain, a million-dollar model home for Fernbrook Homes in Aurora, Ontario. The lush design elements include an interior waterfall, a home theatre, a yoga room, three custom fireplaces, an opulent kitchen with a custom pantry and servery, natural stone features, walnut hardwood, gold-leaf finishes, and elaborate murals.



Custom ceiling mural with gold leafed plaster moulding trim and crystal chandelier.

"The huge success of the model home is due to efficient, steady communications, professionalism, and attention to detail between the Fernbrook project manager, site super, and all the trades and suppliers that were a part of the lavish Belfountain home," Maternicki remarks. "They were all a true pleasure to work with, and I look forward to our next project together."

As industry trends evolve, Maternicki says continuing her education becomes increasingly important. "A good interior designer must be aware of the newest materials, products, and trends but still be familiar with and appreciate what is truly timeless and not dated," she says. Trade shows, seminars, and presentations are among the pursuits Maternicki uses to enrich her current level of education and experience. She also holds an NCIDQ certificate for "culturally sensitive design for long-term-care facilities and creating sustainable interiors" and has studied LEED programs and green design.

By developing and honing her skills, Maternicki maintains the flexibility needed to meet clients' varying needs. Though some clients want to approve every design choice, others only are concerned with the finished product. In each case, Maternicki focuses on catering to the client while earning his or her trust.

Maternicki has built her business around her love for the artistic process and frequently provides opportunities for other artists. Whenever possible, she hires local artisans to create paintings, murals, floral arrangements, and other original pieces to incorporate into her designs. "I know what it's like to be an artist wanting exposure," she says.

Maternicki feels a bond with these artists because she always has been one herself. In the past few years, she has found a way to turn what was once a hobby into a growing interior-design firm. CBQ