

perspective

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INSPIRING ARCHITECTURE & DESIGN

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A LIFE ALOFT

Hidden away in Cape Town's Hout Bay, South African fashion and interior designer Jenni Button's eclectic, light-filled home is a celebration of different influences and textures



+ A&D TROPHY AWARDS 2015
Exclusive interview —
Pinnacle Award winner
Dr Ronald Lu

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HK\$48
 US\$18
 €15



colourliving executive director Denise Lau has expanded the family business from building materials to a focus influenced strongly by “synchronisation with fashion”

When we meet, Lau is elegantly dressed in Céline, a fashion brand famous for minimalism and style; she is the perfect exemplar of the importance of style in the living space. “Even though homes in Hong Kong are small, being small does not necessarily mean being boring,” she says.

And the style she advocates for Hong Kong’s homes is simple: contemporary yet timeless, an ethos amply reflected in the ranges showcased at colourliving. “When choosing brands to collaborate with, the heritage values and stories behind the design are paramount to me,” Lau says, pointing to Zaha Hadid’s work displayed in the colourliving showroom as an example. “She’s usually perceived as avant-garde, but I think it’s the hidden philosophy that makes her design stands out.”

While she agrees that there is no shortage of professional interior designers in Hong Kong, she notes that they chiefly focus on ceilings, walls, flooring, etc: “How about other aspects like flowers and candles?” she muses. “What I’m trying to provide is a styling service for homes.”

The changing interior trends in kitchens and bathrooms have been pivotal in helping Lau achieve her aspiration of building stylish homes. The introduction of the open-plan kitchen, for example, has meant the once-isolated cooking space has become a new social venue for socialising with families and friends – and, therefore, deserves to be more interesting and tasteful. Bathrooms, meanwhile, have evolved into a haven, a sanctuary of R&R.

Lau travels all over the world with her team, staying at the best hotels to learn about customer service and attending exhibitions to suss out designs which would be right for Hong Kong’s consumers. On the flip side, she also expects her customers to share the same passion for tasteful living, and clearly be willing to pay a premium for authentic design – colourliving employs a professional

in-house interior designer to offer guidance and direction. “Nobody’s providing a styling service for, at least, bathrooms in Hong Kong, and I enjoy being the first to do something different,” notes Lau.

Interestingly, the businesswoman’s childhood dream was to become an architect (“I always loved painting and drawing”) and although her mother encouraged her to pursue this dream she was so passionate about, she voluntarily took on the mission of running the family business. After completing her education at the London School of Economics and Cass Business School, she began her career in corporate banking in London, before returning home to join the family business in 1992.

A key part of her vision involves engaging the local design community – last December, for example, colourliving teamed up with renowned Danish furniture brand Republic of Fritz Hansen for the exhibition 7 Stars X Series 7, which showcased seven reinventions of the brand’s iconic Series 7 chair by seven local designers.

And, Lau is keen to point out, there is more to design than just the price tag: “Design is not just about high-end,” she says. “Good design should support the function of the product, give pleasure and eventually improve people’s lives.” ●

In addition to bath and kitchen choices, colourliving also stocks various accessories and lifestyle products to suit stylish Hong Kong residences, including the Poul Kjærholm Collection x Raf Simons textiles range

The lifestyle curator

As executive director of the colourliving lifestyle store and the chief operating officer of its parent company, B.S.C. Group, Denise Lau is smart, funny, and dedicated to curating the lifestyle of Hong Kong’s homes

TEXT:
Leona Liu
PHOTOGRAPHY:
Courtesy of colourliving

Founded in 1970 by chairman and managing director William W Lau, B.S.C. Group started off with building materials and interior contracting, while the subsequent retail business rapidly developed into 15 stores specialising in kitchen and bathroom products in Hong Kong. Inheriting her father’s dream of creating a one-stop destination with a comfortable environment for home shopping, Denise Lau launched colourliving in 2000, marking a new chapter in both the group’s retail development and her personal vision.

Spanning over 20,000 sq-ft across three floors on Lockhart Road, Wan Chai, colourliving is now Hong Kong’s pioneering lifestyle emporium, featuring trend-setting kitchen and bath offerings, as well as stylish home furnishings and accessories.

