

IT'S ALL IN THE DETAILS



Words Glen Peloso

While attending a charity fundraising event recently, I was seated next to a couple who were one of the evening's biggest benefactors, and I caught myself staring at the wife. She was not only a very beautiful woman, but she was also impeccably dressed. And although her simple black dress was not unlike many in the room, her jewellery, shoes, purse and belt were unusual, perfectly coordinated and suited her exceptionally well. As my mind wandered during the many items being auctioned, I lost myself in thoughts of her home. Eventually, as we began to chat about some of the latest developments in residential decor, I confirmed to myself that, in the same way this woman presented herself, spaces in the world of interior design also move from ordinary to extraordinary as a result of the details and use of unique innovations.

I was introduced to a unique artist last year whose medium is light. Steven Knapp has developed a way to refract light into its various colours by using pieces of glass strategically placed near a light source. While other artists might use paint to put colours on a canvas, he uses the colours of light that come from the white light that we perceive. His backdrops include actual canvases, large interior walls and the sides of buildings. Not only is the final product incredible to look at because of its purity of colour, extraordinary movement

and the emotional content that it evokes, but it grows and changes by virtue of the time of day and ambient light in the space in which it is installed. I also love the innovation and creation of something 'more' from an element as ubiquitous and as simple as light. All of his pieces are vibrant and so full of life that one would never grow tired of looking at them.

The plumbing world has brought consumers various kinds of metals and some innovations with respect to shape, but being able to look at a bathroom faucet and discover something that's truly different is a rarity. I was delighted to find a faucet from Aqua Brass that has both beauty and function. What opulent powder room or restaurant restroom doesn't have both a tap and fresh flowers to make the space sumptuous? It's sometimes the simplest thoughts that seem to spawn some of the most interesting elements and innovations and this faucet adds a great touch of class to either a residential space or commercial space in its ability to combine nature, water and function in an elegant and graceful way.

The marriage of beauty and eco-materials is not always easily found. A wonderful product that has finally hit the market is Eco-Glass by Mondial Granite & Marble Inc. Although there have been glass products on the market used as countertops and other hard surfaces, the colour selection has never been available aside from the blue-green that comes from thicker pieces of glass or the clear look of Starphire glass. Neither type can be manufactured in the same way as natural stone slabs; however, Eco-Glass can, with the added advantage that you can use backlighting to create a more delicate allure similar to onyx but with a more consistent look. The colour variations are relatively vast and the fact that it can be backlit provides an opportunity for underlit countertops, backlit bar fronts, feature walls (both backlit or not), tabletops, tubs, pools, restaurant furniture, water features and reception desks. The appeal of the product is only enhanced by the good feelings that are associated with its eco-story being that it's constructed of recycled glass products; and as a design professional, I am excited to have this option available.

It's always delightful when products offer an element of surprise. We are endlessly attracted to innovations that seem to combine two elements that we don't expect to see together, function as one cohesive unit. This is the case with the Lumiere Circolare Floral fixture by Jaclo because it combines the element of light and water into one — a merger that we believe, historically, must never go together. In fact, there are entire sections of the building code that work to ensure that these two elements remain apart from one other. We are more than accustomed to having showers that house lighting, as well as to showers with rain shower heads, but we do not expect that our rain shower heads will also be our light source! Until now, of course.

This "rain canopy" fixture has taken the elegance of the rain shower head (which, by the way, I find to be an unbelievably sensual and effective way to have a shower), and combines it with a drum shade that comes with great pattern selections, to create a shower light. When taking a shower, our focus generally goes to the plumbing fixtures; lighting is usually hidden in the ceiling, but this shower head offers an extraordinary focal point to the shower by providing a drop-lit chandelier. I installed this fixture in my own bathroom and I am continually pleased with the quality of light that it provides; I love its innovation and its classic, simple allure. It also provides an element of surprise when the water is running because the actual water jets are relatively hidden in the base of the light fixture; it not only moves the experience of showering from ordinary to extraordinary, but the expressions of delight from my guests make it a joy to own.

No home is complete without the element of entertainment and the Kaleidescape System is sure to impress even the biggest gadget geek. It is an entertainment hub that simplifies the way you collect, manage and enjoy movies and music. By storing your personal entertainment collection into the system, you instantly de-clutter your house of DVDs and CDs, and due to its high-speed network capabilities, you can, for example, simultaneously play recorded music on one floor, a movie in the home theatre on another floor, and yet another on an additional floor, all from one hub. It is often installed in professional screening rooms and the playback quality is superior to any other system on the market, but this is where the fun just begins.



You can ask for one of hundreds of stored films to be played and the screen will present the art for that film along with an entire selection of films of that genre, starring the same actor, or directed by the same director. The Kaleidescape will even give you a flexography for the various moviemakers involved and the history of that specific film. You can create play lists of your favourite lines from various films for a 'compilation film' of your own choosing, and even pause a variety of entertainment sources, which will remain on hold until you want to continue (up to two years). I'm impressed with the interactive aspect and the personalized experience that it offers. It's a little like having a professional movie-reviewer to direct me to the films and music that I really like with as much information as I want to know about each one of those films. Of course, my inner geek is quite happy as well.

The world of good quality wall covering has been strong for hundreds of years. Over time, wall coverings have gone from fabric to paper to vinyl. In exceptional circumstances, gold and silver leaf applications have been in vogue, but they are incredibly time-consuming as each piece needs to be hand-applied. Not everyone is interested in having trades people in their homes or offices for a year. That problem is now solved with the introduction of wall coverings that are made with gold and silver leaves. The effect is perfect for that luxurious look that used to take months to achieve. There are also a vast array of three dimensional coverings with Swarovski crystals embedded into the paper, micro-glass, which creates fantastic drama when the light hits it, as well as 'wall tattoos,' a new introduction to the world of wall coverings. Creating a feature wall with everything from gold leaves to wall tattoos in an iridescent material adds a drama previously not seen without hiring an artist. And the result is one of truly great detailing with dramatic effects

Regardless of whether your home or office is 2,500 square feet or 25,000 square feet, the distinguishing factor between an ordinary space and one that inspires awe and conversation and takes your breath away is one that incorporates fine details and extraordinary elements. I am as delighted as a child who has just discovered a monarch butterfly every time I come across a new element in the world of decor that combines simplicity with grace, resulting in elegance and peaceful beauty. In my mind, those are the elements that really create luxury and timelessness.

