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Philharmonic Design House 2005

IN THE KITCHEN

BARBARA MCLANE MAKES
MASTERPIECES OUT OF THE MUNDANE

By Anna Curtis

It's not just a matter of design—anyone who's ever dared to try it themselves knows. Creating an intelligent kitchen space is more like crafting a highly functional work of art. Not a job for the layman. To Barbara McLane, owner of ByDesign Kitchens in Santa Ana, going without a designer "is like watching an orchestra play without the conductor." You could probably call McLane a kitchen maestro herself.

"It's always the most challenging space in the house because so many elements have to be chosen appropriately to function and look great," McLane says. "It's truly a smart investment for the homeowner although it's tempting for them to do it on their own." Many of those do-it-yourself types probably end up

sitting across her desk. Costly mistakes, she says, can lead to mediocrity. To McLane, achieving a sophisticated and successful kitchen is about creating total harmony within the space.

She calls it "creative kitchen thinking," which we think is being modest. Evidence of her expertise emerges from an anthology of high-end design projects backed up by a cascade of glowing media reviews. Despite her soft-spoken, charmingly serene demeanor, you can tell McLane is an ace in the industry. Not just anyone can design rooms for the Orange County Philharmonic House of Design, and McLane has done it—with much acclaim—for three years in a row. And that's just one of the pages in her portfolio. ▶



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After studying art history in Europe (what better place to learn?), McLane continued on at the University of Hawaii, focusing on architecture and earning herself a BFA in interior design from Chaminda University of Honolulu. Since she opened her own design doors in 1989, McLane's firm has re-inspired the interior architecture of some of the most prominent homes in Orange County.

"I always enjoy designing kitchens that are beautiful and functional yet authentic to my clients and their lifestyles." With a balance of modern and traditional design savvy, McLane opts for clean lines with conventional touches, making projects warmer and linking history and heritage to the room. "It brings out the uniqueness of personality and human touch," says McLane. "It makes the kitchen one of the most unique and interesting spaces in the home. □



Q & A

WITH BARBARA

What inspires your passion for design?

Life itself and the beauty of nature is always my first inspiration. I get a feel for the architecture of the building first and then focus on the lifestyle of the homeowners. This allows me to create a more unique, personalized space genuine to the lifestyle and personalities of my clients while enhancing the architecture of the home.



Barbara McLane, ASID,
Certified Interior Designer

What are your favorite spaces?

My favorite room in a house is always the kitchen. It should be as sophisticated as the lives we lead, because it completely reflects our lifestyles. Today's kitchens have evolved and become the center of the home. I love to re-sculpt those spaces and watch as amazing, unexpected transformations unfold, giving homeowners a space that they can enjoy daily and love to entertain in.

What future projects are you excited about?

Currently I'm working on several "green" projects. Growing up in Europe, we were always environmentally aware and frugal with our resources. Recycling was simply a part of life. Making intelligent choices in design is an important focus for me. The kitchen lends itself beautifully to use energy efficient systems and green products.

What do you love most about your work?

I'm very passionate about creativity and design. And I always love a challenge. Coming up with innovative, interesting and unexpected ideas is what makes a project unique and original. It's a very enjoyable and gratifying experience.