



STORY BY DAVID M. BROWN

LISTEN TO, AND SEE, THE ART OF ESTHER BOIVIN

ON HER WEB SITE, AN ACCOMPLISHED MEZZO-SOPRANO VOICE HARMONIZES WITH A STREAMING PORTFOLIO OF LUXURY INTERIORS SHE'S RECENTLY COMPLETED FOR SCOTTSDALE AND PARADISE VALLEY HOMES.

IN ARTS, MUSIC AND DESIGN, BOIVIN'S ACUMEN AND PASSION are boldly, stylishly expressed. Notes are well-articulated and passionately sung. Spaces are crisp, colorful and resonate emotionally. Components are integrally connected, with bravura passages of color, swank and embellishment introduced with panache and craft. "For me, a well-designed space is a music composition—a symphony—with themes, rhythm, dynamics, accents, embellishments and layers of meaning," says Boivin, whose multifaceted Scottsdale-based firm, Esther Boivin Interiors, provides sophisticated interior designs for custom homes, residential remodels, retail spaces and restaurants.

"A home, or one of its spaces, should be a harmonious, timeless, poetic design which balances aesthetics with function," she says. Classic fundamentals of unity, balance, scale, synchronization and structure are essential: "Every piece, every detail, should work together. Each should feel good to the eyes and touch. All aspects must be tied together, even if it's a small space—a powder room or hallway, for example."

Usually, she introduces a theme, a leitmotif, repeats it, varies it, adding new themes to complement it or play against it—as a master symphonist or sonata composer does to add drama to a composition. A recurrent rhythm of fabrics and colors follow, offering contrast through scale, boldness and layering. The result is a pleasing complexity, one texture of many.

A graduate of the Arizona State University School of Music, Boivin was a professional opera singer for many years and has appeared locally with Arizona Opera. She is also an accomplished tango dancer, has five education degrees and speaks a half-dozen languages. Art is her life.

Combining traditional elegance with warm contemporary sensibility, her designs juxtapose refinement and strength, whimsy with sophistication, exuberance with restraint, multi-sensory experience with symmetry. Boivin interiors exude style and seductiveness to delight both owner and guests.

In the entertaining area of a recently completed Gilbert home, for example, Boivin was challenged to combine red, blue, purple and yellow. As the design developed, each color had an important function in balancing the room, she says, noting that she began by using the deepest, blue and purple, for the window treatment. "I added drama with custom exaggerated high-back dining chairs in softer blue/purple giving a sense of extension," she says. She followed this with a custom table base to contrast the suspension created with the chair—thus creating a sense of intense, intricate rhythm. Yellow was incorporated as a color splash.

Raised in Montreal, with its multicultural influences, Boivin recalls that, as a child, she began redesigning her sisters' rooms. "I'd find antiques, used furniture and odd pieces in our family barn and would place them in unique arrangements," she says. People noticed: relatives, neighbors and friends asked her to design

rooms. This inspired her explorations outside Quebec: to England and Europe, Scandinavia, Africa, Asia and Mexico. "I'd study the language and read up on the cultures and the traditions," she says. This cosmopolitanism has inspired her openness to various period styles and textures.

Listening to clients' needs develops collaboration and long-term relationships. "Through our experience, we have watched Esther create great relationships with her clients to build their trust in her and to help build their imagination into their own home to fit their own lifestyle," says Dan Bonavich, principal of Scottsdale's Tile Setting Techniques.

Owners' dreams and doubts, their wishes and vision, all inform a dialogue that creates a home eloquently expressing their character and experiences. "I often say to my clients, 'Let's think about this, let's look at it tomorrow, or the next,'" Boivin says. "In the end, I want them to be happy, and that's a process requiring time, understanding and patience." ■

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