

CREATING AMBIENCE

BY ANNA LEE BOSCHETTO // PHOTOGRAPHY BY JIM DAWSON

THE PLACE: From fabric selection to colour schemes to custom home interiors, **Ambience Design Group** has been providing interior design services for nearly 20 years. "I started decorating homes of friends and family, eventually expanding to a retail and studio location," explains owner Josie Abate. Currently offering commercial design services with her daughter Sara Rezvanifar, Abate made the decision to grow the company's design services beyond residential interiors. "We consider ourselves a total design team," explains Abate, adding that services include branding and office design.

THE STYLE: At Ambience Design Group, clients are urged to meet with a designer before a project begins. Their material selections include an extensive library of fabrics, flooring, surfaces and accessories. Clients can share their style preferences and explore their options in a relaxed atmosphere. Using advanced computer software to create renderings so realistic that they look like photographs allowing clients to see a visual image of their redesigned space. "Rather than having to imagine it, you get to see the space in all its true materials," offers Rezvanifar, adding



Sara Rezvanifar and Josie Abate



that it's good value and eliminates any surprises.

WHAT'S HOT: Abate says there's been a revival of a more stylized design approach, including furnishings with curved legs, which is synonymous with the French Provencal style. By selecting current fabrics and colours, she says it's quite easy to add a contemporary look with these very traditional looks.

DESIGN DECISIONS: Before beginning any design project, Abate encourages clients to consider their enjoyment of the space as much as the home's resale value. Abate believes updating your kitchen should be high on your priority list, followed by bathrooms, which she says should be updated about every seven years. That said, homeowners don't have to spend a lot to achieve a custom look. Instead, Abate recommends adding a granite or solid surface counter or updating cabinet hardware and fixtures for a fresh lift without a costly renovation. "Many times it's a matter of adding new artwork or a new area rug that pulls the colour scheme together," she explains.

FAVOURITES: Custom wall graphics are an achievable way to add impact to a space. And although variations of grey and taupe are still top contenders, Abate points to brighter splashes of yellows, oranges and greens as essential colour picks for the upcoming year ahead especially since the Pantone 2013 colour of the year is emerald.

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