

HOME

STYLEMAKER SPOTLIGHT:
WENDY DANIELDesigner
turns homes
into havens

By Anh-Minh Le

Wendy Daniel has worked in several industries — including retail apparel and natural foods — but the graphic design major could never quite shake her creative tendencies. When her three kids were young and she was a stay-at-home mom, Daniel took drawing and painting classes. She also started decorating the family residence with “real grown-up furniture for the first time,” she recalls. “In the process, I interviewed a few interior designers, but felt I could do as good a job as any of them.”

So Daniel later returned to school, enrolling in UC Berkeley Extension's interior design program. She and a friend then established a firm, which they operated for a decade. In 2011, Daniel launched her namesake practice (www.danielinteriors.com). The Piedmont resident's business experience from past careers has “helped me hone my professional skills and made me a seasoned problem solver,” she says.

Daniel's downtown Oakland studio showcases some of her custom furniture line and offers home accessories and fine art for purchase.

“I really love a clean, neutral backdrop where the main pieces have a more masculine feel and scale to them,” she says of her aesthetic. “Then I like to add touches of luxury in the form of texture and color on the smaller pieces.”

The interior designer relishes decorating challenges. “When I'm working with clients who don't believe their home can really be a haven, it's rewarding to provide a completed project where they want to gather with family and friends.” She continues: “I really feel it's my job to push people to consider solutions that make their lives better.”

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Russell Yip / The Chronicle

A few favorites

Animal attraction:

“An elegant space with a sweet little pop of animal lightens the mood in a subtle way. Several pieces of furniture in my studio line have reproduction animal legs, and my Louis armchairs feature custom-painted finishes and bright cowhides. I have leopard-print carpet on the stairs in my entryway, a collection of dog figurines in my family room bookshelves, and two real-life dogs and two cats.”



Wendy Daniel

Bracelet: “I have a gold bangle bracelet that my girlfriends gave me for my birthday seven years ago. I wear it every day.”



Craig Lee / Special to The Chronicle



Wendy Daniel

Murano glass lamp: “I love really tall, vintage Murano glass lamps — as tall as you can find. Thirty-six inches is great! A great source for them is 1stdibs. Just add a big silk lamp shade. They're a splurge, but so worth it because they're the perfect final touch — like jewelry.” (www.1stdibs.com)

The Daniel cheat sheet

On display: “To make bookshelves and mantels look great, group pottery or glassware all in one color. The pieces can be fine art or from a reasonably priced home decor store or a combination of both. ACCI Gallery is a great artist co-op that I often scout when I'm ready to install a project. I get five to seven pieces — vases, bowls and plates in the accent hue for the room — and they are a really nice addition of color.” (www.accigallery.com)

Sit on it: “Splurge on the sofa or sectional in the room you use most. Sometimes clients think they don't want to spend much on the family room sofa because the kids and animals will be using it. I disagree. I think it should be the most comfortable, best-constructed piece you have. Purchasing a sofa is like selecting your mattress; you'll be using it every day. High-quality frame and cushion construction are very important. I like to have my seating custom-made locally, or prefer those by Kravet or Baker.” (www.kravet.com, www.bakerfurniture.com)

Mix it up: “Spaces are so much more interesting when finishes are mixed, rather than matching. Incorporating nickel, brass and bronze in the bathroom or kitchen is so pretty. Mixing wood stains and colors gives your rooms a collected or acquired look. Matching sets of furniture look dated.”

Cover story: “If you have a piece that is the right size and scale for your space and it's either good quality or an interesting shape, you're better off re-covering it than starting over. You can usually re-cover the piece with a great fabric for the same price as purchasing a new one and you won't have to figure out what to do with the old sofa.”

Well grounded: “If you've spent your budget on furniture and window treatments, get a nice wool remnant carpet and bind it for the floor. Stark and FloorDesign have a huge selection of quality wool carpets. Sometimes there are deals on great end-of-the-roll pieces at Dicks Carpet.” (www.starcarpet.com, www.floor-design.biz, www.dicks-carpet-oneoakland.com)

MORE OR LESS By Chantal Lamers

A '70s touch — go with the flokati

The urge to gravitate toward accessories with a simple, natural bent is perfectly normal following a kitschy red-and-green sort of season. Not only are flokati rugs monochromatic, but they are also wonderfully warm and cozy underfoot. We're well aware that these well-piled, shaggy wool rugs are intimately associated with the '70s, but flokatis have managed to transcend the era's bad rap. So we say: Layer on these beauties.



Urban Outfitters

• **\$299**
Flokati rug at Urban Outfitters (urbanoutfitters.com)

Who needs a blanket when you can snuggle up with Urban Outfitters' traditional flokati rug? This plush shag is made from wool and natural wool backing. It measures 5 by 8 feet. (A 3-by-5 version goes for \$114.)

• **\$79.99**
Flokati rug at Ikea (ikea.com)

With the flokati rug from Ikea at your feet, you just might skip the socks and slippers around the house all winter. Made from new wool and a polypropylene base fabric, this option has slightly different measurements at 6 feet, 7 inches by 4 feet, 7 inches.



Ikea

Free How-To Clinics

Edible Landscapes For Busy Lifestyles

Saturday January 26, 2013 10:00 – 11:30am

Have the healthy garden you always wanted with raised beds! Come and learn about the benefits of vegetable gardening in a raised bed. Brian Lerable will discuss the key features and demonstrate how to assemble the HealthyScapes Raised Bed System. Brian Lerable is the owner of HealthyScapes, Gilroy, CA. We want our clients to enjoy beautiful, edible landscapes that are accessible for people with busy lifestyles. Good landscape design and maintenance emphasizes native plantings, organic soil maintenance practices, composting, and water-wise irrigation systems.

Designing a Garden Habitat with Andrea Hurd

Saturday February 02, 2013 10:00 – 11:30am

Design a Habitat Garden with award-winning Garden Designer and Horticulturist, Andrea Hurd. Learn some solid techniques to invite a variety of butterfly and songbird species to your garden. When habitats for butterflies and songbirds increase, so do habitats for all our native bees and pollinators, allowing the elimination of pesticides. We will discuss the best plants to use to attract a wide variety of species; the best techniques for combining plants to increase habitat for butterflies and songbirds; how to prepare the soil; and how you can incorporate water features and water-loving plants in an ecologically intelligent way. Slides from Andrea's own work, as well as from the work of others will be used to demonstrate several design ideas and techniques. As a bonus, bring a rough sketch of your garden, and get walked through the process of developing a new plan for your garden.

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Limited availability, reservations are required, register online at www.lyngsogarden.com

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