

designer profile

WILLIAM MACDONALD



William MacDonald is the Principal Designer of WillMac Design. An Accomplished Designer William has over 15 years experience designing private residential interiors and has garnered an abundance of practical know how. William brings innovative ideas to each custom project and his vast knowledge includes furniture design, styling, lecturing, writing and art directing. His firm focuses on small as well as large scale bespoke design projects from concept to completion. An enthusiastic traveler, William makes frequent trips to the world's design hot spots. Highly influenced by his overseas travels, his design work can best be characterized as an amalgam of contemporary new world chic and traditional European styles. Visit www.willmacdesign.ca for more info.



We know you are known and passionate about fabrics. What are your fav fabric companies and products to use in our homes? how can we all learn to embrace fabric and texture into our lives? Well I work with a lot of fabric companies however most of my fabrics come from Robert Allen and Beacon Hill. They have always been an amazing asset to my company

and supporter of my work. I also like to find vintage fabrics in markets in Paris, New York and Palm Beach. One of all time favorite fabrics is simple garden burlap from the hardware store. I remember using it a few years ago in a client's guest wing. It looked great and after the earthy scent dissipated my client and all their guests were amazed. It added so much texture, sophistication and whimsy to the space.



what does every room need? Besides a butler and a drinks tray...every room needs great lighting. It's so overlooked by most people and it is absolutely imperative. I'm working on a rather large living room right now where we have several light sources. Such as, a central chandelier, pot lights, table lamps, floor lamps, picture lights, up lights, (all on dimmers) and wall sconces to hold candles. All of these light sources provide not only useful, necessary illumination but also add a sense of importance and drama to the room. They each highlight several of the interiors key design features such as art, architecture, fabrics and tablescapes. If you think you have enough light sources in the room add a few more and you'll be fine.

It's also important not to forget whimsy, a sense of fun. So many rooms are so serious and "done" I always throw

something in that catches people off guard and makes them smile because it's a bit silly.

what does good design mean to you? Simplicity is, above all, the master. I refer to this, my own mantra, very often.

many of your spaces seem to integrate old with new elements. what's the best way to combine vintage items with more contemporary pieces while keeping a cohesive? Integrating old with new does seem to be difficult for a lot of people. It's hard for me to explain the best way to combine pieces because I have an innate ability to know what works and what doesn't. That's why I thankfully get hired to do what I do. I always go by my own adage. If I love it alone, I will love together.

as a designer who or what has inspired you in your career? My main career inspirations have always come from Creative, stylish and smart people. Figures like the legendary fashion editor Diana Vreeland, the designer and teacher Van Day Truex, English decorator John Fowler, the ultra private and effortlessly chic gardener and philanthropist Bunny Mellon to name but a few. I always find peoples lives more interesting than things or places and it's in how a person lives, works, collects, dines, travels, dresses, writes and speaks that I find the most inspiration.



what are the biggest mistakes we make in our homes when it comes to design? I think the biggest mistake most people make is not hiring a designer. However, failing that, what people so often do badly is, space plan. They don't seem understand that scale and proportion are key to good design. They often fail to measure their rooms, doorways, ceilings, elevators etc. so that in the end they buy furniture that is usually far too big, awkward and clunky for the space. Also, many people like to buy "sets" of furniture i.e a bedroom set, a dining set. Please stop! Buy a table and some different chairs and bed and a different dresser. And again makes sure they are size appropriate.

best advise on how or where to start ? Well I'd suggest starting with what inspires you. Perhaps nature, a piece of fabric, a favorite hotel, the dash board of a vintage car, a pair of earrings? For me, a lot of inspiration comes from history. I have a degree in art and architectural history and studied in France and Italy where I began an ongoing affair with visiting historical houses and gardens that has lasted more than 25 years. I'm also a keen reader of biographies. I love reading about how people lived and decorated their houses. For instance the Duchess of Windsor had a small minstrel's gallery in her dining room in Paris filled with craved wooden monkeys playing tiny violins. I love knowing details like that.

TORONTO-BASED RESPECTED DESIGNER WILLIAM MACDONALD IS THE PRINCIPAL OF WILLMAC DESIGN. HIS FIRM IS BEST KNOWN FOR CREATING STYLISH APPROACHABLE SPACES THAT EVOKE A SIMPLE TIMELESS ELEGANCE. SERVICING CLIENTELE THROUGHOUT CANADA, THE UNITED STATES, AND OVERSEAS. WWW.WILLMACDESIGN.CA @WILLMACDESIGN

do you have any tips on creating collections of artwork that feel like they fit together even though the pieces may not seem to match? Oh I never match art to anything especially a room. Buy only what you cannot live without. Great art looks good anywhere. And if you don't know what great art is then hire someone who does and learn from them. Ask a lot of questions, go to galleries and auctions and find out what you like. And you don't have to spend a lot of money to collect good art.

what are your tips for making a space luxurious yet still comfortable? Luxury for me is never found in the obvious. It's in the little surprises you don't necessarily notice right away. The piping on a chair, the weave of a carpet, the hand made lampshade, the hand forged hinges on a door, the quality and craftsmanship in the structure of the room. All of those things say luxury to me. Of course you need a place to sit or lie down and that must be welcoming and comfortable but that's the easy part.

what do you feel is the most important role you provide as a designer? Instilling a calm confidence in my clients and ensuring them that all will be well and beautiful. Also, to remind them to laugh when the bathtub comes through the ceiling during the renovation.