

# furniture lighting & decor



## *reinventing for 2020*

designers share creative home  
design business opportunities

# FINDING SANCTUARY

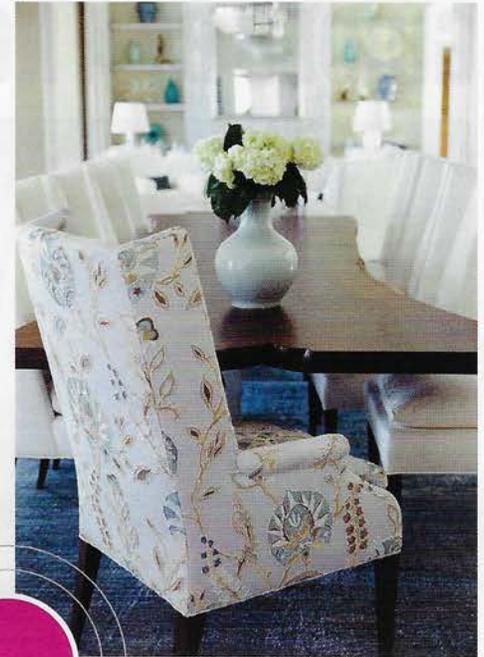
Lisa Kahn is calling from an airport, on the next leg of a journey following a week-long retreat at the Esalen Institute in Big Sur, where she was focused on the “interplay between consciousness and our spaces, the exact intersection between the human spirit and the built environment.

“Interior design is evolving,” says the award-winning designer headquartered in Naples, FL, who has carved her stylistic niche in the residential decorating world as a purveyor of calm. Her popular blog, [findingsanctuary.com](http://findingsanctuary.com), is just one of the business endeavors that has grown out of her experiences as a working interior designer and the mother of a special needs child. “As an interior designer, when you are facing tough times and you really don’t know what to do in your own dark night of the soul, you turn to your space,” she says. “And it really was through those hard personal days that I came to really understand that our spaces have an unbelievably profound effect on our mental health, our physical health, our emotional health and our spiritual health, and I discovered that there is a wonderful opportunity there for designers to tap into that, and really use their power for the good of all.”

Kahn has been developing an e-commerce site where she will sell both curated products and those she has designed and produced. She has a speaking series and is also currently at work on a book and expects to launch Sanctuary Consulting before long. “My firm is going to turn 20 in 2020, and I’m very excited about that thanks to my growing understanding that Sanctuary is so much more at this point than just a design style or a design philosophy,” she says. “It really is a life philosophy and I find myself applying it to all these other areas of my life, from the way that I treat money to the way I treat my body, my friends and my relationships. It’s really interesting to see how this deep, ever-unfolding understanding that I have is really

affecting so many different parts of my life in such a positive, marvelous and wonderful way.”

What can others take from this? “We really have an awesome responsibility and opportunity,” Kahn says. “We have always



Lisa Kahn

known that we can really affect people’s quality of life, but I don’t know that we’ve really capitalized on that, that we understand how profound that can be, how we can really help people transform their lives through their spaces. That is an enormous statement, but I mean it.”

# CHANGING PAGES



Lisa Haude became intrigued by hospitality design in college and has never looked back. The President of Houston-based Paradigm Design Group focuses on telling unique stories through thoughtful design, incorporating her clients’ histories, locations and cultures through color selection, local artifacts and more to help immerse hotel guests in new cultures and lifestyles.

The biggest change she’s seen in the two decades since she launched her design firm are the timeframes in which to get the jobs done. “As massive as some of our projects

are, the timelines are getting shorter and shorter,” Haude relates. “The hotel business has become much more competitive and consumers have so many more options when it comes to where they will stay. Hotels are losing money if they are not selling at full capacity because a portion of their property is out of commission because it’s going through renovation. As a result, when an owner finally says, ‘OK, we’re going to do these improvements,’ the message funnels down to the design and construction team: How quick can you get it done because we have a very small window.”

While Haude admits hospitality design has always been a pressure cooker environment, another challenge these days is an increase in competition for the available jobs. “I’m always competing against the same group of firms. That’s our norm, but as more brands are moving into different types of properties, they are starting to go outside the swim lane a bit. They are saying, ‘Maybe we should try a residential designer in this instance, because we’re looking for a certain experience.’”

In the coming year, Haude is working to solidify and highlight her niche. “I think what it boils down to for me is evaluating what we do really well and then pushing in that direction as an expert in that element,” she says. “Hospitality is morphing a bit with more properties becoming lifestyle-driven. You could focus just on restaurants or boutique resorts or 55-plus communities, but I think the key is to become an expert in some of these elements because properties are really going to start honing in on those niches moving forward.”



Lisa Haude