

Global

WITH LOCAL INFLUENCE

When an internationally acclaimed designer puts her stamp on Ottawa, it's worth taking a look. Anna Simone, founding partner in Cecconi Simone, a Toronto-based design firm, is creating excitement at 106 Sparks Street.

WRITTEN BY MARY TAGGART
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THIS PAGE: A wall of wire brush-treated wood is effective in creating a textural look in the living room. **CLOCKWISE, RIGHT:** Mixing metals, wool and wood combines natural elements to successfully create textured space. Cecconi Simone founding partner, Anna Simone.



Responsible for creating an upscale look that cleverly combines luxury and practicality, Anna's innate gift for design and her detailed eye are reflected in both the presentation centre and model unit at Ashcroft Homes' re Hotel & Residences.

With words that resonate with an exquisite combination of wisdom and passion, Anna shares her thoughts on good design with *Ottawa At Home*. She also talks about the modest quality of Ottawa people as a reflection of the Canadian identity and explains why she is excited to work in the nation's capital.

Describe your design style. This is always a complicated question. We (Cecconi Simone) come across as contemporary, but really we stay true to a genre – whatever that may be. We research and put time into ensuring the look is authentic; usually avoiding the traditional as it is so hard to achieve authenticity in traditional design. Buying crown moulding from Home Depot does not make a home traditional.

What do you think are the key elements of good design and how do you incorporate these into your own work? There are five principles of good design: balance, rhythm, harmony, scale and proportion. If these principles are accomplished, the environment will feel comfortable.

Can a designer be taught how to achieve this? There are two types of designers: those that are born and those that are taught. The ones that are taught may not always have the





sensitivity to incorporate these principles in a room.

Your designs combine luxury and practicality so cleverly. How do you achieve this balance? This has to do with the much-debated concepts of form and function.

What comes first? Design comes out of function. This is a delicate dance, but without the practical, the design just won't work. We have used lots of wood throughout the model suite.

Is this something you do in many of your projects? Wood is something that people relate to – you don't want the environment to feel foreign to people. The wood we use in the model is solid and treated with a wire brush, then stained white and black to bring out the grain. This creates a lot of texture. Adding a textural look to a room creates warmth. A strong foundation includes lots of texture.

As this is your first project in Ottawa, did you face any challenges working in a smaller city? Really it is only Ottawans who see Ottawa as a challenge! I think this thinking is representative of Canadians as a whole. We are humble people about what we have to offer to the international table. I work all over the world and am always surprised by all that Canadians have to offer globally, yet still feel as though they are second rate. I see this modest quality in Ottawans.

What about this project excited you most? Working with David Choo, (president of Ashcroft), who has capitalized on learning experiences from past projects that presented challenges. David has worked hard



to find and utilize experts to help create a project of this level. This is exciting for the people of Ottawa who are well travelled and have seen this calibre of luxury living, but have not experienced it locally. It is wonderful to be a part of bringing this to a city that is ready.

What are your impressions of the nation's capital? One word – beautiful!

Would you do more work in Ottawa? Absolutely!

To learn more about Cecconi Simone visit www.cecconisimone.com.

THIS PAGE: Cecconi Simone designed the beds with built-in components to maximize the function of the space. **RIGHT:** Exotic and simplistic unite in the ensuite.



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