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DESIGNER LOOK BOOK

The Business of Design

“BUSINESS AND DESIGN -
ONE WITHOUT THE
OTHER IS CHAOS.”

Thomas Burger, Pg. 18

Balance the Hours in a Day.
We talk to LEE BROOM,
designer of 30 venues &
winner of 7 industry awards,
about how he does it all
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ALEXANDRA GIBSON
DISCUSSES SOCIAL
MEDIA AS A
BUSINESS TOOL

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ondine karady



Who has been instrumental in your design approach and personal style?

My parents. My mother is an architect, and my father is a research chemist and a woodworker. They designed and built everything in our house themselves, so I had a lot of exposure to art and design growing up. I also like the iconic design look of classic 20th century modernist, like Mies Van Der Rohe, and the pieces produced by Knoll.

What would be your dream project, and why?

My dream project would be to work on the East Wing of the White House. I was actually one of the designers in the running; they invited me to submit a design book and everything. I think that really would have been my dream job; it's a huge honor of course, and exciting to be a part of history, but I also feel that to bring style back to the White House would be like bringing style back to America.

How do you keep up to date?

I use the Internet a lot, especially 1stDibs.com and Decorati. And of course I read all the magazines cover to cover. I love *Elle Decor*, *World of Interiors*, and *Elle Decoration*. And I really miss *Domino*.

Do you use social media in your business?

I'm on Facebook and LinkedIn. The Design Network in New York has a group called the Design Exchange. We meet monthly to see new products or shows and just talk design.

Where's your favorite place to shop for product?

For the selection, and because I can choose to search locally I love 1stDibs.com.

So do you prefer to shop online?

I have mixed opinions about the Web, it spoils shopping because everything is right there. But it's not the same.

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“Always maintain a sense of design integrity, and care about your work.”



What's your best way to build clientele?

Do a good job. I get a lot of work by word of mouth. Leave clients satisfied. Always maintain a sense of design integrity, and care about your work.

What business topics are you dying to know more about?

I'd like to know more about manufacturing. I'd like to design my own lines, but I don't know anything about how that side of the business works, what would go into getting a project like that started and so on.

What technology do you use to run your business?

Quickbooks for financial. I use Google SketchUp most of the time, but for complicated things we use AutoCAD. And I use iPhoto a lot.

What is your favorite project to date, and why is it your favorite?

My favorite project I've worked on is my home. I worked for myself, it was very freeing, no second guessing. I got to design around my personality, find a place for all of my favorite things. The result was this whimsical and fun space I really love.

What are some of these 'favorite things'? Did you have some pieces that you just had to design a room around?

Yes. In my living room I have these big metal medical cabinets from the 1920s. I had originally purchased them for the film *Requiem for a Dream*, and when we finished filming I took them home. They're built into my living room wall now, and I use them to showcase my "Mentally Challenged" Toy Collection. (They're creepy or special-looking vintage toys from probably the 1930s-80s.)



What challenges did you face while working on this project?

It was a raw space, no walls. I had to carve out all these different spaces and manage the square footages. For example I wanted a walk-in, but did I need the space somewhere else? It was difficult to juggle everything I wanted; in some places it came down to inches.

What did you learn from the project?

I learned to be really clear with the contractor. I had two floor plans I was working off of, and I hadn't made the final decision yet, and they went ahead and installed the plumbing for the kitchen without consulting with me. Basically they made the choice for me. ▽

