



Tendrils of bright auburn hair cascade down the shoulders of Lori Clark as she unloads an enormous bundle of exotic flowers, monstera leaves, tiles and textiles. “When I design a room, I engage all of my senses,” she explains. Mixing raw with refined, vintage and modern, patterns with textures, and a thoughtful consideration for color, Lori describes herself as a creator of experiences. Perhaps it is this visceral and immersive sense of expression that perpetuates the high demand for her work, as Lori Clark Design has thrived in Arizona extending into her 10th year of business.

“Every client is different, and no one wants to live in a sea of sameness. My job is to be a good listener and run the client’s vision through my filter, staying consistent with my philosophy.” Looking at her catalogue of interior design work, it is refreshing to see such the vastness of concepts and styles. Though her signature design principles are felt in every room, it is clear her multifaceted inspirations are just as boundless as her list of clientele. Homogenous design, she is not.

Speaking to Lori between clicks of my camera, I wanted to know how she began, and more importantly, how she survived the grueling year of global pandemic. I wondered how her business changed with so many families redesigning their homes in 2020.

With shimmering hazel eyes filled with hypnotic charisma, she told me how she was deeply influenced by her fashionista grandmother. “She made all of my clothes and would take me to various fabric stores to learn her design process.” This education played a big role disciplining

Lori's eye for design as she began to create compelling and functional clothing with selective combinations of color palettes and patterns.

As so many were forced to remain at home for the bulk of the year, one of the primary shifts in design, according to Lori, was the desire to move away from the previously coveted open concept style and into a new found priority for private spaces. Prior to 2020 most families were working away from home all day, so the priority was to commune and join together spaces at home to heighten connection. However, with every family member stuck at home, 2021 gave us a new prerogative and preference for separate zones to linger and lounge with a bit more autonomy and privacy. Obviously with so many people working remotely, the home office became much more of a focal point for design with a need for more square footage and natural light. Outdoor living spaces also rose to the top of the list of necessities as it became more and more necessary to maximize space and get outside the limitations of the home itself. "I'm very lucky to be doing what I love," she said, "nevertheless, I had to come up with a new platform of creativity to conform with the 'new norm'."

A post 2020 adjustment: E-Design was added as a service on Lori's website. This contact-free system allowed clients from any location (Lori had clients as far away as Nashville and Florida use the service) to access the design process at a much more affordable rate. This year another new modification within the industry was The Expert Movement, a trend that Lori was eager to join. "It's a service that has all the big name designers that you can pay an hourly rate to ask any designer as many questions as you want about your project," Lori continued.

2020 permanently altered the urgency for the home to be multifunctional as both a place of retreat and place of Being. The luxury of comfort and style rivaled the need to create spaces that maintain sustainable inspiration... something we all needed especially when our home was the Only place we could be.

— Paige Craig, writer/photographer