

JR Studio – Joel Robare

By Lorrie Browne | 8 May 2009



Today, I would like to introduce you to a very talented interior designer, Joel Robare. Joel is recognized for his innate creativity, open approach, attention to detail and superior service in interior design. He has been kind enough to answer a few questions and share some of his work with us today. Thanks Joel! Enjoy everyone! ~ Lorrie

Could you describe your path to becoming a designer?

I was bitten by the creativity bug early, drawing and painting ever since I can remember. My first apartments lived like stage sets! That said, it surprises most people to know that I started with a business management degree – how efficient! I think the experience gave me the ability to run my business with my head in the clouds and my feet on the ground. A friend once told me we all have to ” do what makes our heart sing.” If you are near me, you can probably hear my song without straining your ears too much! I love what I do and am inspired daily.



Can you describe your philosophy of a “lifestyle-driven approach to design?”

Have you ever walked into an interior that takes your breath away? That is our aim when we work with our clients. We create interiors that speak to their own inner voice – going beyond current trends and catalog pages. Our interiors speak of the people who live and work inside them. Our life-style driven approach takes into account everything our clients are willing to share with us. We start with a comprehensive interview that asks all the right questions. Have a dog? Have children? Have a problem with hiding clutter? Don’t want to hide clutter? There IS a perfect interior for every person, and I believe we create it...beautifully. Our clients become intimately involved with their own homes and they love our work! Some of their testimonials have been very touching.



What was the inspiration for your featured project?

The featured project on our website is a home for San Francisco newlyweds. Putting together a home is really the first decision making process any young couple takes on. As a designer, we have to ask a lot of questions and use a bit of light psychology to bring two lives together under one roof. Our inspiration was “a fresh start” and we worked hard to assist them in finding their combined voice. I think they both learned a lot about each other in the process – almost as much as we learned about them! (The discussion on the nursery was important for all of us...) We layered in a lot of pure functionality (easy maintenance, extra storage, private spaces) with layered bits of personality they identified with individually. She was most interested in the past like antiques and creating moments that stir her memory like the wallpapered powder room and painted cabinetry. He was very interested in the home’s tactile components like the Aga range, walk in shower, and building out his garage. Our job was to add completely fresh elements, a cohesive color story and a few “wows” like the glass stripes in the kitchen floor and that lush mosaic tile

backsplash. Our work combined with their individual preferences led to a cohesive whole that both expressed their personality to the world – both as individuals as well as a new couple.



Joel, could you share a few tips with our readers on how best to marry style with practicality/functionality?

Marry is the word of the day! If you read my blog, you will see I love lists. Here is one for your readers: JR Studio’s 5 steps to making any situation stylish.

1. Everything starts with a plan. Write down your list of needs, but keep it short. 5-7 needs are all most people can focus on, and you don’t want to stop before you are finished! Defining what problems need solving will help you stay on track with decision making. Your list might include anything from “this room needs more light” to “I need a more comfortable sofa.”

2. Find your inspiration. Get out the magazines, books and blog postings that have you have been eyeing and start a style stack of what inspires you. Style is what you are after, so be bold and push yourself a little. Don't edit yourself – just quickly pile everything that speaks to your soul in one spot and...sleep on it. Seriously, that was a lot of work! When you are back to your stack the next day, find 5 images that really speak to what you want to accomplish and put them on a board. Maybe you see a color story you like, a “wow” detail you have to have or a room that leaves you wanting. You don't need THE thing, only a sense of what inspires you. You will create THE thing yourself. This board is crucial – it's a visual reminder of your stylish inspiration!



3. Define the scope. Back to your list of needs. Look at the room you are working on and firmly say, “I will do this,” “I won't touch that,” “I can afford to spend this much now and that much next month.” It is important to keep it real so that the outcome is as perfect as you wanted before you made it to this step. No compromises are necessary if you are honest with yourself. Enlist your best friend to help only if you really need it, but

open it any part of the process up for general discussion. The president may have a full cabinet of consultants, but he only has 1 designer! Design is personal and should not be done by committee. The idea is to be a little self indulgent and let others enjoy your expression afterward.

4. Get to work. You've done your homework – now get to work! Start sourcing items at your local furniture shops, antiques dealers (we LOVE vintage!.) and yard sales. Ask your local hardware store how to change your door swing or install a new light fixture. I can't stress enough – you need to get out of your house to work on your house. I love the Internet, but nothing beats face-to-face communication with people who can inspire you further and help you along. Use the Internet at night after you've gotten out during the day. It is a great tool for affirming your decisions and filling in the blanks with items you may not be able to get to in your city. Remember to evaluate your decisions against that list of needs you created at Step 1. Stay focused! You can tackle those other items that inevitably pop up another time.



5. Use JR Studio's favorite mantras. "Bigger is better" because nothing is worse than a room full of tiny objects. "High touch = high value," so spend your resources on the features you touch the most and let the accents be...accents." Decoration should be drama free," this IS supposed to be the fun part! And, of course, check out our website for other great resources and tips. Your world should be a beautiful place and we are happy to help any way we can.

URL: <http://www.mydesignsecrets.com/2009/05/08/jr-studio-joel-robare/>

URL: http://www.jrstudiodesign.com/index.html?who_we_are.html