

## The Profile

## PASSION FOR DESIGN

A visit with  
Lori Andriot

**Lori Andriot, Vice President, Residential Design Bittners**  
 Photographer: Josh Merideth  
 Hair design: Stephen Lewis  
 Makeup: Jill Higginbotham

By **FRANNY CORRIGAN GUENTHNER**  
 Special to The Voice-Tribune

As I enter Bittners, it is abuzz with new fall arrivals for the Showroom. Lori Andriot warmly greets me as we settle into a comfortable spot in the great room, by a magnificent, oversized Italian bookcase. She is very friendly and guides me into a wonderful camel-stitched sofa. Two rustic, gothic lanterns reflect a warm glow onto the limestone mantel. I notice on the wall two striking Donna DeMari photographs, from her horse series, and later learn that Ralph Lauren bought this famous photographer's work for his new store in Paris.

Our conversation begins, and it is quite apparent that Lori's passion for design started at an early age. She tells me how, even as a little girl, colors and fabrics fascinated her. Her travels as a child also gave her an openness and versatility about people, which is reflected in her design work today. We start to talk more about her life and her love of design.

#### What is it about design that you love?

I truly love creating a home that is a reflection of that owner. After growing up in various wonderful places, you learn that each person has their own definition of what a beautiful home is for their family. I have designed projects from New York to Florida and out West to California, with each client wanting completely different styles. Being open and versatile to their needs is very important.

I also love the process of design. After meeting a client, I envision the space and how best to create their style. To see the pieces of the puzzle come together is very natural to me and in the end, very rewarding.

All of this truly culminates with my utmost desire to make a client's home their home. I feel I am giving my special talent to wonderful people, who over the years have become my dear, close friends.

#### What trends do you see in design today?

First, I feel we are returning to our history as we see more clients incorporating architectural detail and artifacts into their homes. This can be from adding antique columns to intricate crown moldings on the walls with reclaimed lumber on the floors. Each is a work of art that builds character in the space.

Second, today's client is a global traveler and wants those worldly elements brought into the design of their home. People are traveling to unique places and collecting wonderful pieces. Plus, we have access to products from all over the world, from silks made in China, rugs from Tibet and bronzes from Italy. They want all these unique pieces reflected in the design of their home.

Third, lighting has been underestimated for years but is now given more importance. Unusual lighting is becoming

popular. Lighting can dramatically affect a space and express a personality.

Last, we are seeing a lot of neutrals, but now with pops of color. A neutral room may be designed with a bold-colored furniture piece or contrasted with a large color block wall.

#### What is your design philosophy?

Blend comfort, classic design and quality with a contemporary, youthful approach. Juxtapose old furniture with the new or traditional fabrics and textiles with contemporary to create your lifestyle.

Always incorporate an element of surprise. Find a piece that inspires you and place it in an unusual way in the room. I always call it "layering traditional with a twist." These little surprises make your home so much more interesting!

Last, design with a purpose in mind. Make sure you purchase quality pieces so as you transition through the different phases of your life, you have invested well for the long-term.

#### What is your greatest inspiration?

My passion for life and people inspires me. Traveling and designing for clients throughout the country gave me a love of meeting people and hearing their stories, which inspires me in my design work.

My family is my greatest inspiration. My wonderful mother gives me strength and courage. My father blessed me with his wisdom and conviction for life. My loving husband, Steve, balances me with his quiet strength, insight and tremendous generosity. My children inspire me with their passion for life. Lindsay has an energizing zest for life; Jenny possesses an inspiring sheer determination; and Brian is filled with an adventurous spirit. And last, my best friend, Barbara, who has been a confidant and mentor.

#### What are the design strengths of Bittners?

Bittners is a fantastic design firm and it starts with our leadership. Douglas Riddle has an amazing insight and style, which we all look up to. Our leadership team motivates us with their vision and passion for design. This is accompanied with the most talented team of designers and support staff that are unparalleled in our region. Each team member brings with them a unique ability to the firm, which comes together to make Bittners a true "one of a kind."

Many people do not realize the depth of our services. We have master craftsmen on site who create furniture masterpieces, every day. Our vast design resource library is a huge asset for our clients, who can come down and see all the fabrics we have to offer. Our showroom boasts over 10,000 square feet of furniture, lamps, pillows, lighting and accessories. We have a commercial division so that when your office needs the Bittners' "touch," we are there with the design experts. Last, we have our own delivery staff that

understands the importance of your pieces and carefully delivers them to you.

Bittners is so unique. I am truly grateful for the superb support staff and to be surrounded by this family of creative, passionate people that allow me to execute high quality design every day.

#### What are your career highlights?

My career highlights actually occur every day because I get to work with the best clients for the best design firm, who allow me to express my passion for design. I have been blessed with an amazing life filled with a great family and wonderful friends.

#### What is the best advice you have ever received?

That advice came from my father in which he said, "Every day brings new gifts – make sure you untie the ribbons."

#### What type of community service are you involved in?

Most recently, I have joined the Norton Cancer Institute Suburban Patient and Family Advisory Council board. My mother, an ovarian cancer survivor from whom I draw a lot of strength, stirred the passion in me to help others fight this disease. This illness even inspired my daughter to host a formal tea fundraiser and raise over \$5,000 for the cause. Serving on this board will allow me to be involved in helping others during their time of need.

Volunteering at my daughter's school, Sacred Heart Model School, has also been important to me. I've chaired and served on various school committees throughout the past eight years. I have also dedicated time in the preservation of Whitehall Historic Home.

#### What is one thing that people are surprised to know about you?

I am taking hip-hop dance lessons.

### Q&A with LORI ANDRIOT

**Hobbies:** Cooking (attended cooking school at Julia Child's former home in Southern France), entertaining, wines, travel and reading.

**Favorite movie:** "The Great Gatsby."

**Recent book read:** "The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo" by Stieg Larsson.

**Favorite restaurant:** My kitchen.

**Favorite wine:** Shibumi Knoll, Napa Valley.

**Best Show:** "Jersey Boys."

**Favorite vacation spot:** Napa Valley, Calif., and France.

**Favorite painter:** Claude Monet.