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Opening Extract from...

Designs for a Happy Home

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1. The Threshold

You have opened the door. Take a deep breath. Now step . . .

. . . into the world of Good Design. Have a look around you. Isn't it lovely? So calming, but also so alive. Here, colours always *go* – or, if they don't, they clash in interesting ways. Here shapes are in harmony (or else meaningful *dis*-harmony) like a beautiful musical chord. Look, over here, at this Utzon chair and footstool next to the simplest possible standard lamp from IKEA (design doesn't always have to be expensive). Isn't it magic? Or gaze down there at that re-creation of the classic WilliWear showroom in New York: so functional – and also so *funny*.

Don't worry: I know you probably can't actually see these things in your mind's eye yet. And maybe you have no sense of colour, or are psychotically messy, or rubbish at DIY, or simply feel design is not for you. All of us are on our separate journeys; all of us have different hurdles to hop over. But trust me. I have taken this path ahead of you, and look at me now: Alizia Tamé, lead designer with IntArchitec Home-is-Harmony. Whether you want to merely go on a day trip, or else a wholesale design pilgrimage, this book that I am writing will be your guide.

It is a How-To Book; and also it is my Life Story. Why both together? Because the roots of my Designs go deep into my life and

their branches (i.e., their effects) stretch out in all directions. You will see my ideas spring up, and watch me bringing them across the threshold of reality. Testimonials from friends and colleagues will show you the influence that I and my Designs have had on them. Finally, I am going to reveal to you my own personal trade secrets – my Magic Mottoes – to help you activate the Design potential in your own lives. A beautiful Interior can make you calmer, more generous – and, in a really startling way, more *you*.

How come? The reason is that your Interior – your thoughts and feelings and fears – and the Interiors that surround you, with their wallpapers and stripped-pine flooring and leather chairs (or whatever), all somehow go together. If a lick of paint can lift your mood, make life seem brighter, and the world a better place – imagine what a full-scale re-design can do. Imagine light-filled rooms. Imagine shining, adorable colours: Naples yellow, cadmium, Manila, cobalt, verditer, burnt vine-wood blue. Imagine spaces harmoniously interlinked. Imagine a bathroom where the shower really works, is really wonderful. Imagine chairs chosen and arranged so that conversation zings like a jazz band or murmurs like a melodious string quartet. Imagine a kitchen where everything you need is miraculously within reach, where your everyday dull chores become a happy dance.

Wouldn't it be wonderful?

When I step into my Home Office (see ch. 4) at the start of each Designing day I take a few minutes to remember when I have been most happy. Of couse good Interiors can make my spirits soar but at this sensitive beginning stage I don't think of them so much as of private things, moments with Poppy or Jem, oh, and other people, other times. I let the smiles rise again inside me, the sunsets fill me with their joy. What's funny is that these moments didn't always happen in beautiful places. It wasn't always sunset! But I remember them as if they did. Don't you? If it was drizzling I remember

brightness shining through the wet; if I was in some terrible stodgy blunt Interior it comes back to me miraculously transformed. This is the golden key. This is what I am trying to get through to: these angel Interiors that somehow were there in the air around me even though they actually, physically were not.

Now: relax. Reach back (will you do this for me?) to the happiest moments in your life. What Design ideas do they summon up for you? What colours? Textures? Forms? Or any particular *objets*? Stillness or movement? Brightness or velvet gloom? Visualise these memories: make them real, let them gleam again, let the feeling of them grow. It may help if you jot down some pointers – anything at all: words, doodles, names, shapes. If you like, you can jot them down here:



Did you manage? I don't mind if you haven't actually scribbled anything. Jem wouldn't have done, for instance (he's my husband) – he's a very private person, he likes to keep his feelings nested safe inside. All I need is for you to have accessed that Emotion. The sparkle in your heart. That is what we want to grow and then encapsulate in our Interiors. Through Design, your Happiness can flower and spread.

We have arrived at Magic Motto no. 1:

1. Interior Design Is The Makeover Of Minds.

I know this is a big claim. But little by little you will see it happening. Room by room.