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Family, friends and faith

By Kathryn Kates
Special to Go@home
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NAME:

Linda Lundstrom

OCCUPATION:

Fashion designer

RESIDENCE:

'50s style split-level in Toronto

Canadian fashion designer Linda Lundstrom, chief creative officer and president of Linda Lundstrom Inc., is the creator of the popular LaParka -- the winter coat she has produced in a multitude of monochromatic colours for two decades. In late September, to celebrate the 20th anniversary of her signature design, Lundstrom kicked off an auction on eBay with a one-of-a-kind version called Okichitaakwe.

Lundstrom recently returned from her annual trip to Paris where she scoured international textile fairs for fabrics. She's working on her fall-winter 2007 collection, finding inspiration in her Parisian fabric finds.

Lundstrom lives in Toronto's East York with her husband Joel Halbert and two daughters, Moshana, 19, and Sophie, 16. The couple bought the home 20 years ago.

Q: How would you describe your home?

A: Our home was built in 1951. It has a very '50s look with echoes of Frank Lloyd Wright. It is a split-level home, linear and geometric. We fell in love with it because of the great big picture-frame windows and because it was not typical to Toronto. It has four bedrooms and 3 1/2 bathrooms.

One unique thing about our home is the swimmex -- a sort of swimmer's treadmill -- in a small gym. Some of my best ideas come while swimming.

The colours in our home range from neutrals in the living room and kitchen to a sunflower yellow in the hallways to a tomato red in the pool room. The colours of my daughters' rooms were both picked out by them. Sophie's room is very girly. It features a deep coral pink on the walls with chocolate accents. Moshana's room has a more whimsical feel with a sky blue ceiling and white clouds. Our entire home is finished with hardwood floors or



Photography by Ron Albertson

Linda Lundstrom says her home is cosy, open and loud and 'most often full of people.'



Linda Lundstrom's living room -- like the rest of her split-level home -- is 'linear and geometric.' Inset: Marley likes the couch.

laminated flooring. Our home features a lot of art, which I would never part with. We love large, bright paintings that bring colourful accents to the soft creams and neutrals. Our favourites are our Norval Morrisseau, our three Helen Lucas paintings and our children's art.

Q: Is this your dream home?

A: As soon as we saw it, we knew it was the one. Even though it was outside our budget, had no basement and was electrically heated, we both loved so many things about it. The neighbourhood has a community feeling with great local schools, little traffic and is bordered by a ravine.

Q: What is your most exotic decor piece?

A: The most exotic pieces in my home are the pieces that television's Design Rivals, Chris Hyndman and Steven Sabados, brought in when they did my living room makeover: A gorgeous braided lemongrass chair is out of this world. Also, there is a fabulous table made out of a slab of tamarind wood. This is my favourite room, Steven and Chris did a fabulous job. I feel grown-up in it because it's very sophisticated.

Q Did you design or renovate yourself?

A: We have renovated or redesigned our home on five different occasions. We have always used professional services. The first renovation was the kitchen, then we added a third floor to accommodate a master bedroom. Our third renovation was converting a bathroom to a laundry room and an ensuite bathroom. The fourth was adding the gym-solarium that houses the swimmer. Our latest renovation was the one that Chris and Steven did for our living room.

Q: What about your house reflects your personality?

A: My home is comfortable, not formal. It is open and loud and most often full of people. It is warm and welcoming with the kitchen being "command central," often with me cooking. I am happiest when I am feeding my guests. Also, our home reflects the importance of family and friends and faith.

Q: What piece of furniture will you never part with?

A: I cherish very much and would never part with a hockey stick chair made by my father. He was always very handy and would salvage broken objects and make things. I love things that have a story.

Q: When something needs fixing around the house do you reach for the tool box or the telephone?

A: I would probably reach for the tool box, although sometimes I'm so exhausted and running out of gas. I do have tools and I am pretty handy doing small things.

Q What do you feel most comfortable redecorating yourself?

A: I feel very comfortable doing curtains, but I get professionals to do tasks like painting. An exception to that is when we are at our weekend summer cabin. At the cabin, I do little projects like stencilling the cupboards



Linda Lundstrom's dining room features colourful artwork which contrasts nicely with the room's neutral tones.



Photography by Ron Albertson

Artist Sandy McMullen did these 'essence portraits' of Lundstrom's family. They are displayed above the fireplace.

or painting the rooms because it doesn't have to be perfect, and I can do it in my bathing suit.

Q: What is your proudest decorating or handyman moment?

A: My biggest accomplishment is building a wood-burning sauna at the cabin. Being Scandinavian, a sauna is an important part of my cultural background. I drew the plans for our building permit; I designed the layout, worked with the builder and helped put the ceramic tiles around the sauna's firebox that contains wood. It was totally my project from the beginning to the end.

Q: Do you have a tip for other homeowners?

A: Hire a professional. Working with one is way more fun and you get better results. It just makes sense to go to people who were put on this earth to do interior and architectural design.



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