

A Passion for Fine Design



...and an appreciation for stylish cuisine. That's what three local, independent professionals have in common. Richard Lewin, Don Genova, and David Coulson each have their niche when it comes to creative work. Where they meet is at the intersect of food, writing, and home design.

Richard Lewin, Golda's Pesto chef extraordinaire, first met David Coulson back in the late 1980s, when both Golda's Pesto and David Coulson Design were still on the drawing board, and when Richard was running an art gallery/cafe on Kenneth Street. "Richard had the best cappuccino—everyone went to that gallery for coffee and conversation," Coulson says. "I think I had the only cappuccino machine in town at that time," recalls Lewin. "And with 458 square feet to work with...well, I did what I wanted, but I'm no designer."

Fast forward 20 years and we find Golda's Pesto firmly established as a gourmet line of sauces, pastes, pickles and more—all lovingly made and packaged at Richard's home 'factory' in Mill Bay. A recent home renovation by David Coulson Design has added fuel to the creative fire of Lewin's enterprise.

"I can create an inventory now!" Richard exclaims, gesturing proudly to a custom-built, ground-floor walk-in fridge and freezer. He leads me through the office space, the shiny new pickle factory, and upstairs to his expanded living room/glass gallery and sun deck. Phyllis Serota, Jack Shadbolt, and Will Julsing are among the painters represented in Lewin's private art collection. The colourful gallery of his past is vibrant in this present-day culinary HQ. "What's the next project?" I ask. "Oh, the kitchen. We're going to expand it out here, change this entrance ..." and

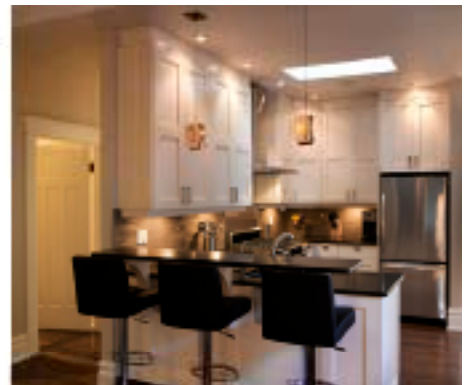
we're off again on another tour.

If the kitchen is the heart room of the home, then food journalist Don Genova's airy new workspace is a heart room with a view. Generous and dramatic describe the windows surrounding Don's Cobble Hill altar to all things cookery. With natural light and woodland views on three sides, it takes a moment to focus on where the kitchen itself begins and ends. Not least because Don's writing equipment (laptop on a raised bar top above the counter, books spilling across the woodblock cupboard opposite) stays close to the recipe-testing 'console'. "The open concept is perfect for entertaining," says Genova. "It allows me to connect with my guests while I'm cooking." The centrepiece to this design is the curved granite island, with room to manoeuvre on the inside and comfortable elbow (and entree?) room on the periphery—just




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close enough for the host to refill your glass without having to leave his station. But this treetop kitchen was not always so heavenly. “I loved the house when we bought it, but I knew this room was the weak point.” Don attempted to modify the cramped, inefficient space on his own, but it wasn’t working for him. “I met Dave [Coulson] at the Saturday Market about five years ago. He immediately took me to see the Green Door project on Ingram Street. I knew then that this was the guy I wanted to handle my kitchen.” A few years later, the time was right.

“The first drawing David came up with was just what I had in mind. It was exciting to see it



on paper.” Did Genova have a hand in the design process? “We talked a lot about movement within the space. From kitchen to deck, from dining table to kitchen—it’s all accessible.” The biggest benefit from this renovation? “The kitchen design is important because it makes me want to cook.” The most fun? “Playing with Dave,” says Richard Lewin. “His energy is contagious and he’s passionate - whatever he sets his mind to, he finishes.”

Images Don Genova, David Coulson, Richard Lewin taken by Erin Morgan Coulson. Kitchen images this page courtesy of Don Genova.



Erin Morgan Coulson’s labour of love is Green Monkey Writing Services, an entrepreneurial move inspired by her father.

craft

We live busy lives, rushing from one thing to another. Often a ‘break’ will be coffee or tea in a styrofoam, waxed paper, or machine made cup, most of which will end up in a landfill somewhere. We often do not think about the environmental consequences of our single use throw-away containers. Try taking only a few minutes enjoying your favorite beverage in a fine crafted hand made cup – you’ll notice the difference. You can take it with you and use it as an alternative wherever disposable cups are offered.

In the early 1900’s in Japan there was a reawakening to the fact that it was important to have fine crafted objects as a part of every day life as they enhance one’s quality of life. This movement is known as ‘Mingei’ which means ‘art of the people’ refers to that simple folk craft quality of hand made pieces (dishes, furniture, paintings, textiles, etc.) that helps keep us connected. As Soetsu Yanagi writes in *The Unknown Craftsman*, “Handcraftmanship, if it be alive, justifies itself at any time as an intimate expression of the spirit of man.”

Now you’re sitting holding your coffee or tea in a hand made mug. You can feel the texture of the handle, or if you cradle the body of the mug you can also feel its warmth. There is a pleasing smoothness as your lip touches the rim. You can smell the aroma and see the colours of the liquid and your mug. Let the outside noises and concerns go for a few moments.

Now doesn’t that taste and feel better. Enjoy.

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Cathi Jefferson is a full-time potter that makes salt-fired stoneware dishes and sculptural pieces at her studio and home on the Cowichan River.



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