

portland home design
UpClose

by donna pizzi photography by phillip clayton-thompson

UPTOWN style

A REMODELED FOREST HEIGHTS
TOWN HOME BRINGS NEW ENERGY
AND CREATIVITY TO A
SENIOR VP'S BUSY LIFE

SOARING WINDOWS BRING NECESSARY LIFE AND LIGHT INTO KATHLEEN SUSEÉ'S LIVING ROOM, WHICH IS ALWAYS ADORNED WITH FRESH FLOWERS. SUSEÉ AND PENN DESIGNED THE SOFAS TOGETHER TO FIT INTO THE SPACE BEFORE PENN WENT ON AN EXHAUSTIVE SEARCH FOR ITS MOHAIR FABRIC. "NOËLLE WILL GO TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH TO FIND THE RIGHT FABRIC FOR YOU," SAYS SUSEÉ.



A TABLECLOTH MADE FROM THE SAME POLLOCK FABRIC USED IN REVERSE ON SOME OF THE SOFA PILLOWS BY TRACY QUOID ADDS FLOW TO THE CIRCULAR DINING ROOM TABLE. ARTWORK BY MODERN CHINESE ARTIST MAO JIE ADDS FURTHER ENERGETIC MOVEMENT TO THE DINING AREA.

WHEN Kathleen Schultz, senior vice president at Harsch Investment Properties, was in the market for a new home, she had very definite criteria in mind. She wanted something modern and light-filled whose décor would be restful and soothing after a stressful day. She also wanted something that would reconnect her with her “other self” – the one she had put on hold to pursue a successful career in real estate.

Like Clark Kent, Schultz dons a very different wardrobe as her “alter ego,” artist Kathleen Suseé. Both women live within her, but when she returns home from work each night, it is Schultz who steps out of the slim black suit and Suseé who slips into the gauzy fuchsia shirt discovered during a pilgrimage to Turkey this year.

“My former home in Lake Oswego, which [interior designer] Noëlle Penn and I decorated with an Asian theme, was located in a setting that put its arms around you and said, ‘It’s quiet and secluded, you can be safe here,’” explains Schultz/Suseé. And yet, the very qualities that first drew her to that home soon began to chafe at her soul. “I needed a more expansive environment with greater artistic freedom and light,” she says.

Her daughter, artist Bridgette Brown, spotted the model for the two-story Forest Heights town home and knew its bank of modern windows would supply the “enlightenment” her mother needed. Suseé selected the site and together with Penn, spent a year designing the space to make it uniquely her own.

Alchemy was definitely at work when Suseé first met the owner of Noëlle Interiors at a Portland framing shop, where Suseé often brought her artwork. Soon, the two women began collaborating on the interior design of three of Suseé’s successive homes.





left: INTERIOR DESIGNER NOËLLE PENN WORKED WITH SUSEÉ TO UPGRADE MANY ASPECTS OF HER FOREST HEIGHTS TOWN HOME, INCLUDING THE KITCHEN CABINETRY, BACKSPLASH AND CONCRETE COUNTER TOPS TO GIVE IT A MORE CONTEMPORARY LOOK. above: SUSEÉ ENJOYS ADDING DASHES OF COLOR THROUGHOUT HER HOME. HERE SHE CREATES A PLAYFUL COUNTER-SETTING, USING UNMATCHED PLACE MATS, DISHWARE AND WHIMSICAL ARTWORK.

Both agree that Suseé's latest home is their crowning collaborative effort, thanks to the restorative aspects of its décor and the expansiveness of the space.

"I understand space planning and relationships," says Suseé. "I deal with space plans all the time at work, so I knew I needed a clean environment with places where I can rest my eye."

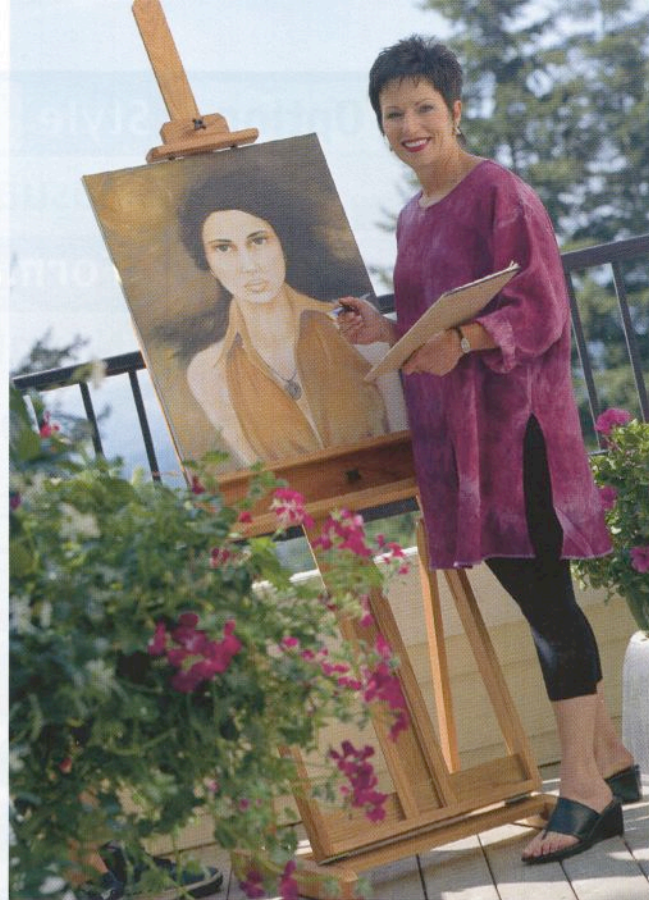
Penn, who understands how to create a client's vision and then artfully add to it with strokes that broaden the design appeal, encapsulated the style for the proposed interior design when she brought back a photograph of a Demi Lune piece from the Seattle Design Center that later became the focal point for the entrance to the master bedroom suite.

"I told Kathleen, 'This is what I visualize your new house to be!'" says Penn. And indeed, the piece ultimately defined the palette for the décor – its textures and proliferation of rounded edges a key design element that a Feng Shui consultant told Suseé she needed to keep the "chi" energy flowing freely within her home.

"Think of the energy as it comes into your house as water that flows in and around your furnishings," said the consultant. To prevent the chi from getting "stuck," Suseé selected a number of rounded furnishings, including a pair of swivel chairs by Directional in the living room, an oval coffee table and a circular dining room table and chairs.

"One of the reasons I placed a large plant near the patio windows," explains Suseé, "is to stop the eye and prevent the energy from whooshing out the back."





left: ADDED GLASS DOUBLE DOORS LEND IMPORTANCE TO THIS ENTRY TO THE NEWLY RECONFIGURED MASTER BEDROOM SUITE. **above:** KATHLEEN SUSEÉ (NÉE SCHULTZ) ON THE TERRACE OF HER FOREST HEIGHTS AT WORK ON ONE OF HER PORTRAIT OILS. **facing page:** ALL THE BATHROOMS, INCLUDING THE MASTER BATH, WERE REFITTED WITH UPGRADED COUNTER TOPS AND FAUCETS. THE SHOWER WAS ALSO ENLARGED.

Penn also incorporated Feng Shui concepts into the alterations of the town home plans. "Originally, there was a door in the downstairs hallway between the powder room and bathroom, which we removed for better flow," she says.

Upstairs, they streamlined the entry to the master bedroom suite by adding double glass doors that will eventually feature a curtain of recycled glass tiles from Pratt & Larson, and eliminated an extra closet that gave the area a dark and closed-in feeling. They also moved the bedroom closet and the door to the bathroom to create a better focal point for the signature Demi Lune piece.

As for her artwork, Suseé has chosen it slowly over time. The Michael Parks serigraph of The Jester over the fireplace has been with her for a while. "It's very whimsical," she says. "It reminds me of this little child that lives within each of us that must be kept alive to bring joy into our being."

With Suseé's own creativity being so focused on completing her home, she has had little time recently to devote to her own art. In fact, the only unfinished room is her artist's studio, whose expansiveness has been beckoning her to paint again. A recent call from an artist's representative who knew her work from the Denise Amato gallery in Lake Oswego and wants to "rep" her is a sign, Suseé says, that her new home has brought a good flow of energy into her life. **P**