

Hidden Gems: Meet Laura Abrams

Today we'd like to introduce you to Laura Abrams.

Hi Laura, thanks for joining us today. We'd love for you to start by introducing yourself.

I'm one of the fortunate ones who knew what she wanted to do from a pretty young age. Growing up as the "creative lefty" of the family, I was always drawn to the arts, and was highly sensitive to my environment. I noticed how clutter and chaos in a space created feelings of anxiety and stress, but being in a well-designed, beautiful environment resulted in a sense of calmness and joy. I discovered I could transform my mood simply by rearranging the furniture in my bedroom.

I chose interior design as my major in college, and after graduating, I moved to London to work at an architecture firm. I earned enough money to continue my interior design studies in Milan. The experiences abroad not only helped me advance my career, but also helped define and expand my style. I learned the ropes as a design assistant in Florida and was eventually promoted to a lead designer. By age 29, I was named one of the top 100 design visionaries in Florida. My career was in full-swing when my husband and I welcomed our son, Cooper, into the world. Once I became a mom, my priorities shifted, and I put my career on hold. In 2010, my husband's business brought us to San Diego, and we welcomed our daughter, Stella, into the world in 2012.

When I was ready to re-enter the work force, I knew a traditional work schedule wouldn't provide the flexibility I sought to support my new family and my love for design, so I decided to have a go of it on my own.

Would you say it's been a smooth road, and if not what are some of the biggest challenges you've faced along the way?

There were definitely bumps in the road. The biggest struggle was the shift from being an employee to starting my own business. Despite having a design degree and substantial experience, I had no idea how to run a successful design firm. I couldn't afford to hire anyone in the beginning, so I did everything myself from drafting to book-keeping and marketing.

Every project came from word of mouth; I didn't even have a website initially, and the only money I could invest was \$5 for someone to help design my first logo.

Having young kids at home meant working around their schedules and lots of late nights preparing for meetings. But learning all aspects of the business has become an asset, and more recently I've been able to outsource some of the administrative work. That allows me to focus more on the creative aspects and spend more time with my clients.

Appreciate you sharing that. What should we know about Laura Abrams Design?

We specialize in full-service design from kitchen and bathroom remodels to furniture and accessory selections so the whole space is cohesive. My style is "livable luxury" which I would say is more of a feeling than a look. One of the things that struck me the most when I was living in Europe, was how inviting the homes always felt. I try to create that feeling in all of the spaces I design. I joke that my superpower is transforming spaces, one throw pillow at a time. But really, it is a lot more technical

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than just finding pretty pieces. My clients want a beautiful home, and need it to stand up to children, pets and a busy life. I make sure each space is being used to the best of its ability. I love designing custom cabinetry and finding clever ways to solve storage problems.

Before the pandemic, I used to say my goal was for my clients to smile each day when they walk through the door. But now, with so many people working from home, our house isn't just where we land at the end of the day to eat dinner and go to bed. Now it may need to be an office, a classroom, or a cozy place for date night. We need it to be inspiring, and also relaxing. We are asking a lot more of our homes than we ever have before, so I create the environment to support all of those demands.

What quality or characteristic do you feel is most important to your success?

My ability to connect with my clients is key. I spend time learning about their lifestyle, and I take my years of training and experience to translate that into an environment that reflects their needs and their personality. Listening and paying attention rather than starting with a preconceived idea of what their home should look like makes for a happy client and a truly unique space.

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