

Charlotte

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HOME

DESIGN & DECOR

Outdoor Living

How to Bring the Outdoors In

Look Inside David Smith's
Isle of Palms Home Design

Contributor

BUILDING A
BETTER HOME



MARY
LUDEMANN



WHAT
INSPIRES
YOU?

Recently, I went on a trip to California with several girlfriends to celebrate a special birthday. On the long plane ride, I sat next to one of my particularly talented friends, Maureen, who has a boutique DIY studio that she recently franchised with nearly 100 locations across the country! Over the five and a half hour plane ride, we had an invigorating conversation about being female entrepreneurs and the unique challenges we face daily - especially in keeping our designs fresh, current and, most of all, forward-thinking.

Maureen asked me questions I don't typically think to ask myself because in the busy day-to-day flow of business, many things run together. Being 40,000 feet in the air, with no emails, texts or phone calls provides a rare opportunity for an earnest conversation and a moment of clarity. We talked in-depth about what inspires us and what overwhelms us in our businesses, especially in our designs. I think what we learned is pretty solid advice for anyone building a new home.

It's no surprise that I've always been inspired by the architecture around me - especially older homes and buildings. I love historic details; especially those that serve a purpose and those that were painstakingly created by hand years ago by talented artisans. The extra deep roof overhangs, high ceilings, and interior transoms that reduced solar exposure and allowed hot air to rise and circulate, keeping homes cooler long before the days of air-conditioning. The meticulous handcrafted details, which are so rare today in an age when it's much easier and cheaper for a machine to crank out a simpler, homogenized version. I don't watch HGTV or do much browsing on Instagram or Houzz, and I'm never on Pinterest; maybe I should be... But I've learned that too much looking doesn't inspire me, instead it overwhelms me, clouds my vision, and often shuts down my own design ideas. It was nice to learn that I wasn't alone in this feeling of "too much," that Maureen





felt similarly and found her inspiration from everyday life rather than social media as well.

I was surprised to realize that the most meaningful inspiration for me, the daily influence in pushing my design just outside the “normal” margin, is our clients and their dreams. They inspire me to figure out new solutions to old problems, to tweak designs to allow for their one-of-a-kind (if perhaps wacky) family heirloom and to combine all their favorite (if perhaps competing) design elements into one cohesive and well designed home. The more difficult their request, the better I become and the more fun I have. The design is better overall because it has the perfect blend of uniqueness and our New Old feel which translates into one incredibly inviting, beautiful, and completely original home. It’s the details that make a house a home and it’s the individuality of each of our clients that keep our homes innovative and fun.

Despite coughing passengers and crying babies, that 5-hour plane ride became energizing for me – and a birthday weekend in Napa didn’t hurt either!◆

Using her trademark blend of tradition and innovation, New Old co-founder Mary Ludemann has been designing and building dream homes for more than a decade. To find out how she can bring your ideal home from a dream to a reality, visit www.newold.com, call 704-975-3723, or email building@newold.com

