

designing DIVAS



Designing your new home or renovating your existing place to suit your lifestyle and making it functional and stylish can be a challenging undertaking; and making the wrong decisions can be a waste of money and time..

luckily, you now have the advantage of bringing in a team of local design professionals - DESIGNING Divas. Chrissy Jones chatted with Michelle Burton, the founding Diva...

Who are the Divas and what are their individual specialities? Designing Divas is a collective of local experienced designers - me, Michelle Burton - interior designer; Eva Cassegrain - landscape and garden designer; Linda Perkins - building designer; Julie Borger - design consultant. We are all passionate about design and have enough practical experience to understand what a client wants. We look after our clients and won't be bullied by builders, trades or suppliers who want to take short cuts.

When did you start the company and why? At the end of 2011, I moved into the area with the intention of dividing my time between Sydney clients (I have an interior design practice in Sydney) and new clients in the Port Macquarie area. I have recently restored my own beach 'shack' in Lake Cathie and during the process I met numerous builders, trades and suppliers. I soon realised there was a need in the area for a design consultancy that could in effect be a one-stop solution for homeowners.

Having met Linda, Julie and Eva during the design process I loved their enthusiasm as well as their talent. So, at the beginning of this year we decided to form DESIGNING Divas and opened a resource design studio inside Cullens Carpet One at 199 Lake Road in Port Macquarie. It's a great place and ideal location for clients to meet and discuss their ideas and view all sorts of product samples.

I believe you have just won two Housing Industry Awards (HIA). That was so rewarding

to be recognised for the work we are doing locally. We were awarded HIA - Northern NSW winners in two categories - Kitchen Design of the Year and Bathroom Design of the Year - they were two new homes located on the Canals in Port Macquarie, built by Brandon Calder Homes. The winning designs now go through to the state finals.

So are you spending more time in the Port Macquarie area or Sydney these days? I spend most of my time locally, but occasionally I do travel to Sydney or Melbourne to meet with clients. But what is great about the Hastings area, apart from its obvious beauty, is that we are meeting adventurous clients who appreciate good design - both in their homes and gardens. There are some fantastic homes being built in the area with talented architects, building designers and great builders.

What do you feel your personal strengths are? Space planning (the flow and function must be right), kitchen and bathroom design, colour and finish selections.

What do you feel are the most important attributes for a designer? To listen.

Why should a homeowner call in a

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professional designer? I often quote Red Adair, an American oil well fire fighter who said - "If you think it's expensive hiring a professional wait until you hire an amateur".

Quite literally we will save a client time, money and make the process more enjoyable. We all love what we do and that enthusiasm is infectious.


Thank you Michelle.

the plug!

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 Design studio is located at 199 Lake Road, Port Macquarie - inside Cullens Carpet One - by appointment only: