



THE INTERIOR ARCHITECT

With Dee Dee Taylor Eustace

Few people know luxury design like Dee Dee Taylor Eustace. The well-known architect and interior designer has worked on hundreds of residential and commercial projects across North America, including private residences, Muskoka's Friday Harbour, Harbour 60 restaurant, and even a 154-foot Feadship yacht.

The Collection was recently invited for a private tour of her latest project, a three-storey, three-suite condo in the heart of the Annex. The building takes its cues from its traditional Edwardian architecture, and pairs it with luxurious finishes, modern appointments, and Dee Dee's signature attention to detail and drama.

The Collection: In your opinion, what makes a great space?

Dee Dee Taylor: From an architectural perspective, it's that there's order. When I look at space, I look at the floor plan, the elevations, the volume. In the room we're sitting, I had this strip of stone on the inside, and I repeat that on the outside. Both the floors are heated, and when I look at the cove ceiling, there's an articulation of lighting. Great spaces blend details with the rules they follow, [whether] axes or symmetry or repetition.

TC: What is the most important trend in luxury design right now?

DT: A mix of material. Now you'll see kitchens where I have a car paint finish and bronze islands and a matte perimeter, and then the Gaggenau appliances disappear. You see wood with stone, stone with metal, painted wood with porcelain. Our technology allows us to put materials together that you might not have in the past.

TC: Is there anything you're finding that comes across as dated now?

DT: I don't do the one liners, here today gone tomorrow...some weird colour of Corian that's on your countertop or some ostentatious faucet. When style is really good, it becomes iconic, and that means it needs to have legs, it needs to have history, and needs to have structure.

TC: How do you approach colour?

DD: I love colour. I dyed an Aubusson carpet blue because I was done with the colour that it was. But I think there has to be balance. I did Harbour 60 restaurant...blue agate in their kitchen, the least likely material you would ever use in a commercial kitchen, but the blue is fantastic. You can do the structure, but it needs to have substance.

TC: How has the pandemic altered your approach to interiors?

DT: Well, there's the economic side. For the first time in a long time, it's cheaper to buy than to build. Anything new, being built today is going to come up in price. It's a very interesting time with inflation, labour, interest rates and the costs of construction. It's actually the time to buy in the luxury market right now, because it's only going to get more expensive.



The other side of the pandemic is that people are retiring earlier, or opting like I am, for amazing space, where we walk and don't drive. I have 3100 square feet, three bedrooms. I don't want something massive. I want to travel and experience life. So, I think that we have a different mindset. This is a great size for three bedrooms. 4500 square feet is a great size for three bedrooms, 2 offices and a bigger principal room. 2500 is a great size for three bedrooms and a kitchen that's combined, versus a separate kitchen. So square footage relates to program. I can give you a two-bedroom in 700 square feet, but would I call that luxurious? I could appoint it luxuriously, but it wouldn't scale proper. Maybe in Hong Kong that would make sense.

TC: *With all the construction in the city, we're seeing smaller suites. As people adapt to smaller spaces, how do you preserve luxury lifestyle. Are there some key design inclusions?*

DT: Scale is important...so is the size of the room and the height of the ceiling. We're in a room with 11 foot ceilings and 10 feet of glass. If I brought that down to eight feet of glass, and I had a nine foot ceiling, I'd want the room a bit smaller so it doesn't feel short...so there's proportion. But true luxury is perfect space, it's not about how much program you shove in the space. One of the things you'll notice here is that there are no hallways. It's called railroad car design, where you put a room beside a room beside a room.

I don't have any corridors. If this was in a building that was a different structure, there may be. I try to design spaces where you go through a principal room, and there may be a door to another principal bedroom. But I don't think program is luxury...I think we have convertible spaces these days.

TC: *I like how you qualify it as 'true luxury.' Luxury has become a watered-down word in the building industry.*

DT: This is a stone baseboard with a reveal, with a casing that's flush with the wall, with a mahogany pocket door. To make that stone flush with the drywall, you have to set up the wall a certain way

to go up, and then have a one inch reveal around all these pieces. To me, that's luxurious. Not slapping on a baseboard. A Swiss watch is luxurious, a Swatch is not. It's the mechanisms, and the detailing, and the planning that's luxurious. I've worked on a Feadship, the Rolls Royce of yachts...they are so beautifully put together. But buildings in Canada also have to function...we have snow melt, we have frost, we have sun. It's like menopausal weather.

TC: *What's the most interesting or innovative project you're currently working on?*

DT: 85 Bedford just got registered as a condo, and this to me is truly a masterpiece. I'm also doing a



sustainability project in Nassau right now. It's a house on the ocean with two pods. We're trying to do all of it within the 100 kilometre range, in terms of vernacular materiality, plus solar panels, rain collecting, cistern water management.

TC: What considerations were given to sustainability at 85 Bedford?

DT: Full historical retention. We kept the 1906 building...its triple masonry construction that we restored, and we underpinned by four feet. Then we did full historical windows, lead coated copper roofs and downspouts. Part of sustainability is repurposing, and that's luxurious, that was painstaking. It would've been way easier to drop this whole thing and just put up a tower.

TC: How important is it to design with the existing neighbourhood in mind?

DT: I've done 168 Davenport with its limestone façade. I've done many homes in Forest Hill that I think are stunning. Also, cottages, DLK Spa, Friday Harbour, so I'm very cognizant of what things look like and that it's got my stamp on it, if it's got my name on it. But I also am fearless. I don't care what people think.

For more information on Dee Dee Taylor Eustace, visit taylorhannaharchitect.com