

SEDONA ONLY WOMEN



Designing Woman

Debra Lyss was 6 when she received her first Barbie doll. Little did she know that that doll would get her accepted to Trenton State College's interior design program 12 years down the road. In painstaking detail, Debra designed furniture, accessories and clothing for her Barbies, and she photographed the dolls getting married, picnicking and lounging in a hot tub all at her family's home in New Jersey. (During a visit to her home, she happily shared the photo album.) "Anything humans had, my dolls had," she says.

When it came time to apply for college, Debra didn't have the high school art courses needed to be accepted into TSC's interior design program. While she was being interviewed for the program,

she told the administrator about the doll furniture. He asked to take a look and after seeing her detailed construction, he instantly admitted her into the program. Four years later, Debra had her bachelor's degree in interior design, and she's never looked back.

After spending 10 years in commercial design, Debra entered the world of residential design, opening Lysy Interior Designs in Wilmington, Del. Her client roster included DuPont heirs and high-powered executives. But everything changed when she visited Sedona for the first time eight years ago. Like so many before her, Debra was struck with a case of Red Rock Fever. She began commuting between Sedona and Delaware

and eventually moved here full time in 2006. Semi-retired, she worked as the in-house designer at Studio Panache in Tequa Marketplace and started a line of T-shirts called Makes Me Happy Tees; proceeds benefit local nonprofits. (If you've spotted anyone wearing a Red Rocks Make Me Happy shirt, you've seen one of Debra's designs.) But after remodeling her own kitchen, she started to get the itch to return to the world of interior design. Earlier this year, she relocated **Lysy Interior Designs** to the Village of Oak Creek. She was also recently approached by HGTV to star in one of their *Showhouse Showdown* episodes.

Debra is involved in all aspects of design from working with architects to constructing kitchen cabinetry to hiring lighting consultants. Her own home is a cozy mix of rustic charm with an eastern flair. She says designing in Sedona is definitely different from designing on the East Coast.

"No one wants to be traditional in Sedona," says Debra, who is also an animal advocate and an avid hiker. "Back east, things are much more formal but here people favor a relaxed, contemporary, rustic feel. In Delaware, the window treatments are huge, and in Sedona, no one wants to obstruct the views. And here many people love Spanish colonial style, which just happens to be my favorite."

For more information, visit www.lysydesigns.com or call 928-284-4334.