



bearpath buzz

By Resident
Michelle Hellbusch, Esq.

pioneers & passions:

INTERIOR DESIGN BY DIANA

“Go bold and take risks. You can always change it.” —**Diana Hanson Vadis**

“The single most important key to success is to be a good listener.” —**Kelly Wearstler**

Diana Hanson Vadis lives both of these maxims in all areas of her life, and particularly in interior design. When most people retire, they kick back, travel the world, play golf or tennis, maybe embrace a hobby or find a new passion. However, if you know Diana, she is not most people. So retirement for her means not only embracing a new passion, but turning her passion for design into a successful one-woman interior design firm, garnering accolades and features in several interior design publications.

1. When did you develop a passion for design?

I developed a passion for design when I was 5 years old, playing with my Barbie dream house. I would make furniture out of Legos, Lincoln Logs and steal my brother's cotton balls to make poofs. That passion continued throughout my life. I was the go-to person for dorm rooms in college. There's not a friend of mine that I haven't helped with a home design project. Every boy I dated more than two weeks received a makeover of his home. I became that annoying guest that would come to your house and try to rearrange your furniture to make it work more aesthetically!

2. Who are your favorite designers?

Kelly Wearstler, Ralph Lauren and Barclay Buttera.

3. What or who inspires you?

What inspires me is the environment in which the home lives and the local culture. If it's a lake home in northern Minnesota, then I work with local wood craftsmen. If it's a beachfront home, I bring in the element of the ocean. I recently did a Disney rental home and used two of our local Bearpath princesses, as consultants, Sage and Morgan Hellbusch. They were very direct with their opinions. They said not too frilly, use purple. No Disney dolls on the bed and they wanted some bling. They were my inspiration on the project and my target audience. I listened, of course.

(Disclaimer and Disclosure: Morgan and Sage are my 9- and 11-year-old daughters and I had no idea they would become part of this article. Now, if they could only be so inspired to clean their rooms!)

4. What is your favorite design style?

Everything...Mid-Century Modern, Old World, Modern Farmhouse...and I love to mix them. My favorite is to go bold and take risks. You can always change it.

5. What is your favorite project you have done so far?

My favorite project I've ever worked on would be the Modern Coastal project in Florida. After spending my entire life looking

over design magazines and designing homes. I finally receive validation and was featured in a design magazine in Florida, which is a very competitive market. The feeling of opening that magazine and seeing a six-page spread was as exciting as being a kid again and getting your favorite toy at Christmas. I just screamed when I saw it, I was so excited.

6. What was the most challenging project and why?

My most challenging project is the project that I'm working on now. I was awarded a project for a 200 unit condominium in Florida. I am working with all the common areas. I have to keep within the art deco design and keep all the condominium owners happy. And let me tell you, that is absolutely challenging.

7. What is your dream design project?

My dream design project would be to do an Adirondack camp in the Adirondack mountains. There are just so many fabulous craftsmen that are outstanding artists. It would be thrilling!

8. What advice do you have for others who are seeking to find their passion?

It's never too late. I know everybody says it but it's true. I waited 56 years to see my designs recognized and it finally came true. I am having so much fun.

Diana is living proof that you should embrace your passions at any age. Despite retiring two years ago, from a successful 30-year career as an IT executive, she is living her best life...enjoying time with friends and family time with her husband and teenage son, while successfully doing design projects on the side. Now her designs are visible in homes from Minnesota to Florida and are regularly featured in magazines.

“An empty room is a story waiting to happen, and you are the author.” —Charlotte Moss

Diana Hanson Vadis is finally telling her story, through design.

Bearpath Buzz® is a monthly blog created by resident Michelle Hellbusch, Esq. to get a pulse on the various things that Bearpath residents are dealing with or talking about. She and her husband Jon have been Bearpath residents since Christmas of 2013, along with their elementary school children. Michelle has been a Sports and Entertainment Lawyer for over 15 years, now Momager to her USAG Tops 100 ranked gymnastics daughters.

Michelle Hellbusch, Esq.