



# GOOD TASTE, BAD TASTE, *what is it?*

by **SHERRI SUMMERS  
AND JANINE MACKIE**

**DELICIOUS DECOR RARELY HAPPENS BY CHANCE. WITH HER SHARPENED** eye for the beautiful, the interesting and the unusual, renovator and principal of Intermind Design, Mila Djuras intuitively transforms her client's homes into a place that expresses their unique style. Between renovating condominiums, updating heritage homes and receiving numerous awards for her highly customized kitchen designs, this skilled and savvy contractor sat down to talk about good taste, bad taste and how taste plays out in the realm of design. What is defined as "the ability to discern what is of good quality or of a high aesthetic standard," by Oxford Dictionaries takes on numerous meanings depending on who you ask. "Too much good taste can be boring," according

**PICTURED ABOVE**  
**MIXING & BLENDING:** This modern open space features a pool table surrounded by a tasteful melange of decor from African tribal bench to hand-blown chandelier.

to Diana Vreeland a noted fashion columnist, while artist Pablo Picasso simply stated that, "Taste is the enemy of creativeness." British playwright Oscar Wilde was known to say that he had "the simplest tastes," and was only "satisfied with the best," in contrast to actress Whoopi Goldberg's quip that, "Art and life are subjective. Not everybody's gonna dig what I dig, but I reserve the right to dig it." But of all the famous quotes pertaining to taste, one especially resonates with this New Westminster-based renovator. It's from fellow designer Philippa Tristan in her book, Living Space, Fact + Fiction, "Neither good taste nor wealth can transform a house into a home, for a home does not consist in the quality of its architecture or decor, but in the quality of the lives that it expresses."

**HOME DECOR & RENOVATIONS:**  
**Where does the concept of taste come from?**

**MILA DJURAS:** Taste is by no means some absolute category that belongs to any one group of people. It is completely defined by social climate, cultural conditioning and it is highly referenced to a certain time. Something considered as good taste in India is not necessary accepted in other parts of the world, neither is something beautiful from the 1950s considered "in good taste" today. Styles and objects which survive the test of time and are universally accepted become icons and are often called timeless.

**Q: Does everyone inherently have their own taste?**

**MILA:** In every choice we make, we define ourselves further as more `this or that.` The ability to understand the underlying meaning of styles, materials, finishes, and cultural significance determines the depth

of someone's taste. I believe everyone has their own taste. That taste can be enhanced by education in design, arts, and media, yet admittedly some people definitely have more aptitude than others.

**Q: What is the line between bad taste and good taste?**

**MILA:** I don't think that there is the distinctive line, it's more like 50 Shades of Gray. <laugh> An interesting example I use when teaching, is to ask students who they thought had better taste, Grace Kelly or Princess Di? Often students would misunderstand the elegance of Grace Kelly as a higher taste which is not necessarily true. A real sense of taste, like art requires a higher level of understanding, that it is complex, and that it includes among other things, imperfections, insecurities, humor or awkwardness.

**Q: How do you determine a client's taste?**

**MILA:** A combination of psychology, education, non-judgemental attitude and many years of practice. I find the process of translating client's needs and preferences into the language of architecture and design effortless, enjoyable and enormously rewarding.

**Q: Can you blend different tastes, and if so how?**

**MILA:** I would rather say that you can blend styles, mix finishes and furnishings and overlap spatial requirements with very personal choices. Through the process of educating my clients and expanding their comfort zones a client's taste is naturally revealed and cultivated.

**Q: Is taste important in designing a home?**

**MILA:** Not necessarily. It completely depends on what home represents to the people who live in it. Some people are perfectly content with copies of the current trends shown in magazines, while for others it is an opportunity to illustrate their wealth, or keep up with the Joneses. And then certain people, like our clients, see their home as an extension of themselves and their family. Their homes are interactive, highly functional, sensitive, thoughtful and an ever changing affirmation of life. I feel very privileged to be a part of the process of enabling people to create their own unique home.

**To learn more, or to talk with Mila Djuras personally about realizing your home's full potential, visit [interminddesign.com](http://interminddesign.com) or call 604.338.9936.**



**MILA DJURAS**  
**AWARD-WINNING RENOVATOR:** Mila Djuras has a love for design and detail and helps her clients create decor that is an extension of themselves and family.  
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