

Interior Design Show returns to original downtown venue

VICKY SANDERSON
SPECIAL TO THE STAR

The start of new decade marks a fresh beginning for the Interior Design Show (IDS), which is moving to the Metro Toronto Convention Centre after several years at the Direct Energy Centre at Exhibition Place.

IDS co-founder and vice-president Shauna Levy believes the downtown venue, which she calls “sophisticated and urban,” will attract a new crop of design-savvy visitors.

“I’m thrilled that we’re going to be at the Convention Centre, where we actually started the show 12 years ago,” says Levy. “It feels like we are back in the city — at the Exhibition, we felt we were too far out.”

The show runs from Thursday to Sunday. “It’s a great time of year for an event,” says Levy. “People are finished with the holidays but they’re looking for something to do indoors that distracts them from winter.”

Another change that excites Levy is the launch of a concurrent Toronto International Design Festival (TIDF), a six-day festival from Tuesday to Sunday that promotes exhibits, symposiums and lectures showcasing local and international design, held at various locations across the city (tidfonline.com).

Many of the events listed as part of TIDF are actually exhibits that opened before the show, and will close some time after. Others, such as the Gladstone Hotel’s Come Up to My Room (CUTMR), comeuptomyroom.com, for which artists and designers create themed rooms for public viewing, have been in existence for some time. This year, though, CUTMR will be presented in partnership with TIDF. Levy hopes that similar events will become part of the festival, which she envisions as eventually having a profile similar to that of LG Fashion Week.

Although a World Without Oil symposium on sustainable design is being held at the Design Exchange to officially start the show on Thursday and Friday is open to trade only, members of the general public wishing to rub elbows with local and international design celebrities can buy tickets to an opening night party on Thursday for \$50.

Visitors to the show can expect just the right mix of high-concept exhibits and practical advice, says Levy, and to find design to meet a wide range of tastes and budgets. She concedes, though, that there may be more emphasis on value in 2010.

“Good design is very accessible, but that message has been blurred a bit during the last year, as people have become more bud-

get-conscious. We want them to know that they can buy a small affordable thing that will make a big difference to how a space looks.”

For example, exhibits called Off the Wall and Off the Loom feature embellishment or improvement for walls and furniture and include wallpaper, tiles, stencils and fabric with user-friendly pricing.

The show will also offer visitors ideas, inspiration and information through seminars, workshops and lectures, some free and some of which require a ticket. Single tickets are \$17 in advance and \$20 at the door. But for \$35, visitors can walk the show and attend a seminar, such as the colour “Trend Talk” workshop on the weekend led by design personality Cobi Ladner or a panel discussion on the direction contemporary design is taking.

Included in admission are presentations that will run during the show on the Krups stage. Among those expected to be heavily attended are *House and Home* editor Suzanne Dimma’s 2010 trend talk, and an audience with Barbara Hulanicki, the founder of swinging ’60s fashion house Biba, who now designs wallpapers for Graham and Brown.

Homeowners can also sit down for 15 minutes of free advice from a qualified interior designer at the Association of Registered Interior Designers of Ontario (ARIDO) booth. Those wishing to do so are encouraged to bring pictures, samples and floor plans.

Those creating outdoor spaces this year will want to visit the Five Small Rooms exhibit, in which five designers offer their take on the backyard shed, or bunkie — a structure that’s taken off in Ontario since the adoption of a bylaw that allows the construction of buildings that are 100 square feet or less without a permit.

Fans of Ikea will want to catch an installation made from precision-fabricated sheet metal enclosures used with pieces of furniture from the giant retailer.

The launch of new “Vegetal” chairs by design duo Erwan and Ronan Bouroullec will be a can’t-miss event for aficionados of contemporary design. These chairs are made by Vitra, a Swiss company that manufactures work done by historically important designers such as Charles and Ray Eames, and a host of contemporary talents. Forty chairs will be displayed in a sculpture conceived by Toronto-based artist Bruno Billio, the shape of which will change over the three days.

For more information or advance tickets, go to www.interiordesignshow.com.