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SITTING down with Jane Lockhart

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After 20 years of running her own successful high-end interior design business Jane Lockhart has decided to launch a line of furniture that is proudly Canadian. If that wasn't enough, she is also hoping to revolutionize the industry by offering consumers a new way to shop for furniture.

Q: How has furniture shopping changed over the years?

Jane: In the past, people bought furniture for life, spending thousands of dollars on a bedroom set, outfitted with a matching dresser, side tables and the grand four-poster bed frame that hardly fit in the room. Pieces were also inherited; meaning your grandmother's sofa got an extra 50 years in your living room. Today, furniture is purchased for a life cycle of approximately 8-10 years.

People are done with cookie cutter pieces that resonate with their parents' tastes. Instead, they are gravitating towards pieces that reflect themselves, their tastes and where they currently are in their life.

Q: Shown by your work on Colour Confidential, you are a colour guru, what advice would you give to anyone re-designing their home?

Jane: Embrace your own taste. Bright bold hues and graphic prints are in style right now. If you love colour, consider buying a sofa in mustard yellow or in a warm scarlet tone. If you are a fan of calmer shades I recommend buying a sofa and chair in an alternative neutral. Look past beige and consider buying a piece in charcoal grey or smoky blue.

Q: What should you look for when buying furniture?

Jane: Rule number one is to find a piece that is comfortable. That may sound obvious, but people are often influenced by a sofa's aesthetics over its comfort. Next, think about your lifestyle. If you are a social butterfly consider purchasing an armless chair because it allows for easy movement to socialize. If you are a bookworm, an ottoman is a great investment, because it allows you to sit, slouch, lie down or take any other position you want.

Q: Your recently launched furniture line, Jane by Jane Lockhart is Canadian made, what motivated you to take that approach?

Jane: In Canada, we have both the expertise and resources to produce high quality pieces. Canadian furniture builders are craftsman, knowing to add details, such as corner blocks and hardwood frames, which elongate a piece's life. I've worked with top Canadian furniture suppliers, Korson Furniture Design and Statum Designs Inc. for many years, sourcing and designing custom pieces for my clients and I trust them. This is why I chose to work with them, to create a Canadian line where the majority of the money will be put back into the Canadian economy, specifically in materials and labour.

Making it domestic also means a drastically shorter time frame for shipment; Jane by Jane Lockhart takes only four to six weeks.

Q: Jane by Jane Lockhart is a customized line. How are you putting consumers in the driver seat?

Jane: As an interior designer for over 20 years, I have worked with several high-end clients. All of them know what they want, but still need guidance on how to execute their vision. Applying this experience, I created the Jane by Jane Lockhart mood boards as a guiding tool for consumers.

When selecting furniture pieces, consumers will be able to consult with eight different Jane by Jane Lockhart mood boards and select from 40 fabric groupings, to help get the customized look and feel they're looking to create in a space. Within the mood boards, all the pieces have been hand-selected by myself for flawless room coordination.

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