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LIFE AT HOME

LATEST NEWS AT CALGARYHERALD.COM/LIFEEDITOR: **YVONNE JEFFERY** 403-235-8658 YJEFFERY@CALGARYHERALD.COM

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AROUND THE HOUSE

Guest room holiday makeover

TIPS • Welcoming family for the holidays? Dress up your spare room with these simple ideas from furniture company aspenhome:

- Place a water decanter on the nightstand and add orange slices for seasonal flavour.
- Swap out the above-bed art for a fresh evergreen wreath. It adds a welcoming fragrance to the room.
- Replace accent pillows with seasonal design ones.
- Guests will love seeing old photos of a previous visit or a special memory. Place them on the dresser or nightstand.
- Bath accessories are always appreciated. Save small travel amenities and place them in a stocking to hang from a hook in the guest bath, for fun.
- Make sure there's room in the dresser or closet for guests to unpack. Don't forget a luggage rack to make unpacking easier.

— Lisa Kadane, Calgary Herald

Detecting a deadly intruder

CARBON MONOXIDE • Snow tires, weather stripping and parkas are all part



Photos, Ted Jacob, Calgary Herald

Paige Smith collects bone china tea saucers, which she uses to create her custom ring holders, shown above and right.

To that list, add a carbon monoxide (CO) detector, a life-saving device that costs as little as \$30.

CO is a byproduct of burning gas, oil and other fuels. Everything from a blocked chimney to an improperly installed gas hot water heater can cause CO to accumulate indoors and impede the blood's ability to carry oxygen through the body. This results in headaches, drowsiness, even death.

CO is colourless, odourless and tasteless, which means it can gather silently. Infants and seniors may be particularly vulnerable. Here are some tips to follow:

1. Have your furnace, chimney, fireplace, wood-burning stove and natural gas or oil-fired water heater inspected annually. Check to ensure outside vents for gas and oil-fired appliances are clean.

2. Never run a car, snow-blower, lawn mower or barbecue in a closed garage.

3. Install a CSA or UL-approved CO detector. They're widely available starting around \$30. A dual battery/electric version is best. Follow alarm placement, battery replacement and other instructions. Test detectors once a month.

Some models include both a CO and a smoke detector, but read the package carefully: most smoke alarms are not also CO detectors.

If the detector sounds, call 911. Leave the home immediately if anyone is suffering from nausea, dizziness or other CO-poisoning symptoms.

— Patrick Langston,
Postmedia News

ANTHROPOLOGIE DELIVERS PAIGE SMITH'S CREATIONS TO NORTH AMERICA

HEIRLOOM RING HOLDERS

LISA KADANE
CALGARY HERALD

Paige Smith believes in second chances, for pieces as well as people.

More than 1,000 orphaned tea saucers wait expectantly inside her home studio, stacked between white coffee filters, yearning for another chance to show off their tiny red rose patterns or whimsical birds-and-gold-curlicue motifs.

In time, most of them will be given new life when Smith turns the cup-less plates into Vintage Saucer Ring Holders.

Her creations are delicate works of art meant to showcase engagement rings, diamond studs or the latest trendy cuff.

"These ring holders are more just for the special (pieces), or things I might wear every day," says Smith, 39, of Paige Smith Designs.

They're beautiful,



CELEBRATING
THE ART AND
CREATIVITY OF
LOCAL DESIGNERS

unique, and they've caught the fancy of retailer Anthropologie, which opened its Chinook Centre location Friday stocking Smith's designs.

Through a stroke of serendipity, the ACAD grad went from selling her ring holders at local craft shows, through custom orders (paige-smith.ca), and on Etsy.com, to supplying one of Calgary's most eagerly awaited stores.

Anthropologie buyer Melissa Green spotted the ring holders in

Calgary-based creative arts publication Uppercase magazine. Green immediately contacted Smith about carrying the creations in stores across North America.

"(Green) instantly fell in love and felt that they would be the right fit for Anthropologie," e-mails Anthropologie public relations associate Amanda Woodward.

It may seem an unlikely marriage — local artist meets large American chain — but Smith and Anthropologie share a similar philosophy: Smith aims to transform abandoned found items into useful artistic accessories; Anthropologie strives to showcase products that are "an expression of our customers' appreciation for innovation, artfulness and good design," writes Woodward. The store carries an extensive home collection in

addition to clothing and accessories.

"Anthropologie's buyers travel the world to find unique items and special artists and designers to partner with. We love to bring uncommon items to our customers. It is always great when we can find local artists to support in our stores," Woodward adds.

For Smith, it's been a dream come true — she gets to make something she loves and, thanks to Anthropologie, her creations have a direct line to their ideal demographic.

The idea for the ring holders began in 2005, when Smith took a three-month sabbatical

from her job as a senior designer to get back into her home studio and play around with art and sculpture.

What resulted was a miniature mannequin jewelry holder, also made with a tea saucer, that was beautiful, but didn't sell because of its high price point (it was time consuming for Smith to make).

So she simplified the design by subbing in a lamp filial atop the saucer to hold rings. The simpler design has broader appeal, and a lower price tag (Anthropologie is selling them for \$118).

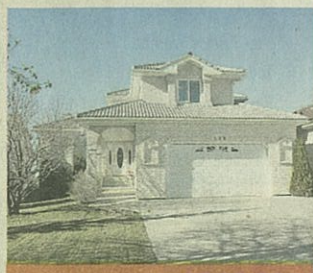
First, Smith drills a hole in the centre of each saucer using a Ryobi drill press.

SEE HOLDERS, PAGE G3

Arbour Lake

136 Arbour Glen Close NW

- 5 bedroom two storey walkout
- hardwood, 3 fireplaces, views
- finished walkout on ridge

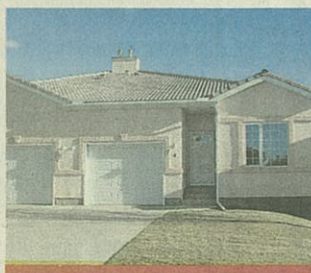


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- 3 Royal Birch Villas \$273,900
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- Cougar Ridge condos \$299,900 - \$319,900
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- 212 Springmere Grove \$372,900
- 263 Evanston View \$379,900
- 204 Hawkwood Way \$379,900
- 68 Royal Birch Park \$383,000
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Marie-France Coallier, Postmedia News

In the bedroom display at designer Rollande Vachon's store, the simply styled wooden bed has a white quilted bedspread and chocolate linens.

Heirlooms central to decorating

DONNA NEBENZAHL
POSTMEDIA NEWS

When she was fashion and beauty editor at Coup de Pouce, Rollande Vachon dealt with colour and material.

Now she has transported her expertise: she decides on colour for walls and floors rather than faces, on fabrics for curtains and bedding rather than clothing and on accessories for tables rather than fingers and ears.

"I always felt fashion is great when you're young," Vachon says. "I thought after 40 that interior decorating would ground me."

She started with a small decor boutique in Montreal and branched out into design. "It goes well together," she says. "I buy things I like and try to

show people how to put everything together."

Decorating her shop like the rooms in a home influences prospective clients, she says. "They come to see us because they like how pieces are put together in the shop, or what they've seen in a magazine."

Vachon says her style is European, which now influences the more sedate American design style where the print on the wall and on the sofa went together.

"We believe in working with things that you like, an heirloom like a carpet or vase or painting that is part of you," she says. "The decor is you, and it grows and changes with you."

Europeans have an advantage because they have the richness of their heritage, she says. "Now we're

moving in that direction. We're buying better quality things that we can keep, and holding on to sentimental objects."

So before they look at trends, Vachon encourages clients to think about what they like. Her ideal decor, she says, is a mixture of unique accessories, different forms, textures, fabrics and colours.

"I like to work with greys and now we see in Europe a comeback of gold — in a new way, not too flashy."

This gold, she says, works well with grey. Wood with a painted patina is also stylish — in white, grey or a natural linen colour. "We've been working with that for years."

Vachon likes to play with neutrals because you can kill decor with a

colour that is too bright. "If you want to add orange, you add a spicy orange. I love to use a greyish lilac. You don't get tired of it."

She likes to add emphasis with accessories such as plates, mirrors and lamps. "A rule of thumb: you don't want a decor to shock; you have to live with it."

In a dining room area in the shop, a chandelier suspended above the table is a unique design from the south of France, made of wire with crystal. The table, while new, is made from old wood, surrounded by curved chairs in burnt oak.

Table runners are quilted and scalloped in a shade of prune under off-white dishes that stand on a rattan charger. Another dose of white comes from the white pillar candles and white-handled cutlery at

each setting.

In the bedroom, a simply styled wooden bed has a grey, hand-painted patina. The white quilted bedspread and pillow cases brighten chocolate linen bedding. Floors are covered with a dark sisal, a canvas for the simple wood mantelpiece and circular mirror.

Lighting includes a signature metal chandelier and pale wall sconces in a leafy pattern.

On floors, Vachon loves sisal and sometimes works with wood that is bleached nearly white or in natural tones of grey.

Metal is one of the recent new looks, she says. Over a long metal table imported from Spain, she has hung a series of architectural drawings and a curved and beaded chandelier from France.

HOLDERS: FROM GI

Then, she screws on a metal table lamp base that has either been hand-painted a custom colour, or powder-coated in white or black. This becomes the ring holder's stand. Finally, she affixes a painted lamp finial, on top of the saucer, that's the perfect size for holding rings. Voila! A functional piece of art.

A born collector (her south-west condo is filled with antique cookie cutters, several apothecary trays and a grouping of vintage tea pots), Smith sources her orphaned saucers from flea markets and Heirloom Antiques, a local store that has a line on the inexhaustible saucer collection (more than 18,000) from the estate of Mary Nielson. She also seeks them out when she travels, and once stuffed her suitcase with 100 saucers during a trip to Ottawa.

Smith will pay anywhere from 25 cents to \$5 for a single saucer. That may sound like pocket change considering some of the brands — Royal Albert China, Aynsley and Paragon, to name a few. But, Smith says, "With saucers, their true value is only with the cup."

Since those Smith collects are cup-less, they would otherwise languish in flea market boxes instead of finding new purpose as jewelry holders.

"I see so many beautiful (saucers) all the time, but I feel I can't hoard them," says Smith.

"I have a small stack of favourites... I have them for a while, then I let them go."

Now, lucky Calgary shoppers can enjoy the ones Smith has set free.

LKADANE@TCALGARYHERALD.COM



Ted Jacob, Calgary Herald
Paige Smith with her collection of saucers that she turns into beautiful ring holders.