

ABOUT DESIGN FIRST

Articles

Sheila Brady, Ottawa Citizen

He's self-taught, elegant and the design brains behind many of Ottawa's top kitchens.

On Saturday night, Friedemann Weinhardt left the 14th annual Design Awards with five heavy glass and marble trophies in his arms. The self-taught designer was the biggest single winner of the night, dominating in categories which clearly impressed judges with a series of clean, sophisticated designs.

"The biggest privilege is to really understand what people are looking for and then have the opportunity to enhance people's lives through good design," says the man who is a combination of imagination, discretion, top tastes and practicality. There is also a big sense of humour which shows up in a voice which changes pitch several times within one sentence.

A synergy develops between client and designer. The client talks and Friedemann listens. Then he measures the spaces, sketches out plans and presents the ideas.

Once approved, he turns to his team of suppliers and craftspeople who turn an idea off the page into a finished room. Cameron Metcalfe and his team of installers can make the most complicated combination of mouldings and cabinets fit neatly into large and small spaces.

"Friedemann has a unique ability to see people's style of living and provide solutions," says Cora, who brought the designer into her home last November. Two days later he came back with drawings and a month later, Cora was hosting a Christmas dinner for 14. "He provides design solutions but more importantly, he 's an artist."

(Excerpts with kind permission from the Ottawa Citizen, Report on New Homes, Interiors and Lifestyles, October 28, 1997)