

DECOR

Vibey office revamp

Hotshot businesswoman Sue Lederle transformed a gritty Salt River warehouse into a vibrant workspace for her family companies

WORDS: HILARY PRENDINI TOFFOLI :: PHOTOS: SUPPLIED

Five minutes from Cape Town's city centre, in Brickfield Road, Salt River, there's a massive, brilliantly coloured mural on the side of what was once a factory building. Old rag trade turf. Where the cool brigade is now moving in. Interior designer Sue Lederle is one.

This driven and multitalented businesswoman has several entrepreneurial strings to her bow, and they all operate from here, under one roof in an imaginatively decorated warehouse.

Lederle Holdings includes a property development company that has built a beautiful luxury safari lodge in the Kruger Park and is busy on another, having just completed an Italian villa in Umbria where the first guests arrive in August. Mauritius is in the pipeline.

Concierge Travel is Lederle's boutique travel consultancy. It handles business and leisure clients. Loveables is a gifting store she's opening in August in a showroom in the warehouse and online.

SPACE

And since there's a considerable amount of room in the former factory building she's given some space to her children – son Dean Lederle

and daughter Tam Holmes – for the Cape Town office of their advertising agency Brandnew Creative, which also handles their mother's PR, marketing and property websites and so on.

Lederle moved the business from a Wynberg cottage to Salt River a few years ago to be closer to town. When the enterprise grew she relocated to the warehouse nearby. "It was the same landlord so we thought we'd get in at ground level and create our own space," she says. "We were on site for nine months." Six months ago they moved in.

COLOUR

She has created an engaging cluster of offices that make for a positive work environment. Colour plays a key role. Walls separating areas are brilliant pink or battleship grey, butting against stretches of exposed brick. Walls in the toilets are a bright sun-splashed yellow.

With her signature chandeliers, comfortable wingback armchairs dotted about and a pink velvet-upholstered sofa and chairs in the boardroom area, this is not your normal one-dimensional workspace.

Thanks to its centrally located kitchen and bar counter it functions more like a home from home.



"I believe colour can be therapeutic. If you have beautiful colour and furniture, you never notice industrial pipes in the ceiling"

Sue Lederle, Lederle Holdings

HOMEFRONT

DESIGN SPECS

What challenges did the conversion bring?

Splitting up a huge space to make it cosy and workable. With all the dynamics involved, I was desperate for a quiet studio where I could design away from the day-to-day busyness. So we put in a couple of walls topped with cottage-pane windows for light. It is designed so that everything works around the central kitchen.

What design features were used specific to offices?

I'm not prepared to spend thousands on office furniture as it has no resale value. So we used home decor pieces as office furniture. We can relocate them to any of our other projects if necessary. The boardroom chairs are dining chairs, the table a 40-year-old oak table from my first home in Hermanus and so on. Mostly we've used décor pieces we've picked up. I did, however, commission desks with solid oak tops that could be used in a home study. This worked out at less than a standard office desk and has the

bonus of being pretty! Having both the design and travel aspects in the business I thought I could get away with some lovely Moroccan accents in the office such as the beautiful tiles on the kitchen counter.

What's the secret of marrying an industrial feel with soft textures and bright colour?

My world is full of colour. I believe colour can be therapeutic. If you have beautiful colour and furniture, you never notice industrial pipes in the ceiling. The best way to deal with them is to not do anything to draw attention to them. Clients and suppliers love coming to this office. One said it's so inspiring that if we move out, she'll make it her home.

Which artisan furniture-makers have you used?

It's been more a case of recreating old pieces. Someone I work closely with is Kathy Dodds. Give her an old cupboard and it becomes a French armoire.

How did you get into property development



and how do you manage diverse businesses?

My late husband and I developed and sold property together. I've always been able to operate better when I'm busy. My friends think I'm crazy! However I love what I do so much that I'm constantly finding new opportunities. As an interior designer I'm busier more and more on my own properties. It's lovely being my own client.



PRODUCED BY
BLACKSTAR PROPERTY
PUBLISHING

Unit G4, Old Castle Brewery,
6 Beach Road, Woodstock, 7925
021 447 7130

EDITORIAL TEAM

Editor: Kim Maxwell
Creative Director: Mark Peddle
Designer: Samantha Durand

A **BusinessDay** PUBLICATION

Copy Editor: Michael van Oist
Content Business Manager: Catherine Davis
Production: Joanne Le Roux

ADVERTISING SALES

Michèle Jones michele.jones@thecreativegroup.info
Susan Erwee susan.erwee@thecreativegroup.info

084 246 8105
083 556 9848