

THE SALON PRIVÉ EXPERIENCE

Wise Nadel Design, a prominent design firm based in Toronto, garnered attention with an elegant lounge installation at last April's Living Luxe Design Show, ultimately claiming the coveted first place award: Outstanding Booth Design. Here, the firm's principals discuss the strategies behind capturing the admiration of judges and luxury enthusiasts alike.

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And the winner is . . . Wise Nadel Design! The occasion: the inaugural Living Luxe Awards Show last April, a glittering gala celebration of the country’s shining stars of interior design, architecture, fashion and real estate. The category: Outstanding Booth Design. “I felt like I was at the Golden Globes!” recalls a triumphant Harvey Wise, half of the design duo behind the star exhibit. “The event itself was so glamorous and well executed, and a lot of fun. Being recognized in front of our peers was the icing on the cake, and we were thrilled.”

Competition was fierce, with more than 50 exhibitors vying for the honour. Wise Nadel Design emerged as both a crowd and judge favourite. “It was such an honour to be selected by the panel of six experts, each a design luminary in their own right,” adds Robin Nadel, Wise’s business partner and co-principal in the prestigious Toronto firm. Wise Nadel Design had a large booth space, a 20-by-30-foot canvas in which to showcase their combined 50-plus years of design and architectural experience. As innovative and creative visionaries, Wise and Nadel have gained recognition for creating stunning high-end spaces in the Greater Toronto Area.

The winning booth at the Living Luxe Design Show was constructed

onsite at the expansive Toronto Congress Centre in less than three days. But its conception and execution were the culmination of four months of hard work for the pair and the Wise Nadel Design team. As 2024 dawned, Nadel was vacationing in the Caribbean with her family, and drew on her surroundings for inspiration. One morning, Nadel—coffee in hand—stared out at the turquoise sea and was struck with inspiration. The concept for the Living Luxe booth emerged as a sketch on a napkin. A quick call to Wise, who was also on vacation, cemented the vision, and it was full steam ahead in January.

Front and centre in the space: A stunning slab of deep-green quartzite with exuberantly sinuous veining from Cava Surfaces was an anchor amidst the millwork and furnishings. A work of art unto itself, the eye-riveting focal point not only covered the wall behind the bar area but was also book-matched onto the counter and the island itself. “It has the most energizing and expressive movement in it,” Nadel says, “a topographic feel that makes you feel the tension between water and shoreline.” It ingeniously embraces the biophilia design trend, a holistic approach that integrates natural elements to create energizing environments.

The rest of the booth showcased the bespoke craftsmanship of Dives Design, a local millwork company with whom Wise Nadel Design

collaborates on numerous projects. Fumed oak with brass accents, glass, and bronze mirror were among the variety of materials. Underfoot, pale-toned engineered white oak herringbone floors from Nœud Atelier du Parquet evoked a sandy beach, while wavy printed Phillip Jeffries wallpaper echoed an undulating shoreline. Luxurious upholstery from Creative Custom Furnishings provided an inviting atmosphere for visitors to comfortably relax. And finally, for a playful touch, a wine wall featured bottles of delicate pink rosé from Peller Estates, an unexpected splash of hopeful, spring-like colour.

The space was aptly named *Salon Privé*, French for private salon.

Nadel notes that over the past four years, Wise Nadel Design has had increasing requests from clients who want to upgrade their living rooms to boutique-hotel-worthy lounges. This means integrating a bar area and spaces devoted to different ways of entertaining. “This approach really reinvigorates the idea of what a living room can be, and confirms that people today want to have more options while at home or when entertaining,” she says.

Historically, a salon was a gathering of people who shared similar interests in the arts or culture, and knew how to live well. The Wise Nadel Design booth captured these moments and proved a magnet for the throngs of design aficionados who attended. “What was remarkable to me was not only

the number of people who came to our booth, but their level of knowledge and passion for design,” says Wise. “The public could mingle with us and our colleagues in not only the design and architecture fields, but fashion and real estate as well.”

And while the pair graciously accepted the award at the podium, Wise

acknowledges that it took a great deal of effort from Wise Nadel Design’s in-house team and a partnership with Kilbarry Hill Construction. “Such elevated design is so much more than just a collection of beautiful finishes,” he says. “It also took the cooperation of

the many suppliers, speciality tradespeople and upholsterers, many of whom donated their time and resources.”

The experience also brought home that excellent design is much more than an Instagram moment; it is something to be touched, felt and lived. “I think we showed a great example of what a booth at the Living Luxe Design Show should be in that its design was very thoughtful, purposeful and cohesive,” Nadel says. As so often happens with this in-synch duo, her business partner concurs: “We brought a way for people to experience firsthand a Wise Nadel-designed room,” he says. “The challenge next year, of course, will be to outdo ourselves.”

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