

cathy hobbs

by Jenifer Song



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In a tough-as-nails business world that encompasses the entirety of New York, being successful in one specialized field is a feat in itself. However, Cathy Hobbs leaps over those lines and crosses into a category of its own. Having been in the New York business industry for over 25 years, she started as a reporter and is now a full-fledged designer, building her own empire and brand. As a news reporter at the time, she gained a whopping 19 Emmy nominations and five wins. After nearly two decades as a news reporter, delivering heart-wrenching stories ranging from housing discrimination in Washington, DC, to a story of four boys' friendship that was torn apart by cancer, Hobbs "took a leap of faith." She decided to dive into her second love of interior design while maintaining her love of television, and became the co-owner of the interior design TV show: *Metro Residential*.

Now she diverts all her time and energy to aphereä, her own design firm that specializes in design and home staging. She admits to not getting much sleep and being part of an exclusive "4 AM" club (which other business owners can join if they are constantly awake), but the work is paying off with other popular and successful branches, including Design Recipes and Design on Delivery. "I think home is really personal. I think the definition of home is where one finds comfort in themselves, in their family, in their space, surrounded by people and personal items that they love. And what I'm doing each time is really coming into someone's home and helping them enhance their space using what they already have, elevating it into a design, and really creating it into a home environment." Utilizing her personable ideals and her inspirations, she has seen her favorable ideas take off and has reaped the rewards through her many customers who ache for their chance to really try their hands at interior design. "One of the things that I think is so great about my business is that I really have focused on providing

people with the information to do it themselves. You're aware of what interior designers really do. This gives you the tools and information to do it yourselves. I find that sharing that information is great because I couldn't really afford a designer and I would just kind of do things on my own."

Using her experiences as a source of inspiration, her travels around the world have played a big role in her design schemes. Travel has imparted a particular wisdom, a palette of the unknown colors and images that can only be found on a trek far from home. "Whether I'm in the apartment of someone who fled back in the Civil War, or in a refugee camp, or in a penthouse on Park Ave – all places that I've been – I'm so inspired by my experiences. Whether it's the Spanish Steps or Table Mountains in South Africa or the color of a piece of cloth that I've found at a market in Thailand. I kind of take these images and these experiences with me. I always carry a camera, a pocketbook video camera, and a little moleskin notebook to jot these things down and keep them in little envelopes or document them in some kind of way. I feel that I draw upon them when I am designing. I'm also interested in and inspired by old Hollywood glamour. I feel like some of my work is inspired by 40s and 50s Hollywood and the earlier Art Deco period."

Having graduated from USC and FIT, she holds a degree in business and film, but no degree in journalism. Yet, she went above and beyond what most journalists do with her genuine urge to dig into the roots of reporting and share the stories of people with the world. "I can tell you that with journalism, there are a lot of people who I started out with that only cared about being on television. When it came to reporting, that was not my goal. I just really wanted to learn the craft and I wanted to do it well." Her unadulterated dreams also crossed over into her current position. "And I think that is true with interior design as well. For

both careers I have researched and have been mentored by people who are successful – and I ask a lot of questions – working towards a goal consistently. I find that it's nearly impossible for me to reach a goal without first verbalizing, writing it down, and determining what that goal is. Because if you don't know what the goal is, how do you know that you've reached it?"

With her design firm and television show under way, her next venture is to "create a line of products under the Design Recipes brand that will be sold on a national retail level. A national line of products, a national TV show; this is actually a plan I've had in place for about 15 years." On top of that, she is also on the road to becoming a first time author. "I've actually been meeting with some literary agents recently because the feeling is that Design Recipes would make a wonderful book."

She's faced several hurdles while achieving accomplishments in her chosen fields. One person in particular, her USC professor, claimed that she would never work in television. (Are you reading this, Professor?) "I quit the class the next day. I remember this teacher's name. And here I am, 20 years later, still doing television." Hobbs has climbed the New York ladder to achieve the ultimate satisfaction of becoming her own brand and penning her own book. Her advice? Simple enough: "Never, ever, ever give up. I firmly believe that the only way you won't achieve a goal is if you turn around. If you stay on the same path and you continue on it, I believe you'll succeed. I believe that you'll reach that goal." With her fervent perseverance, her personable megawatt smile, and her soon-to-be branded and franchised realm, Cathy Hobbs is a prime example of what hard work and dedication can amount to. She is an unstoppable force to be reckoned with – or just accepted lovingly into our homes.

photography by David Johnson
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