

BY WENDY RUBICAM

Chatting with interior design and lifestyle expert Moll Anderson as she takes a break from the Neiman Marcus book tour promoting her latest work of art, *The Seductive Home*, is an inspirational way to kick off the New Year. The Emmy-winning entertainment reporter has hosted and designed for E! Style Network and HGTV, and inspired millions of viewers on ABC's *Good Morning America* and NBC's *Today Show* in recent years, along with being featured in national magazines such as *In Style* and *Cosmopolitan*. Now happily settled in Knoxville, Tenn., the exuberant Scottsdale native not only shares tips on making your home a special place, but puts a positive spin on life and celebrating ourselves as beautiful women at any age.

*Moll Anderson
shares her secrets for
embracing life with
joy, generosity and the
right can of paint*

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Life Makeovers and Divine Destiny

Anderson left Scottsdale in 1999 after some rough life changes and her son's departure for college left her feeling like she needed a fresh start. She admits now that she was probably running away when she set off for Nashville, thinking she'd pursue a career in music. But she was also drawn to the South for some reason, and now believes it was all a part of her destiny.

"I kind of went there not knowing anyone, and everyone thought I'd be back in six months, but it was just a really amazing life change and I think it was obviously meant to be," she says. "Little did I know I was going to meet the love of my life... sometimes you just have to follow your heart."

So how does a 40-year-old woman start over in a strange city? Check in with Oprah, of course.

"I turned on the TV that day and Oprah was doing life makeovers," Anderson recalls. "Oprah was talking about how you really hone in on what your gift is, and part of that was she said to go through all of your pictures."

What Anderson found when she pulled out her boxes of photos solidified her belief that music wasn't the new career for her. "The one thing [the photos] had in common was that they were all before and afters of everywhere I had lived and friends' houses and all of the things I had done to help other people," she says.

That's all it took to set her on a new path, and her first step was taking a \$10 an hour job at a furniture store. Anderson is adamant that the number one rule in life makeovers is "owning it," so when she was asked by a customer if she was an interior designer, she didn't hesitate to say yes.

As she pulled up at that first client's country estate, Anderson knew for sure that she was being guided by what she calls divine destiny. She had been down that Tennessee road only once before on a drive with friends, and had been strangely attracted to just one property—the very home she was now pulling up to. Hands shaking, she wiped the mess of mascara and tears from her face and began her new career.

"I knew that I was absolutely being divinely drawn to what I was supposed to be doing, and all of the reasons that I was being drawn to this house, which was completely obscure when you think about it, was because it was part of my destiny," she shares.

Celebrating Her 50s

Anderson's destiny has led her to publish two design and lifestyle books, and she's now enthusiastically working on a third, as well as a line of products that will debut next year. She seems to genuinely love sharing her life-changing point of view

and inspiring others to make the most out of life.

"If I had known in my 30s, when I was going through so much, that my 50s were going to be so darned great because I was going to be smarter and embrace life more—I would have been so excited about it," she exclaims. She has come to realize that her past, although difficult, was just as it should have been to bring her to where she is today. Instead of looking back with regrets, she says, "I could go back and say I made so many mistakes, but instead I go back and say 'Thank God' that my life took the path it did because that made me who I am today. That made me the person who wakes up every day now and I am so grateful for the blessings that I have—for the

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marriage that I have, the husband that I have, the family that I have. I mean, when you go through tough times, you have two choices—you can let them define you or you can let them boost you to another level emotionally, and that's what I chose to do and I'm so grateful."

Now 52, Anderson admits to "screaming" her age to try to break the taboo of keeping age a secret. She rolls with her evolving style and insists, "The older you get the better you get, which is why I talk about age and I try to get women to celebrate who they are."

The Five "Must-Haves" and The Seductive Home

As we go through life, our personal styles will naturally change and Anderson says that your home should reflect who you are. In her first book, *Change Your Home, Change Your Life*, she breaks down home design into the five "must-haves"—paint, flowers, fabric, lighting and music.

"Those five simple things, believe it or not, can change any space, no matter how much money you have," she says. "That's what I learned and what I'd been doing my whole life. I just didn't realize it."

Anderson says that a can of paint is the most powerful decorating tool there is, and recommends a trip to a flower shop to scout out colors that appeal to you. Try color first in a bunch of flowers, then some throw pillows, and then progress to painting a wall.

"The idea is to get comfortable and experiment until you know what it is you want to live with," she explains. "We get to do that with clothes all the time, which is why I talk about 'wear

the room.' You want that color in your life, you want that energy, because color holds energy."

Of course, lighting is everything, and Anderson recommends installing what she calls an "atmosphere thermostat." She insists that a simple dimmer switch can take a space from workday ordinary to seductive with a flick of the wrist.

So what is a seductive home? Apparently, it's something Anderson has been creating all along. She says friends would walk into her homes and say, "What is it about your house? I just want to come over on a winter day and curl up in front of your fireplace with a glass of wine and a good book. It's just so romantic—it's so sexy...like a love den."

Anderson says it all comes from surrounding yourself with the "decadent details" of the things you love and consciously creating a vibe of romance in your home.

"I realized that your home really needs to reflect you, and when you're happy you tend to naturally reflect it, and if you're not, you need to examine that and begin to create a space that's wonderful for you," she shares.

This is the theme of her stunning new coffee table book, *The Seductive Home*, which is available through Neiman Marcus, www.amazon.com and on www.mollanderson.com (\$125, or \$225 for the limited gold box edition). A scaled down trade edition will be available in February (\$55), giving design buffs and fans another chance to lose themselves in the fabulous photos and luxurious details of the book, as well as meeting Anderson during her second promotional tour.

Living Back

Anderson's happiness is reflected not only in her living spaces and on the pages of her books, but shared through the generosity of the Charlie & Moll Anderson Family Foundation, which helps others meet the basic human needs of food, shelter, child care and education.

She also serves on the board of Habitat for Humanity, which she describes as "one of the most brilliant charities on the face of the earth." She channels her own good fortune into

helping single parents get through college through the family foundation and putting her own spectacular spin on fundraising for Habitat for Humanity to provide homes for deserving families, bringing her philosophy that homes change lives to a whole new level.

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