

Designing Reality

Las Vegas Teresa Keegan basks in the afterglow of "Top Design"

Story by KATE SILVER

+

Photo by FRANCIS GEORGE

"Top Design" Season 2 contestant Teresa Keegan works with both interiors and exteriors and has a passion for integrating the two. One of her goals with Las Vegas-based Keegan Designs is to help rid the town of its beige habit. When asked for a good replacement color, Keegan suggests cinnamon.

When Teresa Keegan walked into her class at a Las Vegas yoga studio the other day, one of her fellow students enthusiastically approached her. "Were you on..." Yes, Keegan told her, she was, indeed, on the second season of "Top Design." Occurrences like this are now the norm for Keegan, whose life and business have been forever changed by the television show.

Though she was eliminated in Episode 5, Keegan had ample opportunity to demonstrate her style, which mixes organic fabrics and a modern aesthetic with a healthy helping of texture and a feminine splash of shimmer. Her technique has been in development for many years, prior to the show, at her Las Vegas design firm, Keegan Designs Interiors and Exteriors.

Though Keegan loved being on "Top Design," she's also happy to be back to the grindstone—some days, her business actually feels like a vacation, compared to the hours and stress of the show. "You learn how tough you are," says Keegan. "Fortunately, in the real world and in the real process you're not physically pushed to the extremes that you are on television." Those challenges included 20-plus-hour days, back-wrenching work and snippy colleagues. It was a test on many levels.

"No matter how much ugly was thrown at me I just kept going with a smile on my face and really focused on the positive," says Keegan. "And I think that helps in any situation in life, whether it's on a TV show or on a job site. If you can just stay above it all and really focus on trying to find a solution, I think that's the important thing."

And once her work is to her liking, she has to withstand the criticism that inevitably accompanies artistic endeavors. Keegan did that over and over again on national television.

"Not everyone is going to love it. That's just part of it. No matter what it is, no matter how great it is, the best of the best have been ridiculed and have had unfortunate criticism. But it's one person's point of view," she says. "I'm good with criticism. I went to design school, four years of putting your heart and soul up on the wall, and the goal of critiquing is to pick it apart. So I just roll with it."

Aside from hardening her already tough skin, Keegan says one of the most positive aspects of the show was being in the company of so many truly innovative designers.

"When you're around creative people it just makes you more creative and it opens up your eyes," she says. The designer has carried that momentum back to Las Vegas, and is thrilled to be sharing it with her clients.

Keegan has made it her personal mission to enliven and embolden the colors in homes across town. "It's so needed here; it's screaming it every time I pass a house. I'm like aaagh! No more beige!"

But is she really ready to settle back into life away from the spotlight? After working on two series (Keegan was also on the Women's Entertainment Television show "She House" in 2006), this designer's not quite ready to put her designs on that answer.

"Never say never," she smiles. ☛

To learn more about Teresa Keegan go to keegandesigns.com.

