A detailed mural of a Western town street. In the foreground, two horses, one white and one dark brown, are harnessed and standing behind a wooden fence. The street behind them is dusty and lined with colorful buildings. Signs for 'SILVER STRIKE', 'BARBER', and 'Telegraph' are visible. A stagecoach and a horse-drawn wagon are also present. The scene is set in a classic Western style.

The outside window well was home to this mural featuring the homeowner's horses.

horsepower heaven

By Carolyn Muse Grant
Photographs courtesy of
Cindy L. Payne, ASID, CID

Local designer meets the challenge

If you're reading this magazine, chances are you watch Home and Garden TV, and chances are you have seen the show "Designer's Challenge." I watch a lot of HGTV programs, and I've got to say, if some of those so-called designers did to my house what they do on some of those shows, I'd sue!

One of the shows offering truly good design for real people is "Designer's Challenge." Las Vegas Cindy Payne, who has been in the design/construction industry for 26 years and owns and operates Project Design Interiors, thought so also, and decided to try for a chance to be a designer on the show. She

real homeowners. Each designer is interviewed by Pie Town, and must submit references and past projects for their review. The designer is not paid for their work.

The homeowners apply to be on the show also, giving an outline of their proposed project, along with their allowable budget. The production company then selects three of the designers they feel are most appropriate for the project submitted by the homeowner.

Upon being selected as a designer for the project, Payne was sent a videotape of the

was selected as one of the three designers, not only once, but twice.

The television show, produced by Pie Town Productions, invites professional designers to compete for a design job with

Payne created a realistic western saloon complete with a built-in bar, hand-painted murals, a wooden floor and swinging doors.



The Designer's Challenge interview – where it all began (above). Cindy's proposed basement makeover was the winning design (below).

homeowners talking about their project. During the three weeks the designers are given to prepare their design, they are allowed to visit the homeowners and talk to them as much as practical prior to the actual presentation. They cannot, however, ask direct questions, nor can they propose something and ask the homeowners how they like it. Basically they listen to how the homeowners envision the completed project.

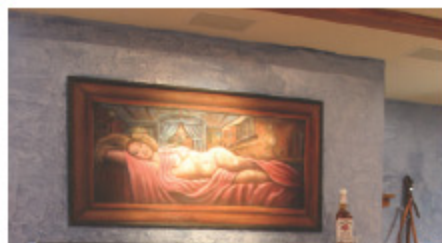
On the day of the presentation, the designers are required to bring a storyboard, which is a visual presentation showing fabrics, floor plans, and photographs of proposed pieces of furniture. They must also bring at least one large item like a chair or a lamp, something the homeowner can actually see.

This entire process is condensed so that viewers see a clip of each designer making their pitch, the selection by the homeowner, and before and after shots of the project in a 30-minute TV program. Needless to say, many

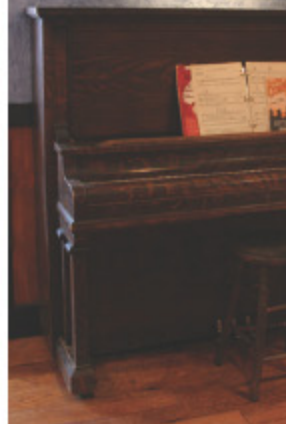


Horsepower Heaven
Las Vegas, Nevada

PROJECT DESIGN INTERIORS
2620 S. Maryland Pkwy. #185
Las Vegas, Nevada 89109
Cindy L. Payne, ASD, CID



Now you see it, now you don't. The piano hides a flat screen TV.



hours of work and preparation go into the show for each of the participants.


After the three designer presentations, the homeowners have one week to make a decision. They notify

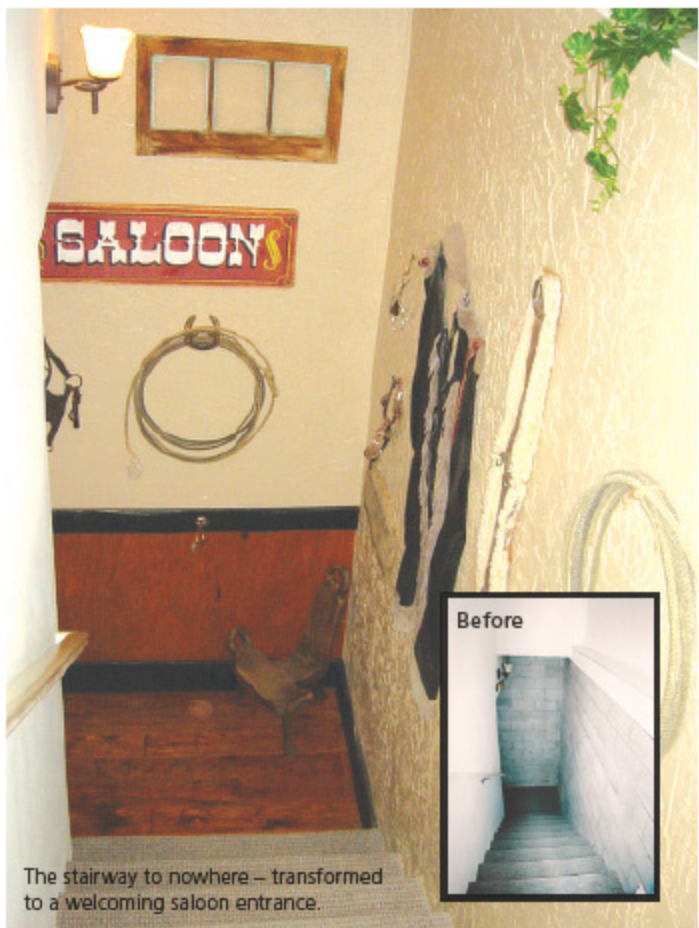
Pie Town of their choice and Pie Town in turn contacts the lucky designer. And then the work begins. During the construction of the project, the designer takes the homeowner on one field trip – an expedition to one of the craftspeople or vendors to look at work in progress. The finished project is then shot, and the show is finished. They make it all look so simple.

I mentioned that Payne was chosen twice for the show. She was one of three designers to make presentations in a show filmed in Los Angeles that aired on February 17. She was not chosen as the designer for that challenge, but the experience “was all good.”

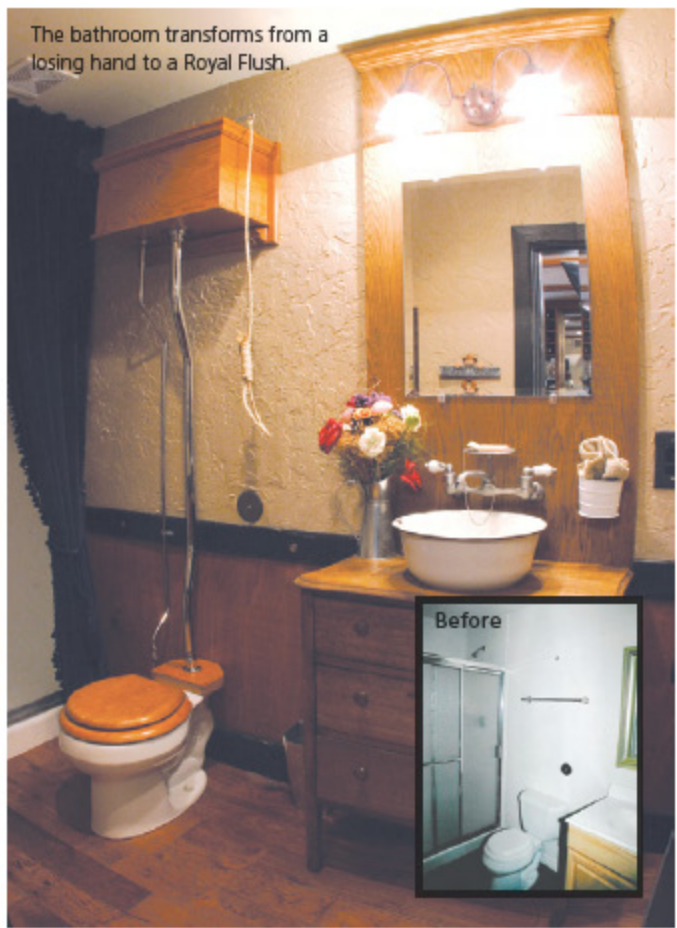
The challenge in Las Vegas that she was chosen for is in south Las Vegas on a seven-acre horse ranch owned by Barry and Iris Yost. They wanted to turn their block wall basement into an old western saloon. The budget was \$25,000.

Payne created a realistic western saloon complete with a built-in bar, hand-painted murals, a wooden floor and swinging doors. She incorporated a Murphy bed, complete stereo system with surround sound and a flat screen TV that rises out of the top of an upright piano. The project took three months to complete. Check out the amazing before and after shots (opposite page).

The show will air on HGTV sometime in April or May 2005. We will be sure to let you know so you can tune in. 



The stairway to nowhere – transformed to a welcoming saloon entrance.



The bathroom transforms from a losing hand to a Royal Flush.



This room was definitely a designer's challenge, but the finished project speaks for itself.