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THE OPRAH
MAGAZINE

SOUTH AFRICA

O at home with

JOSINA MACHEL
Graça's stylish daughter

It's Tea Party Time!
Join O for a gorgeously girlish afternoon (see page 46)

20 FOODS THAT LOVE YOU BACK

The do good, taste great superfoods

Your Life ~ Only Better!

Grey's Anatomy's Shonda Rhimes on a new way to find joy • Bob Greene's health mistakes to avoid
• Brilliant ideas to help you boost your dreams, finances and sex life!

WARDROBE WAKE-UP!

From updated denim to sexy (not 80s!) shoulder pads

Flattering spring trends

The Good Wife's Guide to the Good Life

Julianna Margulies's Aha! moment

A DIFFERENT KIND OF LOVE

"And then he told me that he had not been born a man"



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SEPTEMBER 2010



Destined to Design

Unwavering passion and commitment to delivery can help garner success both here and abroad, says **SHIREE DARLEY**.

BY HER EARLY TEENS, it was evident that Shiree Darley had an eye for style. Her bedroom was regularly redesigned, while the furniture in her parents' house was constantly rearranged. A diploma in interior design added technical expertise to her natural flair. "Knowing my passion from an early age helped me identify which skills to groom. One of my first projects was the refurbishment of the Wild Coast Sun in KwaZulu-Natal. I was 23, with little professional experience, but I had enough knowledge to do the job well." One highlight of Shiree's career was being part of the interior design team for the Oprah Winfrey Leadership Academy for Girls, in Gauteng. "It was an honour to help Oprah realise her dream for the school.

She had a clear vision, which made it easy for us." In 2009 Shiree started Darley Interior Architectural Design (DIAD) with former colleagues Amanda Elliott and

Caroline Dann, specialising in hotel, spa and residential projects. The first client they secured was a hotel and spa in Yemen, which forced the trio to get into top gear immediately. Here, Shiree shares insights on how to land international projects:

■ **DO RESEARCH:** "Read industry journals as well as the websites of prospective clients to find out about developments. Early knowledge means you could get in touch with potential clients before locals do."

■ **COMMUNICATE CULTURALLY:** "Before making contact, find out about a country's business norms and practices. Sending a work e-mail on a religious day, for example, might seem disrespectful."

■ **MARKET PROACTIVELY:** "Track down the right person in the company to speak with and give them a call. Sell yourself by listing the experience and awards/nominations you've received. Follow up with an e-mail to reinforce your interest."

■ **PRACTISE PATIENCE:** "You may not get a booking immediately, as the prospective client may need time to investigate your reputation. Send e-mails with updates of your projects to build relationships that could help you land your next contract."

—As told to Norma Young

Fact File

NAME: Shiree Darley

AGE: 43

JOB: MD of Darley Interior Architectural Design (DIAD)

QUALIFICATIONS: NDip (Interior Design), Wits Technikon

SHIREE'S TIPS FOR CLIENT SATISFACTION

1. **Conceptualise ideas early** and show them to the client. Getting their approval before execution shows your respect and helps you know you're on the right path.
2. **Get to know people beyond their positions** and the company beyond the brief. Making extra effort to understand individual passions, the organisation's philosophy and corporate history will spark ideas to incorporate in your delivery.
3. **Make sure the client** is not just pleased with what you produce, but finds it enjoyable to work with you. Great meeting locations, regular e-mails or even insightful discussions about interesting topics may secure you repeat business or a referral.