



The Prow table by B.C.'s Sabina Hill features First Nations motifs.

Best of the West

BY JANETTE EWEN

Formerly known as Design Vancouver, the Interior Design Show West kicked off this week under its new name and new owners.

The four-day event, which concludes at Canada Place today, was founded by current director Jason Heard in 2004 as a showcase for Vancouver's growing design scene.

Almost immediately, the event caught the eye of Steven Levy, senior vice-president of Merchandise Mart Properties Inc. Canada, which owns and produces other design-related trade and consumer shows such as the Interior Design Show in Toronto and Design Northwest in Vancouver.

Last year, MMPI Canada purchased the rights to Design Vancouver and changed its name to IDS West.

"In joining MMPI, we are able to present an even better collection of design trends and ideas to people," says Heard. "Our guest speaker this year, for instance, is Barbara Barry, one of the world's most talented and influential designers."

Los Angeles-based Barry, whose repertoire ranges from exclusive California and New York interiors to high-end furniture and fabric collections, spoke at the show yesterday and will do so again at 1 p.m. today.

The show's mandate, however, remains the promotion of homegrown design.

"People have a preconceived notion of what West Coast design is," says Heard. "For participants and consumers, IDS

West is an opportunity to experience it as it really is: modern, sophisticated and vibrant."

Among the highlights this year is Vancouver designer Kelly Deck's feature display entitled the Great Escape.

Known for her creative interpretations of both indoor and outdoor spaces, Deck transformed 800 square feet and two sheds into an ultra-luxurious vacation home encompassing a sunken living room, concrete fireplace and outdoor bathtub.

Her design was inspired by the sleek prefabricated structures of Seattle's Modern Shed.

A six-foot-long, single-slab redwood table by well-known Vancouver designer Brent Comber completes the space.

Also represented at this week's show is local "cross-cultural" designer Sabina Hill, who is launching a new furniture collection inspired by First Nations art and mythology.

Called Dwell, the line consists of sculptural solid-walnut side and coffee tables featuring organic-shaped glass tops and ebonized inlays.

First Nations motifs have been cut into the wood.

"The show," Heard enthuses, "has a lot of real eye candy!"

Who says the West Coast is uniformly grey?

» IDS West runs from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. today at the Vancouver Convention and Exhibition Centre. Admission for adults, students and seniors costs \$12. Children under 12 are admitted free. For more details, visit www.idswest.com.

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