



Artful Lodgings

PHOTOGRAPHY: CHRISTINA SYMONS



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Inspiration emanates from A Warehouse Hideaway in Gibsons.

If you are ever on the lookout for the perfect pied-à-terre, a place to escape the everyday, or a creative corner from which to unleash your inner Picasso, don't bother booking a flight to Paris.

Because you can find it right here on the Sunshine Coast, adjoining the

studio of local painter and art instructor, Mary Jean Brown.

The tasteful styling of A Warehouse Hideaway is equally enticing for locals or visitors, especially those with artistic aspirations or a keen eye for design. Not surprisingly, owner and designer Brown has a triple threat of cool credentials: she's a professional artist, a former New Yorker and a renowned interior designer.

"I fell in love with the space and moved here (via Vancouver) 10 years ago," she says. "But I'm still a New Yorker in my soul!"

Today, Brown is best known locally and internationally for her soulful portraits and drawings, along with the popular art classes she regularly holds on the premises.

STORY BY CHRISTINA SYMONS

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The 1930's heritage property on the crest of Killarney Lane off Gibsons Way has a classic Coast lineage. A former woodstove plant, then feed storage warehouse, it was later owned by the CBC and used by production crews to store sets during the Beachcombers' television show era.

Once Brown officially got her hands on it she gutted and converted the industrial storehouse, drafting new interior architectural drawings and crafting a sparse, streamlined aesthetic with ample living and studio spaces for her, plus two guest lodgings for others. But the original, playful spirit of the lofty open-concept was left intact.

"When it comes to art and design, I always say 'let the space and concept lead you,'" she says.

And if it has good bones and proportion, leave it alone," she adds.

A self-described "white walls" person, Brown deftly applied several shades of white-on-white paint to the four-metre ceilings, walls and trim in both lofts, accentuating with a cool palette of steel, slate and soft pink in light-filled Loft 1 and warmer tones of wood, olive and terracotta in tranquil Loft 2.

Punctuating both of the gallery-esque spaces are Brown's beguiling portraits and abstract paintings, including the impressive headboards above each of the sumptuous queen size beds. Vintage finds, from as far away as Manhattan flea markets to Sechelt garage sales look right at home.

Guests are encouraged to chill out and sleep in, with compact galley kitchens ready for independent breakfasts and meals at leisure. Even the stacks of charcoal grey stoneware plates and bowls are the perfect marriage of nonchalant beauty and utility (they are IKEA, if you must know).

Not surprisingly, the lofts attract a hip, young-at-heart crowd looking for sophisticated surroundings from which to experience Gibsons' laid-back charms.

Outside, the graphic gardens are equally stylish and architectural with concrete terraces, statuary and vine covered pergolas, perfect for cozy wedding receptions or other intimate gatherings. A bonus in the unlikely event that it should rain on your Sunshine Coast party, the massive four-metre garage doors of the warehouse loft and living spaces can be opened up to move the revelry inside.

A Warehouse Hideaway is located at 581 Killarney Lane, Gibsons. For more information, visit www.warehousehideaway.com or call 604.886.3849. For information on Mary Jean Brown's artwork and art classes visit www.maryjeanbrown.com. CL

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A former New Yorker, Mary Jean Brown designed the lofts as an expression of her passion for beautiful spaces. Outside, quaint touches and statuary accent the garden.

Clockwise from upper left: The galley kitchen of Loft 1 has an organized Zen quality.

The sumptuous sleeping area of Loft 1. Cool vintage finds animate the space.

Your own private perch and gallery space, Loft 1 is bright, airy and über cool.

The more secluded Loft 2 is a cocoon-like space perfect for romance and contemplation.



CCAOST GETAWAYS