

Heart & Home

Natalie's Leading the Way in the Interiors Industry

By Lia Spencer

After only a few minutes of talking with Natalie Guest, it is clear to see why she is a highly sought-after interior specialist.

Natalie speaks with such passion about design and textiles, and her enthusiastic energy is infectious. It is this positive attitude, paired with an extensive experience in the design industry, that has transformed her business Taits Interiors into a booming award-winning success.

But there was a time when Natalie was unsure where her artistic interests would lead her.

"In year 11 and 12, I had an amazing art, textile and ceramic teacher Mrs O'Connell- or Mrs O- and that's where my love of textiles came from. But I did not think it could take me anywhere and I felt very limited to what I could achieve when I left school," Natalie said. "But thankfully, Mrs O was very encouraging and told me about a studio textile course in Brunswick."

The course was very exclusive and required Natalie to produce an impressive portfolio and sit an interview. Fortunately, Natalie won the panel over and was accepted to study at the private college. There, she learned a vast number of practical skills including weaving, printing, photography, textile technology, small business management and more. Following the completion of the course, Natalie continued on an impressive journey in the world of design.

"I was reading a newspaper and saw an add for a job traineeship in soft furnishings at Calico House in Prahran. I got the job and ended up working there for seven years," she said. "I had a really good repour with the owner, Grace. She was Heaven-sent! She taught me so much and was very influential."

Natalie worked closely with Grace importing home and giftware from India, putting together ranges of cushions and rugs, sending away samples and approving finished products. Eventually, Natalie became the supervisor of Calico House. But after several years, Natalie found that she needed a change and a challenge and she accepted a job offer by a well-known florist in the area. Whilst she enjoyed the work, Natalie yearned to get out of city life and back to her roots at Mooroolbark. That move eventually lead her to Taits Interiors.

"I was working at a winery when I saw an ad in the paper for a showroom assistant. I rang the boss and had a chat with him and, because of my experience, he hired me on the spot. The rest is history."

In 2014, after fifteen years working at Taits Interiors, Natalie purchased the business and has never looked back.

"I love what I do," she said. "I have a lot of pride in my work."

And her work speaks for itself, with word of mouth responsible for keeping a revolving door of new and returning customers calling on Natalie for her advice and expertise.

"When a lot of people shop for window furnishings, they often think they should get something off a shelf because its quick and easy; or they want something their friend or parents have or something on popular renovation tv programs. They don't take things into account like the shape of their window, the lighting, their own persona; likes or dislikes," Natalie said. "To me, it's easy and it's

logic. I know what I am talking about and it is important for people to have the right information. Just like when people go to a nurse for medical information or an accountant for finances, they come to me when they need help with design. And for me, it is a privilege to be invited to do that for them. It takes a lot of trust.”

Natalie said her main goals were to help people make the right decisions so they do not waste their money or time on meaningless, cheaply made product that won't last. She said it was important that her clients choose quality over quantity and invest in pieces that were personal yet practical.

“It's important that people making decision do it once and do it properly. I don't want people to spend their money on crap,” Natalie said. “They need to make choices that will work with the bones of their home and fit in with their family and their everyday lifestyle. Ultimately, I just want them to walk away happy, because I love making people happy.”

Anyone wanting to learn more can visit www.taitsinteriors.com.au or check out Taits Interiors on Facebook, Instagram or on the popular Houzz app.