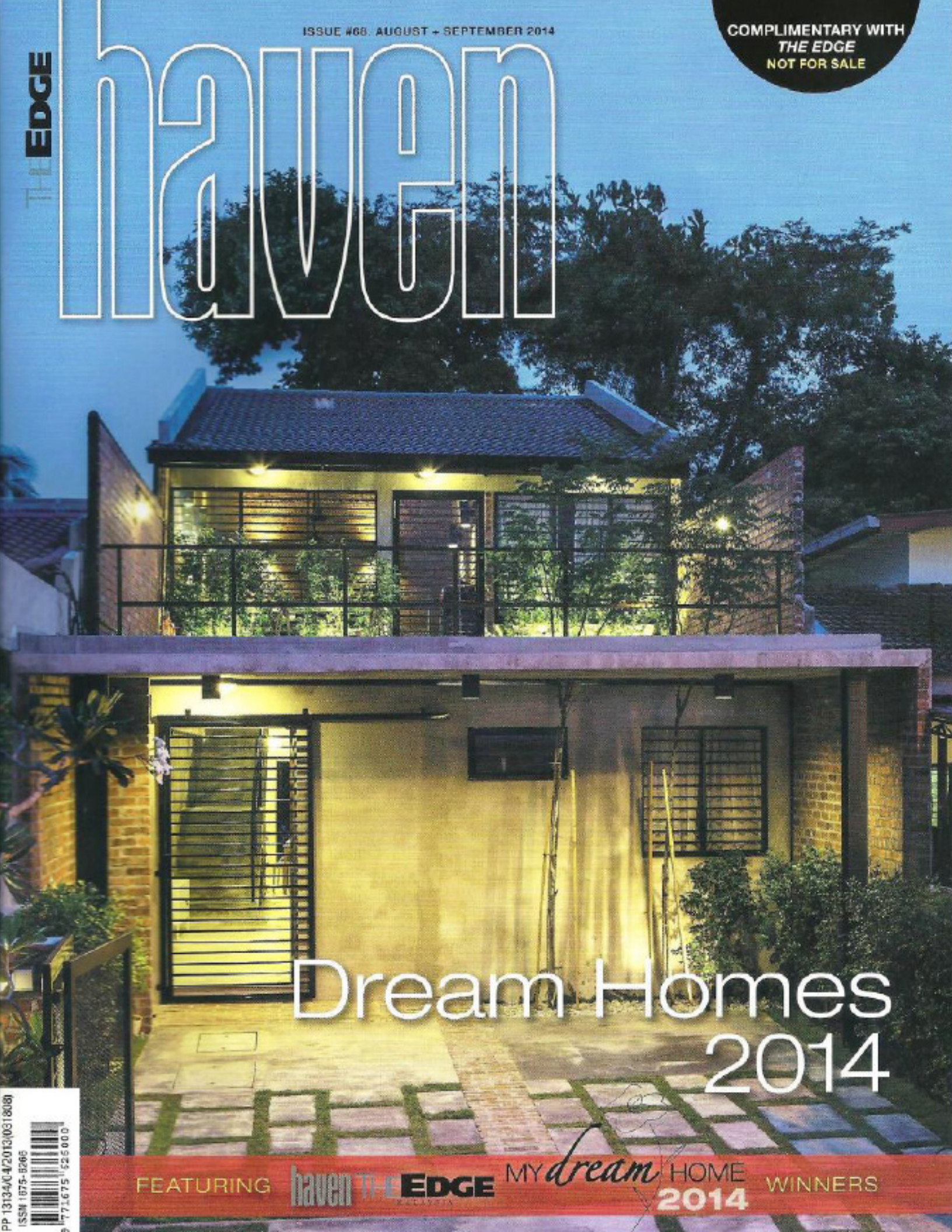


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Melanie Dunn

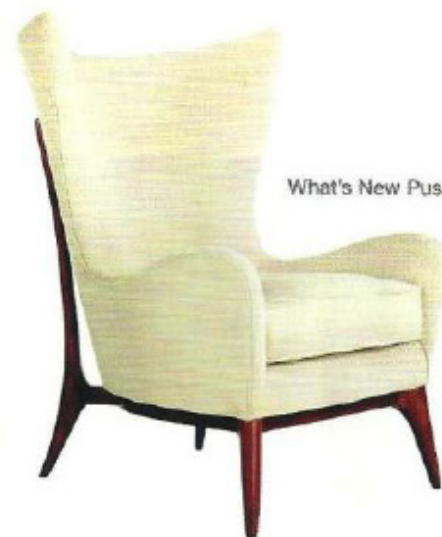
CREATIVE HEAD OF PREMIUM AMERICAN FURNITURE BRAND CARACOLE



Awesome Blossom



Sparkler



What's New Pussycat

WHO: Melanie Dunn is the creative director of premium American furniture brand Caracole, one of the portfolios under Schnadig International Corp that was launched in 2009. She has more than 30 years of experience in showroom design and had been working with Schnadig's CEO Jeff Young for over a decade when she was asked to be the creative head of the new brand.

Dunn defines good design as something that "adds value, beauty and function to people's lives", and that is exactly what embodies Caracole's pieces. She explains, "Caracole was born of our vision to create a furnishings line that had personality, was playful, and an exciting value for high style furniture. We had a desire to use unique material selections and create individual pieces, not collections. From there, we created a unique genre in furniture design: distinctive pieces for every room of the home that are sophisticated, refined, and creative."

Dunn heads a female-centric design team at Caracole, each of whom "contributes in a way that helps to define the brand's signature style". A key person is Kristine Capra, who "has a graceful, refined eye and loves unique tailoring details" and is "phenomenal at the marriage of a fabric to the upholstery frame". Dunn, on the other hand, likes "to streamline traditional silhouettes and accessorise the new face with unexpected finishes, materials and amazing hardware", she says.

WHAT: Furniture that are elegant and stylish, with just the optimal touch of ornateness characterises Caracole's pieces. They are also defined by an incredible attention to detail, sensual lines, and clever mixing of materials as well as classic and contemporary sensibilities.

Everything is and can be a source of inspiration for the designers, such as "a detail seen on a handbag or an antique" and "geometric patterns on a gorgeous cocktail napkin" to "a colour scheme from an abstract painting or a bed design that is adapted from a chair back or a historic railing".

The team also travels to stay abreast of new trends, including to the annual Maison & Objet trade fair in Paris. "We scour the show for glimpses of new materials, styles and elements. We look for colour trends and new boutiques or stores that have popped up. I love to keep up with handbags, jewellery and shoes for forefront fashion insight. Inspiration then turns into ideas, which are refined in the sample development process until we have a good feeling they are going to work for our Caracole DNA," she says.

Some of the brand's signature pieces include the Smoke and Mirrors console made with an antique glass mirror; the Bubbles side table featuring a bold geometric design on the body; and the French Connection drawers with unique ombre finish. In upholstery, there's the Bees Knees chair with a honeycomb pattern; the Black Beauty, which is a modern take of the Windsor style chair; and the What's New Pussycat, a quirky wing chair. Dunn's personal favourite is the Note To Self desk, which can be used as a desk or a vanity. She says, "It's a good example of what defines the essence of the brand, with its fresh spin on a classic form that can be defined as either contemporary or traditional."

This year, Caracole has collaborated with Swarovski to create pieces such as the Sparkler, a small side table, and Awesome Blossom, a closed storage piece with painted and bejewelled blossoms that twinkle as you pass by. The brand will be introducing pieces directed towards the international market later in the year.

WHERE: Caracole is available at Felione Fine Furnishing Gallery at No 62 & 64, Jalan SS2/24, PJ; 174 Jalan Maarof, Bangsar, KL; and 174-3-4 Jalan Sungai Besi, KL. For more information, call (03) 7873 6968 or log on to www.felionefine.com. ■



Note To Self