



# Faux & Fabulous

Transform your tired old walls with some decorative sleight of hand.

**STYLE GURU JASON OLIVER NIXON** recently discovered the faux-finish work of artist Joanne Sbardella while lazing about a Beacon Hill living room hand-painted to resemble crocodile leather. We caught up with the talented artisan at her colorful home on Cape Cod.

**BOSTON COMMON:** Tell us about decorative faux painting.

**JOANNE SBARDELLA:** First you take a transparent glaze, tint it with paint, and apply it over a painted wall. I can change a smooth wall into aged Tuscan plaster, or “paper” a humdrum wall by transforming it into a rich, tone-on-tone damask over painted stripes. I also do hand-painting, choose color palettes for homes, and do whimsical murals for children’s rooms.

**BC:** What’s your favorite faux-finish style?

**JS:** I love Tuscan plaster, a technique that “ages” plaster with crackle and [uses] antique wax to add



depth. This finish can make a new wall look like it’s hundreds of years old. Living on the Cape, I love to paint beach scenes. I recently did a backsplash in a kitchen with a beach scene and a faux-tile look.

**BC:** What’s been your most challenging project to date?

**JS:** It was my first job. I took a plain white wall and gave it a burgundy leather finish. It was a leap of faith for the client, but she loved it.

**BC:** How did you get started in the business?

**JS:** I began about 10 years ago. I’ve always loved transforming rooms—taking them from the ordi-

nary to extraordinary. I advertised a bit and got the ball rolling. Now most of my work comes from referrals and past clients.

**BC:** What inspires you?

**JS:** Inspirations and color ideas can come from something as simple as a carpet, fabrics, a painting, a special item in the client’s home, or from nature. I’m always looking at ways to make my paintings more realistic.

**BC:** What’s your background?

**JS:** I studied at the Art Institute of Boston and have attended the Rhode Island School of Design for decorative- and faux-painting classes. I worked for a great decorating and paint store for eight years, which taught me about color and how it affects moods. It also taught me about the science of paint. So I not only use paint, I really *understand* paint.

*Joanne Sbardella, 508-563-1073; waveofcolor.com.*



# D-Lightful

Designer **Dennis Duffy** “does” retail with his own eclectic furniture line. BY RACHEL BOWIE

COCO CHANEL ONCE SAID, “Luxury must be comfortable; otherwise it is not luxury.”

Dennis Duffy, principal of Duffy Design Group, kept those words in mind when designing his new collection of furniture for D Scale, his debut store in South End’s SoWa district. Duffy wanted to develop a custom collection to reach a larger audience, a shift away from his award-winning interior-design business.

“I’ve always designed pieces for our clients. It’s part of what I do. Instead of going out to buy something, I create the piece to fit the space,” says Duffy. “I wanted to present a total concept, engaging the person to come in for something customized.”

D Scale opened late last fall and features 40 pieces from Duffy’s furniture line. “The core collection follows classic lines, but at the same time has a glamour that’s versatile,” he says. “We tried to add that sense of eclecticism so that the designs are fashionable, but not fashion driven.”



The line is augmented by contemporary and vintage pieces from around the world, including black leather tubular chrome armchairs (circa 1960) and sand-cast glass by UK artist Amanda Brisbane. “People don’t want to just have a cold, minimalist environment,” Duffy says. “They want to be able to layer, say, a great Italian leather contemporary sofa with a vintage piece or something a little quirky.”

Duffy plans to continue his interior-decorating work at Duffy Design Group. “I believe in the store and I’m proud to present it to our clients as a resource. D Scale will complement my work and keep me thinking outside the box.” *D Scale, 520 Harrison Avenue, 617-426-1055; dscalemodern.com.*