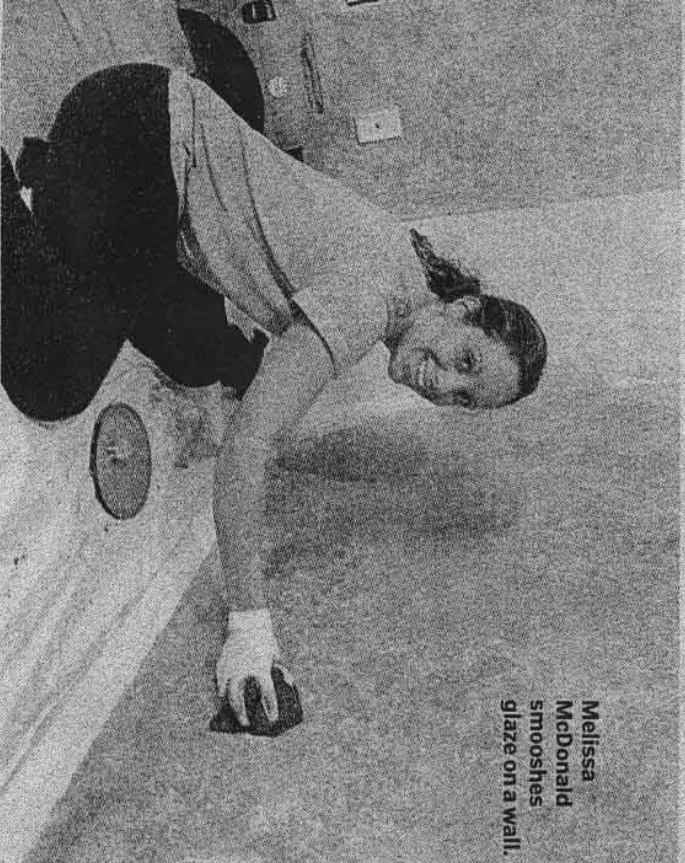


Team Aberdeen went for romance and an exotic edge when they descended on Pier 1 and Home Outfitters on Mervale Road. Their mission was to create a warm master bedroom and ensuite for a professional couple who love to travel. Before the bedroom set from Sears Home arrived, they were busy smoothing a glaze over the golden walls, giving an added richness to the room. The students combined spots of red and added a mountain of pillows on the bed. A Moroccan runner and a pair of ottomans from Pier 1 add another layer of texture. The final tally for accessories was \$3,849.57.

PHOTOS BY CHRIS MIKULA, THE OTTAWA CITIZEN

Training the decorators

Expanded design programs at Algonquin College



Melissa McDonald smooths glaze on a wall.

ROD MACVOR, THE OTTAWA CITIZEN

BY MARION SOUBLIÈRE

When 313 people applied for 25 spots in Algonquin College's new interior decorating program last year, it was clear the current onslaught of television decorating programs was partly responsible for whetting the appetites of aspiring decorating divas.

"People are saying, 'This is what I want to do. It looks like so much fun,'" says the co-ordinator of the two-year program, St Normand. "It's not very often you have somebody who pays you to buy things for them."

While designers deal with construction, decorators are the masters of accessorizing. What ran for almost 15 years as a part-time evening course has grown to a full-day program with an expanded agenda that teaches students how to decorate private homes, as well as commercial spaces such as apartment foyers and doctors' offices.

In the first year, students have studied colour, drafting, lighting, window treatments, furniture layout and a 5,000-year history of furniture. The students who took part in this decorating challenge are shooting for specialties as diverse as the commercial decoration of restaurants, hotels and malls, and rejuvenating residences for sale to decorating model homes, and specializing in lighting, fabric and faux

paint finishes.

Algonquin looks for applicants with creative talent and an aptitude for decorating — actual decorating experience isn't mandatory.

This fall's first-year class will grow to 30 spaces. Meanwhile, second-year students will take part in what Normand calls a very valuable aspect of the program — work placements.

Some partnerships are already lined up, but more businesses are needed to offer students job experience, says the trained interior designer.

If the idea of designing buildings up to 6,000 square feet piques your interest, Algonquin will also be offering a new four-year Bachelor of Applied Arts Interior Design degree this fall. Accredited by the prestigious Foundation for Interior Design Education Research (FIDER), the new program is only one of six interior design degree programs available in Canada, says co-ordinator Dorothy Stern.

The enriched curriculum, which replaces the college's popular three-year diploma program, will cover not only building design, detailing an decor, but building safety guidelines as outlined in the Building Code.

"Interior design as a profession is maturing rapidly," says Stern. "FIDER only accredits the best schools in Canada. We're very proud."

With files from Michele Oberoi