



AS SEEN IN THE WESTCHESTER COUNTY BUSINESS JOURNAL

New Arrivals

Doing the impossible

By CHRISTINA OCCHIPINTI

christina@westfairinc.com

For Kaja Gam and Ken Skalski, interior design and contracting is about making the impossible possible.

The two partners in Kaja Gam Design recently opened their first design studio on Main Street in Ossining.

"We specialize in the impossible, so we do everything people need us to do," Gam said. "I wanted a place where I could get to everything, that would allow people to come in to review things to get an idea of what's out there, and maybe get some advice."

Interior design is nothing new for Gam. She has been a designer for 15 years, and four years ago, Skalski signed on to handle the contracting aspect of the business. Kaja Gam Design was first based in Manhattan, and the couple moved to Ossining following 9/11 because "business was bad," Gam said. After running out of space in their home, she and Skalski decided to open the design studio in May.

According to Skalski, Gam makes things look good and he makes them happen. He said an integral part of their business is getting a feel for the client and the client's family in order to design and construct an area that suits their lifestyle.

"When we walk into a house, we look at the people and see who they are," Skalski said. "We try to go in to see how people are living, and then build a space around them."

Besides working on homes, Gam said she and Skalski have also worked on restaurants and office space. "We cover a wide variety of work."

Some of the services Gam and Skalski provide include interior design, which can range from one room to an entire home, custom design of cabinetry and furniture, expertise in period correct design, project management and design consultancy.

Gam said while specializing a project to a client's needs is important, so is keeping within one genre of design.

"We often come up with very customized solutions to things that are being asked of us, and that's why I think people come back to us," Gam said. The most important thing to me is that if we choose a style that we try to stay in a period. Even if we go eclectic on furniture, we really, in terms of the architecture around it, think it's important that we find a uniform idea. It really is about integrity: architectural integrity and design integrity."

Gam admitted that while she and Skalski's services aren't necessarily the cheapest, "we base our rates on what the market can bear, and what the clientele we are looking to have can afford." She also said the business will work with clients in terms of scheduling projects and with payments.

"I do not say no to clients who have a limited budget because I do believe good design



Kaja Gam and Ken Skalski reviewing plans for the design of a Manhattan loft in their new Ossining design studio.

should be available to anyone who desires it, and may not be able to pay for a turnkey situation," Gam said.

Skalski added: "We try not to let people spend money in ways that they won't get the money back out of it if they sell the house. We do try to do some financial consulting ... to help people not waste their money."

Kaja Gam Design

125 Main St. Suite 2
Ossining, NY 10562

914.923.2393
k.gam@kajagamdesign.com
www.kajagamdesign.com

By appointment only

Gam said she and Skalski also try to be as environmentally conscious as possible in their work.

"One of the things that we really pride ourselves on is we try to go as green as possible when it comes to the materials we use (and) the products we recommend," she said. "For example, we like to use interior surfaces that have been recycled or are recyclable, and we look for allergens in products. We try to go the extra mile."

Skalski said 99 percent of their business is done in Westchester and Gam said it's important to work with other local businesses.

"We really like to work with local people, and it's got to do with credibility and accessibility," she said. "We're building up a network of local contacts all over Westchester with people we can trust, and people who have the same kind of integrity about their business that we do."

Note: New Arrivals showcases businesses that have recently opened in or relocated to the area. If you know of a "new arrival" pass it on to christina@westfairinc.com.