



News Release

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Century College Kitchen and Bath Design Alum Wins National Honor

[Century College](#) alum Rosemary Merrill's work space at Casa Verde Design Studio in Minneapolis features two stunning kitchens plus a living room, bathroom, fireplace, media center, trestle dining table made of 150-year-old reclaimed wood, and a huge ceiling fan. Still, the space is cozy, calming and feels like a sanctuary.

Merrill's ability to achieve both beauty and sustainability in the design of her 2,800-square-foot showroom gained her national recognition this spring when the Kitchen & Bath Business magazine of New York honored Casa Verde with its coveted "Showroom of the Year" award. Casa Verde is located in a charming Minneapolis neighborhood at 911 W. 50th St. near Edina.

"My tastes run to classic design – both traditional and contemporary," said Merrill, a graduate of [Century's Kitchen and Bath Design Program](#). "I love rich, stylish colors, and I like to focus on custom cabinetry that has detail but is also simple and functional. I like things that stay in style."

Walk around Merrill's showroom and you will see examples of how Merrill's designs marry style and sustainability. An all-white kitchen features an island with a thick eating ledge embedded in a soapstone countertop. The ledge is made from Lyptus, a hardwood that is rapidly renewable, but looks like mahogany.

A second kitchen has a more contemporary design featuring walnut veneer cabinets, painted glass, European appliances and Calcutta marble countertops that save resources because they are only half the thickness of regular stone countertops.

"Designing the showroom was a great project," said Merrill, who opened the business in 2007 with principals Susan H. Brunn and Susan Jacobs. "It has attracted great clients who want something unique that also feels like home. These are people who are willing to make an investment in their home. They know that everyone loves to be in the kitchen because it is the heart and soul of the home."

Merrill's career as a designer started in 2003 when she graduated from Century's Kitchen and Bath Design Program in International Market Square in Minneapolis. After graduation, Merrill, an Edina resident, worked for two different kitchen-design firms before starting her business with Brunn and Jacobs in 2007.

"It was a sacrifice to start over and go back to school," said Merrill, who had been a brand management and design consultant with Piper Jaffray. "But I became really interested in kitchen design when I remodeled my own kitchen and realized how much energy that gave me. I decided that a second career in kitchen and bath design would be really fun."

Raised in a family of antique collectors in Mankato, Merrill grew up around interesting objects in an environment that nurtured creativity. "My mom was kind of a Martha Stewart," said Merrill. "She had a very good eye for design, and could make anything."

Merrill married an artist and they raised two children. When her husband died at a young age, Merrill worked as a representative for artists and graphic designers.

Desiring to help the local art community, Merrill's showroom features the work of local painters, potters, glassblowers and other artists. "Everything here is for sale," she noted.

Merrill believes kitchen and bath remodeling has a strong future in Minnesota because people are passionate about their homes, like to cook and spend more time indoors than outdoors. With the price of gas, she noted that people are less interested in building 70 miles out of town and more inclined to remodel existing homes.

"People want to be environmentally friendly without sacrificing design," said Merrill.



Photo: Rosemary Merrill