

Add a dash of sense to a sense of style

A furniture buyer needs business acumen and a creative mind.

By [Maryanne Maina](#) 15 Apr 2008

Lei le Roux is the furniture buyer for @home and @home livingspace. Her work requires her to think creatively so that design-conscious consumers have access to a comprehensive range of affordable contemporary furniture.

“My portfolio covers furniture, home decor and illumination,” Le Roux says. “My main role is sourcing the right product at the right price and locating stores and putting together ranges that fit in with each season's colours and international trends.”

“It is about creating a look that is inspiring and functional. This also means ensuring that the product arrives on time and is displayed correctly in store.”

Over the years, Le Roux has acquired the knack for the business. While in the UK, she was involved in both the buying and commercial, and residential interior design fields.

Her educational qualifications include a BA degree and an international interior design diploma.

“I think this career chose me,” she says. “It was never my dream to be a buyer, though I come from a creative background and I am a designer by trade.

“When I started the job I realised it required a combination of business acumen and creativity, and the result is very stimulating.”

Her experience has taught her ways to keep up with the latest design trends.

“Honestly, it comes from your gut. It's not something you can explain it's just that you either have a feel for something or not.

“I also read about 20 magazines a month, am on the Internet constantly looking at overseas stores and rely on overseas trips to see what's going on. We are also given guidance from our fashion office for each coming season as to colours, prints etc that are coming through,” she says.

“My job is very demanding but in a fantastic way. It's a fast paced, highly stimulating and creative role,” Le Roux says.

As she grows in the profession, she encounters various challenges.

“The main one is obviously the fear of not being able to find the product you want or when you do it's at a price you can't afford. This is a daily challenge.

“Due to the fact that we import a lot of products we are also hugely challenged by the dollar and rand exchange rate. Whenever the price of steel increases, I have a nervous breakdown.

"Sometimes I feel like I am working on the stock exchange as I have never before paid so much attention world currency."

Source: *Sowetan*

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