



Northern
WIDE PLANK



Lori Morris At A Glance

Who she is: Toronto-based luxury interior designer, entrepreneur, and founder of Lori Morris Design, a globally recognized design studio known for its luxurious, bold, immersive interiors with an unapologetic “No Rules” design philosophy.

Prestigious Recognition: Winner of 34 design awards since 2021 including Top 100 Interior Designers of the World, Best Luxury Interior Design Studio, Best Residential Interior for a Private Residence, Best Hotel Interior Design, Business Woman of the Year and was included in 5 editions of the Andrew Martin Interior Design Review.

Global Editorial Presence: Her work has appeared in and on the cover of 100+ design and lifestyle publications worldwide, including Architectural Digest, Elle Décor, Forbes, The Wall Street Journal, Marie Claire Maison Italia, and Robb Report.

Career & Influence: With a career spanning 35+ years and an in-house team of 35+ designers and associates, Morris blends artistry, proportion, and fearless creativity across residential and commercial projects throughout North America and beyond.

Mentorship & Leadership: A respected mentor and leader in the design community. Her studio is widely recognized for shaping both contemporary luxury design and emerging creative talent.

Northern Wide Plank (NWP): To begin, could you tell us a bit about your background and what led you to where you are today as a designer?

Lori Morris: I've always been a creative person. I've always looked at life through a very creative lens but I didn't actually know what that was when I was young because it just seemed very normal to me. Whether it was loving to doodle, redecorating my room with my mother, or being drawn to vintage things and interests that others weren't necessarily into, I took it for granted that everyone thought the same way, because that's simply how my brain worked.

As I moved through school, taking all kinds of different classes that had nothing to do with the artistic or creative flair that was in my DNA, I eventually realized, after graduating from university, that I wanted to create a career. At that time, there was no HGTV or social media, and the interior design movement and industry were very small and highly specialized. Getting into it as a woman more than 40 years ago was pioneering, and I suppose I was fearless, without even realizing how fearless I truly was.

That lack of fear is what ultimately got me to where I am today. I went through the entire process—screaming, crying, feeling overwhelmed, and pushing through milestones and hurdles that every entrepreneurial businessperson goes through. My journey was no different from anyone else's. It was extremely hard and extremely challenging, but every 10 or 15 years in my career, I reached a new milestone that carried me forward, elevating me to another level. And here we are.

NWP: Texture is often described as one of the most emotional aspects of design, something you feel as much as you see. How do you define texture in your own work?

LM: My design philosophy has always been no rules, fearless, and creative. I design what I love, and I do not limit myself by thinking about whether something will or will not work. I have

been a rebel my entire life, and I have always assumed I can do anything. There are no parameters to my skill set, and I do not believe design should be restricted by unnecessary boundaries.

Of course, there are rules to sightlines, symmetry, proportion, scale, and functionality. Those fundamentals must be in place first. Once those are established and the architectural and practical details are set, that is when the real creativity begins, and there are no rules for me anymore. I follow what I see, what I feel, and what my creative brain is imagining, in combination with what my client wants.

The result is always an original, one-of-a-kind, creative, sexy, elegant, timeless design that is built on proper foundations but expressed without fear. And so far, so good.

NWP: Northern Wide Plank offers a range of textures, from planed to wire-brushed to sanded and weathered surfaces. How can these different kinds of surfaces influence the tone or mood of a space?

LM: Northern Wide Plank is the number-one distributor of authentic wood, and what truly separates it from other sources is the texture of its surfaces and the real feeling that comes through in every plank. When I choose materials from Northern Wide Plank, they instantly bring a sense of elegance and age to a space. Many people may not fully understand how much the quality of this wood can transform a room. In my own home, I use beautiful patinaed wood throughout, and it becomes the most exquisite background for everything else. Sometimes the more rustic the wood is, the more modern the furnishings, cabinetry, and moldings can feel, because the floor gives you such a grounding presence. That contrast in textures and finishes creates a dynamic and layered atmosphere that elevates the entire design.

Continued on page 13

INTERVIEW



THE ART OF TEXTURE

IN DISCUSSION WITH LORI MORRIS
OF LORI MORRIS DESIGN





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NWP: How do you approach layering textures to create depth, mood, and visual richness in a space?

LM: Layering textures is something I approach very skillfully. When all the textures sit in the same vein, when everything feels heavy or everything feels hard or cold, there is no break. If the room is filled with marble, stone, shine, or elements all from the same family, you need something that stops the eye and hugs you. That is where softness comes in.

If one texture is very heavy, I like to place something softer beside it or around it. The idea is to create balance, so that every few materials, the room carries both elements working together. Softness and strength, matte and sheen, all need to exist in the same space for it to feel layered and rich.

As an artist, it comes naturally. I follow the flow and the trajectory of the design. If something stands out in a way that feels wrong or looks like it does not belong, then it probably does not.

NWP: When working with natural wood materials like wide plank flooring, what qualities do you look for to ensure they complement your overall design vision?

LM: I think the beauty of natural wood is that it gives a space a timeless elegance. It creates an authenticity that immediately grounds the room. When you use a bold, weathered wood, for example, it brings an instant sense of age and patina, becoming a beautiful backdrop for everything around it. And if someone

prefers a more modern finish in white, black, or gray, it sets the tone for all the elements that will follow.

Natural wood is always a timeless and elegant material. It acts as the grounding plate for the entire environment, allowing every other detail in the room to feel supported and elevated.

NWP: Where do you draw inspiration when conceptualizing the sensory elements of a home, including texture, tactility, and atmosphere?

LM: I draw inspiration for the sensory elements of a home from many places, and every location brings something different. A summer retreat, a lake house, a home on the ocean, a mountain property, or anywhere else will naturally have its own atmosphere. Often, the landscape itself will help dictate some of the parameters for the finished design.

But the true starting point is always the client. They may have a certain look in mind, a particular feeling they want, or a way they imagine living in the space, and that will trigger the creative direction. They give us the story, we put that story on paper, and then we turn it into reality.

Inspiration can begin with anything, whether it is a painting, a chandelier, a colour, or a fabric. Once we find that starting point, everything begins to unfold. Of course, I cannot give away all the secret sauce.



NWP: Wood naturally tells a story through its grain, patina, and imperfections. What draws you to use wood as a material in your projects?

LM: The beauty of wood lies in its natural character, its imperfections, and its patina. Those qualities are what give it personality and, in many ways, perfection. A perfectly finished and seamless piece of wood does not offer the same depth or texture as something that has aged and carries a story within its surface. That is why I always gravitate toward wood with more patina and texture. It creates an authenticity that feels true to the material and adds richness to the overall design.

NWP: In your experience, how does craftsmanship influence the overall luxury of a space?

LM: Craftsmanship is absolutely critical. When you have extraordinary craftsmen who can create beautiful work in their fabrication, it is immediately noticeable compared to workmanship that is not as strong. True craftsmanship elevates the entire space and plays a major role in telling its story. A beautifully crafted room, whether it features elevated wall panels, stone walls, intricately detailed ceilings, or refined trim work, brings all the elements together. It completes the puzzle in a way that makes the entire space feel seamless, intentional, and perfectly executed.

NWP: How do you see the role of texture evolving in luxury interior design?

LM: Luxury never really goes out of style. When someone enjoys luxury in their surroundings, it naturally brings comfort and joy, and it is not something people grow tired of, because beauty is beauty. Most of us appreciate being surrounded by things that make us feel good.

In the design world, texture plays an important role because our homes are where we live, sleep, eat, entertain, and watch our families grow. Texture helps create warmth and character, and it adds another layer that makes a space feel personal and inviting. As luxury design continues to evolve, texture will keep growing in importance because it truly shapes how a room feels and how we experience it every day.

NWP: How important is the feeling underfoot — that tactile experience of the real wood when walking on it — in creating a sensory experience in your interiors?

LM: The feeling underfoot really depends on whether you keep your shoes on or not. If you keep your shoes on, you experience the floor one way, and if you walk around barefoot, it becomes a completely different sensation. Wood has a softer, more pliable, almost bouncy feeling compared to stone tile, and it creates a very different atmosphere in the space. Wood naturally offers warmth, and for someone who walks barefoot, it is certainly a much warmer and more inviting surface than stone. Even if a stone floor is heated, it still carries a cooler feeling overall.

That said, this is not usually the main factor driving the decision between wood and stone, because they are fundamentally different materials that bring their own distinct qualities to a room.



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MACRO TEXTURE OF SOLSTICE WHITE OAK WIDE PLANK, ICONIC COLLECTION