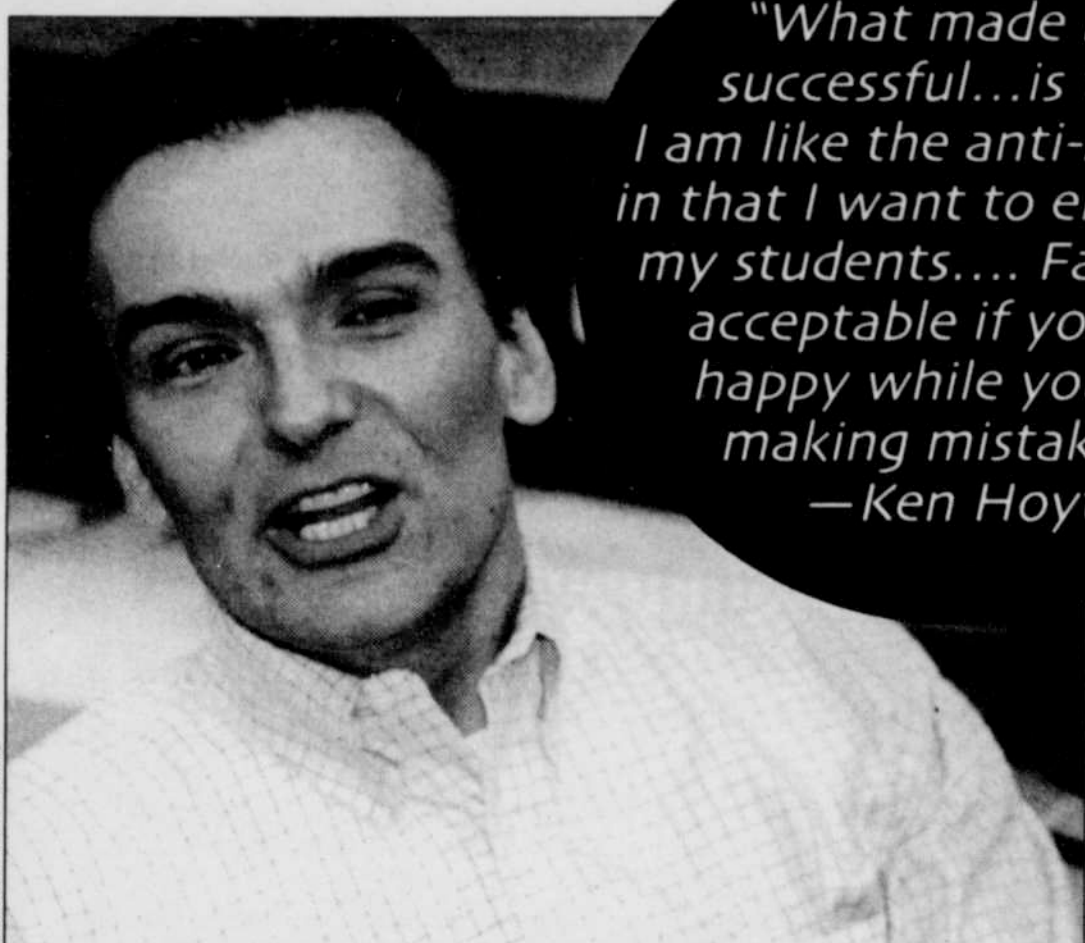


PHOTO BY MARTY DAVIS



"What made me successful...is that I am like the anti-Martha in that I want to empower my students.... Failure is acceptable if you are happy while you are making mistakes."
—Ken Hoyt

empower my students. When I watch her show I am oftentimes afraid to try what she's doing because everything is perfectly decorated and—damn!—where's the dust bunny?"

Making necessary concessions for certain events and parties is one thing, but Hoyt acknowledges that in daily life "failure is acceptable if you are happy while you are making the mistakes." For instance, he recently dashed out to Whole Foods to buy ice cream to cover up a "tart disaster." But as long as you're having fun, your guests will, too, he says. Keeping things relatively easy and not too mysterious is always the key. "We are in a recession, we need to keep it real," Hoyt points out.

Which also illustrates what's trendy about P-town.

"Portland is almost the anti-chic place to live—what seems cool about it is authenticity," remarks Hoyt. "We have no clue about how cool the place we are in is. If you think of Portland, Seattle and San Francisco as the three sisters, I think Portland is the homely one who stayed at home. But that girl can still get a date because she has resources!"

And her local resources are her best assets when it comes to the stylish and trendy. Hoyt mentions Northwest-oriented restaurants like Paley's Place and Lucerne and asks: "Does it really have to come from New York to be good? I think we are learning it doesn't."

Today, Hoyt is also the host of *Good Day Lifestyles*, a television show airing at 8 a.m. Saturdays on KPTV that focuses

on regional food, homes and gardens. In many ways, it is geared toward helping the average viewer with limited income make simple home improvements with flair using basic ingredients. As Hoyt says, the show is for those "who do not have cable, a sort of local replacement for HGTV," referring to the increasingly popular Home and Garden Television channel and its numerous series on gardening, home improvement and interior design.

"I was surprised that they gave a big queen like me a job, but, hey, look at Christopher Lowell!" teases Hoyt.

When it comes to interior decorating, making a home a haven is Hoyt's bottom line. So getting into a client's head and finding aesthetics and comfort zones with colors are a big deal. Colors are a beautiful extension of a client's personality. And a good way for a client to get to know his or her colors, Hoyt recommends, is to look inside their closet.

"If I could help five people to adopt a personal style that eluded a name brand, I would be doing an OK job," he says, adding that "style should be seamless."

And made of high-quality, practical materials. Hoyt says he's always suggesting that clients either reuse a piece of furniture that they already own or to buy only one high-quality piece if that's all they can afford. Then they can build around it in time.

Likewise, an inexpensive coat of paint



PHOTO BY STEVE SCARONIA. STYLING BY KEN HOYT. COMPLIMENTS OF PORTLAND BRIDE AND GROOM.

Ken Hoyt's career is anything but static. As a style and design entrepreneur, he says "you must be somewhat fearless...I think the learning curve is everything to me—life is like school." Hoyt is a frequent contributor to a variety of style and fashion periodicals, including a how-to article on wrapping gifts for gay-owned *Portland Bride and Groom*.

could be the only freshening up that a room might need. Earthy warm tones, such as golds and wheats, counterbalance the gray days of the city while giving the skin a certain depth that will makes one feel good.

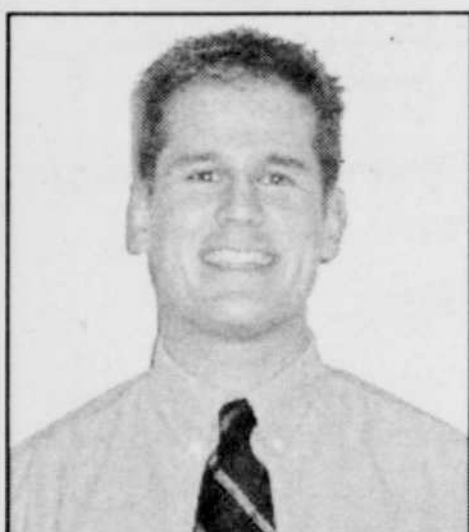
Some designers feel they need to leave a signature after having completed an interior, something that says, "I was here." Hoyt's mantra, on the other hand, is "I don't live here. Let me help you to get where you want to be." And one thing Hoyt specifically avoids is what he calls "revenge decorating," that is, when a couple break up and one decides to redo the entire place to clear the air. This, he says, is a "design don't."

When asked what's next in his career, Hoyt says, "This is the last reinvention for me as I near 50." (Which, he reminds, is 150 in gay years.) But Hoyt dreams about writing about homes and items that people use in their daily lives.

"We are an adaptable species," he notes. "Otherwise we would have never lasted this long." □

For more decorating ideas, visit KEN HOYT online at www.kenhoystyle.com.

TJ NORRIS is a Portland free-lance writer.



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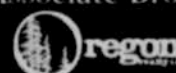
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