

# expat *life*

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*an irreverent  
look at  
the trials  
and tribulations  
of living and working  
abroad and other  
irrelevancies*

## *In My Room*

By Victoria Acerra

Erna Berger Moise has flair, a flamboyance that you would expect from a woman attired in purple gloves, a native print scarf, and a large Indian medallion dangling from her neck. I met with Erna in one of the rooms she designed, one of the individually appointed dining spaces at the Basilicum restaurant

near Cismigui Park. Erna studied art a young student, and at 21 immigrated to Israel. During Hebrew classes in Jerusalem she met a fellow Romanian, Vlad, and she acquired a husband. After following an inspiring curriculum at the College for Fashion and Textile Design in Shenkar, it was very difficult for Erna to continue her studies at the Arts Academy in Bucharest on her return. The teachers insisted that each student in a class draw, sculpt, or paint in the exact same way. Pink was a color not allowable in works by students. Yes, another gift from the Communist regime. Erna braved her way through this stifling environment, and produced printed fabrics in small series. After graduation, she sought work in a field as close as possible to the degree she'd received. She found architects in general to be closed-minded to her ideas, but she designed a restaurant here, a pub there, and slowly built up a private clientele.

Erna's design schemes for



Erna Berger Moise

her clients are organic. Basilicum, for instance, was designed with this through line; basil was first used in India, so most rooms in the restaurant are painted with the traditional colors used by Indians in their own homes. She researches the history of symbols and letterings used in her paintings that are incorporated in the projects she does. She has discovered sources for cobalt blue glassware, old prints, letters, and manuscripts. Erna had the pleasure that every interior designer should have occasionally in their career, when a prominent lawyer with a new home in Banesa said he loved her work, and gave her free reign to bring life and wonder to a brand new home. Erna is a fount of information, and inspiration, for anyone looking for a new lease on the life of their home.