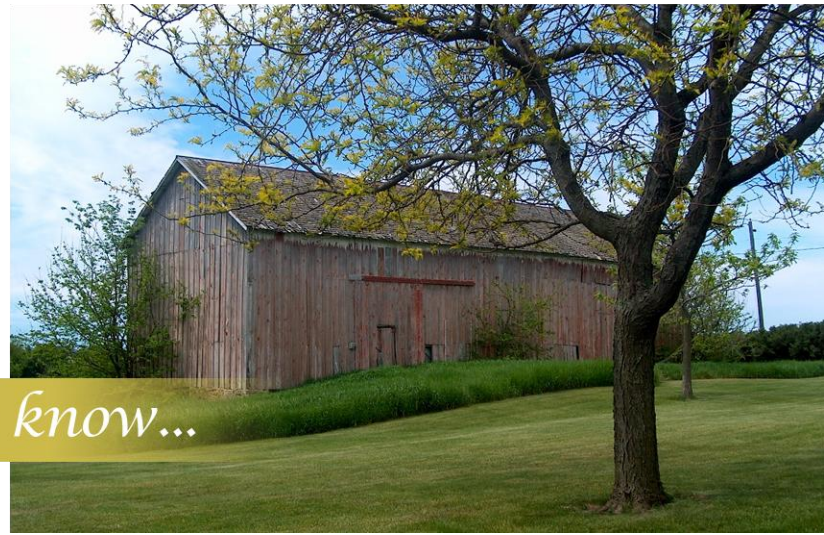


Art & Soul

# Wabi Sabi

*The secret you already know...*



*“Have nothing in your home you do not know to be useful or believe to be beautiful.”*

*William Morris, 1864*

One of the first things people ask when they walk into my home furnishings consignment shop is “What is wabi sabi?” It was only 10 years ago that I asked that same question. I was having a conversation with Jeanette Fisher, author of “The Psychology of Design” when she said “You sound like such a wabi sabi kind of person.” Wabi what? The nearest library had two books on wabi sabi. I read both that weekend. The more I learned about wabi sabi, the more I talked about it. I soon realized there were plenty of other people who understood and embraced the philosophy but none of us knew there was a name for it. In fact, in Richard Powell’s book, he says “Wabi sabi is a secret you already know.”

**Wabi** refers to simplifying, eliminating excess, leaving room for what’s meaningful; it’s about quality not quantity. It’s about downsizing, using restraint, the “less is more” theory. It’s being mindful of what you bring into your surroundings: things that you resonate with deep down inside.

*One of the nicest qualities of wabi sabi is that it is felt in the bones and often is associated with fond memories of childhood experiences.*

Richard Powell

**Sabi** refers to the beauty, charm and character imparted by the passing of time: the patina that develops on silver or copper, the autumn colors that appear as nature’s cycle nears its end. It’s the lines that appear on our loved ones face. Those crinkly laugh-lines around the corners of their eyes only prove they’ve experienced much of life’s joys.

*Age is but an opportunity - no less than youth itself, though in another dress. And as the evening twilight fades away, the sky is filled by stars invisible by the day.*

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

The only constant is change. That’s very wabi sabi. It acknowledges the continuous transformation of life: We’re born. We grow up. We mature. We grow old. We pass on. It acknowledges the movement of time as natural. Learn to appreciate the unique effects of passing time and just accept it for what it is - for it is only for a moment.

Together wabi sabi is a combination of both the physical and metaphysical. It’s the inside and the outside, the yin and yang. Or as Robyn Lawrence Griggs states in her book, *The Wabi Sabi House*, “it represents a material manifestation of a key spiritual concept.”

● *Next month: Enhancing your Home the Wabi Sabi Way.*

Written by Kay Frandsen, owner of the Wabi Sabi Shop

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Kay Frandsen, Owner