

The background of the entire page is a close-up, artistic photograph of several open paint cans. The cans are arranged in a cluster, with a paintbrush resting across them. The brush has a wooden handle and a metal ferrule. The paint colors visible in the cans include a vibrant red, a bright yellow, and a deep blue. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the textures of the paint and the bristles of the brush.

INTERIOR DESIGNER-FRIEND OR FOE?

DESIGNING MINDS

How many times have you been in a house and the dining table doesn't fit exactly underneath the chandelier? You notice the family heirloom secretary is a beautiful piece but it does not physically fit the location it's placed in? There seems to be a lot of light in the kitchen from these small high intensity track lights yet you find it difficult to see clearly while working at the counter because of the heavy shadows? There are not enough outlets in the bathroom for your hair dryer, curling iron or shaver. During entertainment functions it becomes painfully apparent that traffic flow and of the house doesn't accommodate people well? Or what about that paint color, maybe it was supposed to match the upholstery fabric in the same room but it's definitely off the mark?

Even more mystifying is that it's easily apparent by the materials used that there was a budget to do the project "right". So what went wrong? It does not make sense that people would purposely create shortcomings in one of their largest investments and long term assets. In most cases, it is lack of quality planning before the project begins, and poor commitment to the plan once the project is underway.

If budget permits, a good custom builder can build whatever a client wants. A client usually has some kind of vision of what they want, or at least the style and colors to be achieved. But, most struggle with where to begin finding products and how to make decisions in order for it to all work! This is where an interior designer becomes an invaluable service and resource to a client.

An interior designer is educated and trained in all the aspects of design and construction to integrate the steps and pieces throughout the entire process. There are a million choices of products and services. An interior designer will know what types of products are best for certain applications, what service providers are most reputable and where to find them. They will have an established network of vendors, builders, sub-contractors and craftsmen at their fingertips. Working with an interior designer can save a client a lot of time and frustration looking for products and contemplating decisions.

Commonly, the client decides many of the interior selections after a contract has been signed with a contractor. This can often lead to change orders, cost overruns and longer lead times. Also, the contractor had to speculate what budget would support the clients' needs and wants. By making a

simple adjustment in the process and placing the interior selections and interior designer into the planning phase prior to selecting a contractor can lead to many advantages. Decisions made during this phase can develop into accurate specifications, which lead to contractors being more willing to competitively bid the project. Generally, there is an overall cost savings to the client having an interior designer involved from the onset of a project. Because the decisions are made ahead of the contractor needing them, there are no costly change orders and the project stays on a predictable schedule. There won't be any "costly mistakes" of things to change mid-project, or "surprises" of not knowing what something will be or look like in the end.

The real key is to involve an interior designer early in the plan development phase prior to construction.

So, before you start your next construction project, consider interviewing a couple of interior designers. They can make your project a well planned, enjoyable experience that completely reflects you in the end!

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