



## *Hiring an Interior Designer*

By: Kelly Sohigian, Neighborhood Contributor

*Bio: Kelly Sohigian has 15 years of fashion industry experience and participates as a designer at the Fairfield Christmas Tree Festival.*

home, from the floor plan and foot print of the home to the attention of the architectural details down to the last accessory and finishing touch.

Be prepared when you meet with an interior designer. Spend time discussing what you are trying to achieve and what you have already done to work towards that goal. I ask clients to prepare Houzz idea books or Pinterest boards so that I get a sense of their likes, dislikes, style and aesthetics. Most people have a hard time trying to explain what they want and like but their collection of photos typically paints a very clear picture of the style and aesthetic they would like to achieve.

Picture exercises prepare you for the first meeting and walk through at your home. When I review these with my clients, I also make note of their current layout, lifestyle and the personality of the family. Your home should reflect your style and be comfortable for your family. No one should ever walk into your house and know that someone else helped design it.

**T**hinking of redoing a room? Renovating your whole house? Will you go it alone or bring in some professional help? The answers to these questions lie in personal preferences, budgets and an overall comfort level in letting an 'outsider' into your world.

An interior designer's function is to not only figure out overall aesthetics, but to uncover and address your wishes to make your house your home. Designing should go beyond wall colors, furniture selection and placement, window treatments and patterns. A pro works to ensure there is a harmonious flow throughout the



Armed with all of this information, the designer's next step is to prepare a plan for their client's desired outcome by complementing the home's architectural details and working within a realistic budget. You should also review your time frame and the prices of items to be purchased.

Many designers work on a 'cost plus' basis, which is a fee they add to their wholesale pricing. Others work on a project fee basis or hourly rate. If undertaking a substantial project, it makes sense to negotiate a project fee, which is a one-time fee regardless of hours. In this situation, it is important to stay within the scope of the project so as not to incur more costs.

An interior designer turns houses into homes - to help you fulfill your vision in making your home fit your lifestyle. When considering having a designer help you, understand the need for collaboration, the importance of working toward an agreed upon plan and having someone you feel represents your interests. The best projects for both designers and clients are true partnerships.



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