

Can an Interior Designer Really Save You Time and Money?

SANCTUARY DESIGNS

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ABOVE: Rachel Henry of Sanctuary Designs. Left: Peek into hearth room and office nook in kitchen of a 1960's house renovated as a modern farmhouse. Before and after pictures at thesanctuarydesigns.com.

OPPOSITE PAGE: Family room addition added to modern farmhouse renovation. Ceiling treatment on 12-foot high cathedral ceilings adds warmth and helps tie in the new space to the original house.

Yes! And Rachel Henry at Sanctuary Designs can do much more than that.

"My ultimate goal is to create unique, beautiful, peaceful spaces that are also highly functional for my clients," says Henry, whose design mottos include, "Simplicity, Not Stuffiness," "Inspiration, Not Limitation" and "Accessibility, Not Pretention." Her mission is to help clients create living spaces they love that allow them to exhale when they come home.

"Your home can be both a showcase and a livable respite for you and your family. What I've realized along the way is that I bring more than just a sense of taste and design to my clients' homes," she says.

Henry describes her personal style as "luxury rustic with clean lines and a modern twist." But she loves helping clients design traditional, transitional or modern spaces – whatever they love. She works as a designer for a high-end custom builder's market homes, and she also assists individuals with renovations, making selections for new builds or refreshing specific spaces in their homes.

Encouraging Design 'Risks'

A beautiful, peaceful space doesn't happen by accident, Henry notes. Every great design begins with a great process, and at Sanctuary Designs, it all begins with an in-person consultation. It's during that stage of the design process that she often encourages her clients to take design "risks."

"Many of my clients, for example, initially want all-white kitchens," Henry continues. "Those can certainly be striking, but I've come to understand that for many it is simply a 'safe' aesthetic. How can you go wrong when everything is white? But that can easily read 'sterile' or 'boring' without elements that warm the space or make it unique – such as a white backsplash that is a step beyond subway tile or a patterned cement tile."

Recently, a client asked Henry to design a new home library for her – a space for her to retreat, relax and study. She confessed she was afraid of color and asked for all white bookshelves.

"The library had 10-foot ceilings, so I wanted to fill the space and make it special for her," Henry recalls. "I proposed soothing, neutral, but still stunning SW Aleutian gray-blue custom built-ins with a ladder and art lighting. To balance it out and give her an airy feeling, we did a 6-foot wainscot on the other walls in a soft white. She absolutely loved it and said it felt exactly like her, but she wouldn't have thought to do this without some prompting."



ABOVE: Master bathroom with vintage medicine cabinets above custom vanity and patterned tile floor combining new and old.

BELOW: Walker Zanger adds interest to an all-white kitchen.



Going Beyond the Basics

Last fall, Henry was asked to help design a new home. The couple wanted a coffee bar but with no kitchen space for it, had resigned themselves to placing it in the dining room. “We looked at the plans together and discussed converting half of their extra large pantry into a coffee bar with a sliding door covering the pantry portion,” she explains. “Now their kitchen is more functional and their dining room can stay elegant.”

Saving You Time

“Often clients know what they like when they see it, but don’t have the time or inclination to research all available options and put the elements together,” Henry continues. Her job, she maintains, is to understand clients’ tastes, narrow down the options and present a few optimal selections that work holistically so they can make easier, quicker decisions, thereby moving the project along.

Saving You Money

“Every interior designer works differently, but at Sanctuary Designs, we don’t take any mark-ups on furniture, cabinetry or any other selections. I want my clients to know I’m selecting the best options for them – regardless of price – and if I can find the same option at a better value, then I do,” Henry says. “Most designers – myself included – get significant discounts at the better furniture/lighting retailers, which I pass along to my clients.”

Helping You Make Decisions

Design is highly subjective, which can be both freeing and overwhelming at the same time, Henry points out.

“A designer you have a good rapport with will optimize your space to reflect your personal style while steering you away from options you’ll eventually regret,” she says. “In other words, we are the friend you need in the changing room who will tell you when that ‘dress’ is not the most flattering.”

Reducing Stress

Even the best of renovations and new builds are stressful. Problems may arise that can compromise the aesthetic vision, budget or project timeline.

“Your designer is your problem solver and visionary that will help you create a space that ultimately feels like your favorite place,” Henry concludes. While there are more benefits to hiring a good designer than can be outlined here, at Sanctuary Designs, we aim to create a relationship and outcome that couldn’t have been realized without our partnership.” ❖

For more information about Sanctuary Designs, visit www.thesanctuarydesigns.com