

# *Hiring an Interior Designer/Decorator*



Some people feel intimidated at the thought of hiring an interior designer/decorator. A common perception is only the wealthy can afford the services of an interior designer/decorator. More and more people are spending time at home after long commutes and a longer day at work, there is more demand and need for their house to be a haven to come home to. Unfortunately, busier schedules prevent even the "handiest" of homeowners to start and complete a job within a reasonable amount of time. Or, maybe you've gone as far as you can and are having trouble just pulling it all together.

Good time to consider hiring the services of a professional interior designer/decorator! An Interior Designer/Decorator can and will do the research and legwork for you. You do have to do a little homework though. Before hiring an interior designer/decorator, decide what you are expecting from the decorator/designer regarding your project and what do you want the decorator/designer to do for you.

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### How to find a great Interior Designer/Decorator in Virginia Beach

So you have decided it is time to bring in a professional to help you decorate your home. Whether you are doing the whole interior or just a room or tow, there are many thing to consider in making this important decision.

#### Steps to finding an Interior Designer/Decorator:

- 1.) Check to make sure that they have experience.
- 2.) Get two or more references.
- 3.) Ask how long they have been in business.
- 4.) Ask if they will come to your home.
- 5.) Ask what their rates are and how they work.
- 6.) Ask if they have a certain "style".



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The best place to start asking about designers/decorators is your family and friends. Other good sources of referrals include contractors, real estate agents and your local paint supply store. Your city may even be able to provide a list of recommended designers and decorators who are familiar with the codes in your area. When asking for referrals, be sure to check the type of job the professional was called in to accomplish. Also, determine if the interior designer/decorator specializes in residential or commercial work.

## Some good questions to ask:

### Were you happy with the quality provided by the Interior Designer/Decorator?

Everybody has their own ideas of quality, so you should take a look at their house and judge for yourself. Does the home feel comfortable, does it fit the homeowners? Does it feel like it was professionally done?

### Did the Interior Designer/Decorator listen to your needs?

Most people have a fear that when they are hiring a professional interior designer/decorator they lost control over the final outcome. Truthfully, this does happen quite frequently. Being a great designer/decorator does not automatically give them great people skills. By interviewing your prospective designer/decorator you can tell if they're going to listen to what your specific needs are and how best to accomplish these. Remember, this is ultimately YOUR home, make sure you will want to come home to it!

### Were they courteous and polite?

This is a very important consideration. The entire experience, from beginning to end, needs to be as stress free as possible. Plus if the interior designer/decorator enjoys their job, the quality and attention to details will be better. The customers attitude can and will affect the entire design project. Hopefully this will be the first question you ask. If the answer to this question is "no" then you don't want to work with that person.

### Fees

Fees very depending on the interior designer/decorator. This is important to get up front. Whether it's a large or small project, residential or commercial, if you are planning on making your purchases through your interior designer/decorator, all these can make a difference in how your fees are structured.

## How to Hire an Interior Designer/Decorator

Think about the last time you purchased a car. Chances are you didn't go to the yellow pages, choose a dealership at random, and buy your car from the first lot you visited. Many times, though, this scenario describes the way homeowners find an interior designer/decorator – they look in the phone book and call the interior decorator with the largest ad. But much like purchasing a car, finding a qualified interior designer/decorator requires research and comparison shopping.

**Keep in Mind the following for when you meet with a designer/decorator for your consultation :**

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1. **Your Decorating Allowance** : This is very important. It will dictate what resources are available to the designer/decorator to meet your allowance requirements. Resources can be adjusted, designers fees cannot.
  2. **Your Style** : Many people are not real sure of their own style, they may be changing styles, or designing around items already in the home and have a hard time seeing them in other ways. This is fine, be honest with your designer/decorator, that is what they're to help you find. Use decorating books, magazines, photos from someone else's home to show what you like and just as importantly, what you do not like. It may be the way the light is hitting the room that caught your attention, a rug from another picture, the clock hanging on the wall in another, the bookcases and the way the floor plan was so open and so on. Believe it or not, there will be a consistency between all of them. This should give the designer/decorator a great starting point and a visual of what your are looking for in your project.
  3. **Color** : You know when you hire an interior designer/decorator you will be getting color. That's their business. Your question becomes, what color? And where? So many floorplans these days make it very difficult for the non-professional to know where best to "stop and start" color. Be prepared to know what colors you like, what works for you, as well as the other members of your family. And also be prepared to "think outside the box". After all, that's what you've hired the professional for, advice you would not have thought of.
  4. **Know what pieces and accessories you are keeping:** Know what you MUST work around and what you can discard. If you have a piece of Aunt May's needlepoint and you must incorporate it in the overall design, let your designer/decorator know that. But also, be prepared to clean out a little clutter.
  5. **The Room:** Its important for the interior designer/decorator to know how and who will be using the particular room or rooms if its not already obvious, like a kitchen. Are pets involved, guests to consider, children and how old are they? How does the light track through the room, do we need to consider room darkening window treatments? Is there much heat that comes through the windows? All these and more will help determine what types of fabrics should be considered, how furniture should best be arranged, how to make it all more useable.
  6. **DIY:** If you want to try to cut down on some of the expense of the decorating, tell your designer/decorator up front this preference. For instance, if you would like to attempt the painting yourself and you like to paint and do it well, and have the TIME, there should be no reason you can not paint a project room yourself. This is provided you are not interfering with other's schedules, thereby holding everything else up.

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## Things an Interior Designer/Decorator can help you do:

There are a number of areas that a professional interior designer/decorator can help accomplish

1. **Interior designers/decorators offer professional expertise.**

Interior designers/decorators help you put your creative "stamp" in your home by dealing with decorating, furnishings and space issues, often in unique ways. You should choose an interior designer/decorator whose projects are not only appealing, but have proven practical to build

and live in as well.

Interior decorating is not just "having an eye" for color or recognizing quality furniture. It is an extensive discipline that encompasses many specialized areas of expertise, including:

- Colors and how they relate to one another.
- Patterns and how they relate to one another.
- Human perception of space, depth, and texture.
- Compatibility of furniture styles.
- Effective space utilization.
- Specialized painting and stenciling techniques.
- Wide variety of possible window treatments and much more.
- Experience in the building industry.
- Lighting.
- A good base of subcontractors to assist in completing your decorating project.

2. Interior decorators/designers have spent years finding the best professional interior design resources. The professional designer/decorator has already found the best sources for everything from upholstery services to marble pedestals to cabinet makers.

3. Interior designers/decorators can save you money in furnishings and other home decorating supplies. Time is very valuable to everyone. Saving you time is saving you money. Not making mistakes the first time around is saving money AND time. Think about it, doing it once and getting it right, or having to work around that too big piece of furniture and never getting it right?



## **TIPS**

Accidents can happen with almost any home improvement project. So ask your prospective candidate what steps he or she will take to prevent injuries and property damage. Again an interior designer/decorator should be able to answer these questions with ease. Make sure they have a business license and business insurance. Ask about project turnaround times, expect those to be reasonable dates to get the project completed. Remember, there is stress involved anytime your schedule is inconvenienced. Make sure you keep your sense of humor and all will go well.



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Working with an interior designer/decorator can be a pleasant, rewarding and satisfying experience. If you do your homework beforehand, and use the consultation time wisely, this could be a headache free experience. You may enjoy it so much that who knows, maybe you will do something with that guest room before your mother in law comes to visit! We hope this helps in your next decorating venture

Be sure to visit <http://vabeachinteriordesigner.com> to read more and leave us comments! Or call 757-436-3600 to speak with Leslie.