

"Like all good things, design takes time; creativity is a process. The client's wishes, lifestyle, needs, budget, and time frame are all things to be considered. The product's availability, having to collaborate with architects, designers, and several craftsmen – it all takes time and diligence," says ASID Texas Chapter President, Kelley Barnett. "I researched 'Divine Design' to find out that it takes months and 45 people to research and prepare for a 30-minute spot. In a nutshell, good design takes time."

To produce a seamless design from conception to installation, there are hundreds of steps that happen behind the scenes that the homeowner is never aware of. After evaluating the client's needs and budget, the designer will often create three to four floor plans, fabric selections and furniture style options before ever presenting a cohesive theme to the client.

"It takes a seasoned interior designer to know all design elements involved in the execution of design," says Barnett. "It also takes a credentialed designer to respect and determine a client's budget in order to establish a parameter and determine priorities."

After the design concept is chosen, the implementation work begins. Figuring out dimensions, reconstructing electrical wiring if needed, researching countless sources, checking inventory, directing contractors, checking lead time on products, preparing for installation, budgeting a client's finances and micromanaging the details of product transportation.

"Designers are skilled at working miracles with budget limits. We know how to get the most from a budget and where the most value should be," says principal interior designer Debbie Baxter of Baxter Design Group. "Having an honest budget discussion upfront allows a professional designer to tailor the design to a particular budget. It serves as a boundary to discern how to allocate the dollars."

The designer's job is to make the process as low-stress as possible for their client. The interior designer becomes the client's home management assistant and speaker of the house by acting as the liaison between the client and their contractors. In most cases, designers take on additional job roles such as manager of delivery services, vendor and employee manager, negotiator, psychologist, accountant, floral designer and mediator between family members.



Baxter Design Group, Photography by Anne Roberts

A valuable suggestion to consider is to hire an interior designer at the developmental stage of any project whether it be a new construction or a remodel. Designers are dimensional experts thereby having a final vision of the home inside and out. From the beginning, an architect can collaborate with the designer and plan a space's structure to prepare it for furniture placement, space flow and materials selection. In most cases, an interior designer will actually save the client money by being involved in the construction process. When designers are involved in the construction process, key design elements are not overlooked. This minimizes the chances of having to fix costly mistakes as well as putting the project behind schedule.

The ASID, IIDA, RDI credentials designate that a designer has earned a college degree and is a certified and state registered interior designer based on years of experience and continued education. Annually, designers put in numerous hours attending seminars and continuing education classes in order to stay relevant and knowledgeable about current trends and codes such as plumbing, lighting and electrical state



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requirements, construction, building codes, universal design and green practices.

Interior design is much like fashion, both are ever-changing and meant to create works of art that an individual can incorporate into their lives with originality, function and meaning.

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*"Our home has won many design awards and people are always knocked out by the space. But more than that, our home is beautiful and it suits our family. Each room feels so good. That really is the thing that is hard to explain here, and likely it is the most important skill of a designer; once the swatches are put away, this is the space you will be living in and it needs to feel as good as it looks."*

L. Ladd



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