

# WHY SHOULD I HIRE A PROFESSIONAL DESIGNER?

EXCERPT FROM A CONVERSATION BETWEEN JANE LOCKHART & REFINED EDITOR, SHERRY LEE



It was an unusual location to meet, but not surprising. Internationally renowned professional designer, Jane Lockhart, had visited Moose Jaw to do some work with a client, and she had an open hour before her flight was leaving for Toronto. When I got the call a few weeks earlier, I jumped at the chance to meet her in person at the Regina airport.



Jane Lockhart, BAAID, Principal, Jane Lockhart Interior Design Inc.

*Jane is a regular contributor to Refined magazine, admitting she proudly displays copies in her Toronto office — something we were thrilled to hear. Her professional design firm, Jane Lockhart Interior Design, has focused on residential, commercial, hospitality and retail projects since 1997. She has a large following, and we are pleased to share some of Jane's thoughts and advice here.*

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A lot of people ask, is it worth the money to hire a designer? The real estate market, no matter what city you're in in Canada, is still a high market — the value of homes has really increased. For something that is a big investment, it's really worth having a consultant — at the very least to make sure that investment is managed in a visible way. Most people understand hiring a proper mechanic to fix their car because there's not much you can do without some kind of advice, and your home is one of the same things. You may put money into someone, but you'll get it back because the house looks good, or they've suggested things you've never thought of.

Designers work with clients every single day; there's always something new. There are just a lot of things to look at, and our job is to understand what's coming, so instead of you putting in a colour that is probably on its last legs, you would put in something that you see has long-term value. I've been in business 25 years, so I can say, "You know, I remember when we installed that tile and it did not perform, so I would not recommend buying this because the technology is better."

The other thing designers have is contacts that you are just not going to find in the phone book. They have means and ways to make sure the job gets done properly. They are worth it. Depending on how they run their business, they can suggest places to go where they know there are sales and how to get a better value out of something. If you're going to buy a new home, buy some of a designer's time. That one or two-hour consultation is a great starting point. It doesn't have to be a lifelong commitment, although for us, a lot of clients end up being long-term. They do a room, call us back; do another room, call us back, until they get comfortable with us.

If people want to do their own work, I have no problem with that, but I always advise consulting with experts on how to do that work, first. Let's make sure you don't spend all this time painting a colour you end up hating and end up having to do it again. Designers are fast and they are usually a low cost percentage of the overall job. I say to clients, "If you're worried about our price, then you have a bigger problem. We're just there to make sure all those things go together properly." ■