



## Why Hire An Interior Designer?

By MaryAnn Shanks

On the surface, hiring a professional interior designer can appear to be a somewhat “optional” undertaking – nice, but not necessary. After all, what’s the big mystery in buying new drapes and hanging a chandelier?

But much like plumbing or auto repair, interior design is one of those professions where you don’t truly appreciate the value of a pro until your happy little do-it-yourself project turns into a wildly expensive, comedy of errors that has you in stitches (otherwise, you’ll cry).

It hits each *decorator l’amateur* differently.

Maybe your realization will first come when you find yourself elbow-deep in faux finish more the color of “baby poop” than “autumn mustard”.

Or the moment your “off the books” contractor’s enthusiastic hammering splits your crown molding and leaves a giant crater in your wall.

Or perhaps your grand epiphany will arrive with the custom upholsters, as they deliver a 5-foot couch for your 4-foot space (no refunds, of course).

When it does hit you, you’ll find yourself staring down the barrel of the realization that you would have saved *so much* time, money and exasperation had you just gone with a professional.

Here are some more great reasons to invite an interior designer to tackle your next project:

- **They offer the dual advantage of design foresight and 20/20 hindsight.** Designers design for a living, so they have a good “lay of the land”. They keep the vision of your soon-to-be-fabulous room in their crosshairs, while using the benefit of their experience to save you from “rookie” mistakes.
- **They have access to resources you don’t.** Designers are connected. They bring a long list of resources and contacts to the table, saving you the headaches of finding good contractors, furniture and trades people.

- **They take your project to the next level.** Designers are visual people. That ability to picture a finished room before the project's even begun is a *huge* asset to you. While a do-it-yourselfer might decorate a room to look "Tuscan inspired" – a good designer will create an *experience*, making you feel like you're in Tuscany itself.
- **They can help stretch your budget.** Designers know what things cost, and how to get them for a fair price. Plus, they can review your budget up front, advise you on areas of the room where it's important to make a large investment, and identify ways you can get away with something less expensive.
- **They're cutting-edge.** Designers stay current on all the latest styles and trends, and can advise you on a whole array of new products and services you never knew existed.

So get out there and find *your* interior designer! One with the experience, aptitude and connections to make designing your space the fun rewarding project it's meant to be – and leave do-it-yourselfing to the likes of Martha Stewart.

You'll be ever so glad you did.

***ABOUT THE AUTHOR:*** Interior designer MaryAnn Shanks is the owner of M. Shanks Design, a full-service firm offering residential and commercial design services to suit every style and budget; based in Orange County, California. For more information, or to schedule your own two-hour, flat rate design consultation, call (949) 654-2488 or visit [www.mshanksdesign.com](http://www.mshanksdesign.com)