

JUNE & JULY 2015

HOME&DECOR

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THE DESIGNER'S JOURNEY OF SARA STORY

CHEF MIKE WARD'S
MOUTH-WATERING
SURF & TURF RECIPES

ARTFUL, BEAUTIFUL
DOOR DECOR YOU
MUST CHECK OUT

7 GREAT PATIO
DECOR AND
COMFORT
IDEAS FOR
SUMMER

THE STYLISH LIVING MAGAZINE



DESIGN PLANNING WITH MELISSA DAVIS



I'm in the business of creating well-executed spaces. I am a designer. I'm going to let you in on a little secret, I'm actually just a problem solver. My brain is not that of a lateral thinker jumping from creative possibility to creative possibility. I'm a linear thinker. I see a problem, sequence through the possible solutions and form a plan for the most succinct and effective way to execute on that solution. I believe in the possibility of infinite possibilities and I'm very very good at plucking out one such possible solution and committing to it.

When someone decides to hire a designer it's an exercise in acknowledging that some aspect of how and where they live is not working. Clients come in many forms some with binders divided by area and stuffed filled with "inspiration" ideas. Others simply show up and say "We need more space". I've studied design and spent my youth in fine arts programs, and my college years mixing paint at the local décor shop. I know how to create visual balance and harmony, but, good "eye" is not what makes me good at my job.

As a designer you need to be a good listener . I listen to my client's words, but more than that I watch their nonverbal cues. I gauge how they subtly or not so subtly react to each other's comments. Designers need to understand how you live and I tour how my clients live now and mentally note the things they aren't telling me. "We need more space" may actually mean "when my husband gets up for work at 5AM he wakes me up getting clothes from the dresser by my head. I'm tired and grumpy as a result." So, they don't need more space. They just need a secondary dressing area that allows one to sleep while the other prepares. Problem and solution.

Working with a designer means allowing someone into your lives who will listen to your wish list. Letting in someone who knows how to solve everyday problems through the reworking and improving of your physical environment. They save ultimately time and money and they bring you a rolodex of trusted trades and suppliers who have helped them and help other homeowners like you before. They are one part of a team that will become your team if you think they are a good fit with your life.

Your designer will become your voice during the renovation process.

They will shelter you from the daily calls and site queries that inevitably come up. They will work with the team seemingly silently but continuously until the renovation is complete. For every problem they will offer viable solutions, which they already taken the time to consider, allowing you opportunity to make an educated choice, not an emotional one to move forward.

You'll laugh, the indescribable amount of drywall dust may make you cry, but in the end as you settle back into your new home, I promise it will be with a renewed peace, fewer problems at hand, and a new "creative" friend to toast your combined accomplishment with.

— **embark**

