



Guidance to **good design** dollars and sense advice

BY TRACEY RAYSON



IN THIS COMMUNICATION-SAVVY AGE, powered by technology and fuelled by instant information, homeowners may be gaining confidence about decorating their spaces with the glut of know-how at their fingertips. However, some cautionary advice: it takes more than online tools, an app here, a design show there, here a tweet, there a tweet — to get it right.

Steve Jobs, CEO of Apple says, “Design is not just what it looks like and feels like. Design is how it works.” Not just an accurate nod to technology-leading products — but true too of interior design. Good interior design isn’t just a pretty space, it works, it functions, it means more than wallpaper and window treatments, and in the long run, you’re likely to benefit from the guidance of a professional designer who will save you money in costly mistakes — an expert who makes house calls.

“As far as we see it, the design conundrums faced by our fans, both in Toronto and Vancouver, and all the way back to The UK, are very similar,” says Justin Ryan of HGTV’s design duo *Colin & Justin’s Home Heist*. “People, wherever they reside, want to learn about the ultimate bang for their buck. Money, these days, is short, and homeowners want to feather their nest in a stylish, elegant way.”

Budget is at the forefront for most when considering design or remodeling plans, but homeowners’ money woes often hinge on DIY ambitions without careful planning or consult. “The absolute number one design heart break is to rush into a project, buying a big ticket item or two, or tearing down a wall without having a detailed plan and a budget for that plan,” says Dwaina Sprague, partner and principle designer of Vancouver’s Good Space Design Group.

At the Gastown firm, Sprague along



with partner and CEO Brent Neave offers a design planning service to clients who don't want or can't afford a full-service interior designer. People get a holistic treatment of whatever their design challenges are; if it's a small room, they treat it with as much reverence as a big room. Full-service is available too, but what sets them apart is the Good Space Plan, a comprehensive interior design plan in which the client executes it themselves. A lot of homeowners want to be involved in the design of their own space but may not have the means for full-service.

"Working with Good Space on our new living room and foyer was really fun, and I appreciated that my input and contributions were respected throughout the process," says Angela Scardillo of Burnaby. "One of the reasons I had hesitated hiring a decorator before was because I didn't know what I was committing to financially, or what was involved."

The Good Space Plan is the ideal service not only for those who have limited budgets, but for homeowners apprehensive about turning over their home to a designer — it's ideal for people who want to be in the driver's seat. "Our process is collaborative, creative, and fun and we schedule meetings that integrate four key stages of every project," says Sprague. The Plan works to: inform (scope of work/provide quote), enlighten (clients express their vision), inspire (plans are discussed step by step; client is prepped for job ahead) and support (client is guided through the execution of their plan).

"In our quest to demystify or democratize interior design, we have definitely carved out a niche for ourselves," reveals Sprague. "To the best of our knowledge we are the only company out there that offers this type of comprehensive design plan."

"Someone looking for design services needs to do their homework," says Sprague. "Get references, and ask lots of questions: do they offer services that will provide what I need? Is it a service I can afford?"

For more information on Good Space please call 604.669.2064 or visit www.goodspace.ca. Check out Colin & Justin at www.colinandjustin.tv

