

Bringing design to life

Surrounded by a sea of chairs, sofas, lounges, ottomans, a dozen different tables and several hundred fabric samples, designer Regina Sturrock is quite literally in her element. With two pieces of fabric in hand and a third tucked under her arm, she picks her way back to the table she's been using to form the design for her latest client's new Great Room. Slipping the fabric swatches atop a mound of other samples – including pieces of wood trim, glass mosaic tiles and potential flooring options – the color, texture and form of her client's home begins to take form. This will be a warm, inviting space, intimate and cozy, yet with an air of strength and security. Just the place where you want to be on a cold winter night.

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“The client has some key furnishings that will form our starting point in the design of this space,” she explains. “So we have a starting point, and we have a fairly clear vision of what we want the room to be when we’re done, in terms of its feel and its character. Now, it’s a matter of getting there, putting it all together in some kind of harmonious way.”

Regina has been doing just that for a growing number of residential and commercial clients over the past 10 years. Established in 1996, Regina Sturrock Design is a small but busy firm, which places key emphasis on providing the personalized and customized service its busy clients deserve. This philosophy explains why Regina does not have a signature look to her work. The work reflects each individual client’s unique vision, rather than the designer’s imposed personal style.

“It’s not about what I like,” emphasizes Regina, squinting in slight disapproval at the way the color swatch doesn’t quite work with the glass tile sample. “It’s about the client’s vision and what it is they want to achieve. Our personal environment affects everything about us. It reflects who we are, how we live and how we work. For this reason, it has to function harmoniously. If it doesn’t,” she continues, swapping the glass tile for piece of wood, “then it simply won’t work, regardless of how it looks. It has to be uniquely personal yet still functional.”

If Regina Sturrock Design has a signature, it is the broad range of customization found in the work. “We often design custom millwork and furniture or architectural details,” says Regina. “It’s not a lot different than buying a suit off the rack, or having one made. It’s a little more work,



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but absolutely worth it in every imaginable way.”

The process of forming a design begins with a thorough planning meeting with the client. “I always try to meet at the client’s home,” says Regina. “Even though it may not presently make the statement the client wants or reflect where it is they’re going, there is still a lot of value in meeting in that environment, in that it gives me a sense of who the client is, what they like, what is important to them.”

In that meeting, which might take two to three hours, Regina will often take site measurements, furniture measurements and reference photos while learning about the client’s vision and what it is they wish to achieve. She takes her cues on a design from existing fixtures, such as artwork, carpet, furnishings and family heirlooms, using them as a starting point in order to try and better understand the client’s interests and tastes. “It’s critical to have focal points in any space, places for your eye to go when you walk into a given environment,” she says. “Those are key, so what better way to take advantage of the special things that the clients love?”

Regina will then prepare two or three different proposals for the client, presented with samples and detailed floor plan and elevation drawings.

The actual design and working with the client is the part of the job that comes along easily, she says. The challenge comes in scheduling and coordinating traffic flow when working with a variety of different trades people during the actual construction.

“Scheduling can be tough, depending on the complexity of the design. I have a core group of highly skilled trades people I like to work with, so trying to confirm their availability

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on a given date can occasionally take some wrangling.”

Media rooms and home theatres represent particularly unique challenges, she says. Not only does the room have to work in harmony with the rest of the home, but it must project its particular look and character while still respecting highly specific requirements for proper acoustics. When designing such spaces, Regina often works closely with Howell and Associates to ensure that both the overall design and the physical requirements for optimum audio/visual performance are fully satisfied. “Depending on the specifics of the space, there are always ways to integrate the design with the acoustic requirements for optimal quality. By working together from the outset, we’re able to create attractive, functional spaces that truly meet the client’s needs.”

The gratifying part occurs when a design comes together as a finished product. “You work with your client to see something through from concept sketches to the finished product,” says Regina. “The reward comes when the design is completed and they’re thrilled. It is truly gratifying to see people so happy in their homes, to see that all the work was worth it.”



The fact Regina Sturrock Design operates principally on word-of-mouth referrals and significant repeat business says enough. “Constructing a home or renovating a home is an extremely stressful process for anyone,” says Regina. “My gratification comes from going through that process together, reaching a point where you don’t feel like you’re working with a client so much as you’re working with family. Sharing their joy when the project comes together, and seeing them delighted with the way it comes out, is the greatest reward of all.”

For more information, visit reginasturrockdesign.com

