



PERSONAL TOUCH

The long wait is over! Weeks, even months of looking at numerous properties, and chasing the solicitors to complete the paperwork, and now your new house awaits you.

Even before you've collected the keys, thoughts must have been going through your mind on how is the best way to get started into transforming it into your home, and into something that's truly special and inspiring.

Alternatively, you may just have decided to give your existing rooms a complete make-over. The question is, even if you have a good idea of what you want, where do you start?

Firstly, you should ask yourself, - do you want to have to find the time to spend days on end travelling to numerous stores and other outlets where every assistant tells you something different, and no-one has the knowledge, or ability to help you to bring the whole project together?

One of the most frustrating things is knowing where to source everything, and will it all go together when you have.

Will this pattern match that pattern? Is the furniture the right size for the room? Have I chosen the right paint colour? Or should I have chosen a wall-covering? Have I taken my existing pieces sufficiently into consideration? Is the scheme practical for my needs? And most importantly, how much will it all cost? Am I going to blow my budget on the first few rooms I tackle?

So many questions – and where to find the answers? Fiona Applegarth, director of locally based interior design company Sable Interiors, understands, how many people find the idea of taking on a designer a daunting thought. She says 'A lot of people are worried that the designer will take over and enforce their own ideas upon them.

Some designers, of course, have very strong views, or adopt only one 'trademark' style which they see as their 'brand'. This may work for some people, but I find that the majority of clients are looking for a more personal service. This way they can work closely with the designer, where their own personal tastes are taken into consideration."

The mark of a good designer is always to find out as much as possible about the client, and what they looking for. Taste is a very personal thing, and although we are influenced by different trends and fashions of the moment, the most important thing is that you feel comfortable with it all.

The role of the designer, apart from imparting their skill on the project, should be to inform and guide you through the process. You should be presented with options from which you can make a selection, not just be passed a

design scheme without any really in-depth consultation. Arranging an appointment with a designer for an initial meeting is the best way to see if you can work together. Look at their work to see if they are able to adapt to many different styles, and pay particular attention to the kind of questions they ask you.

The majority of people have at least something of their own already that they want to keep and include in the scheme – be it artwork, a rug, a piece of furniture or a selection of treasured collectibles. Pulling everything together, and being inspired with new ideas is key.

When the owner of a purpose-built new apartment in Weybridge, started to work on furnishing his home, he was recommended by a friend to approach Sable Interiors, the design company, based in Thames Ditton.

Sable Interiors have two showrooms, with one large premises in Summer Road dedicated solely to assisting clients with projects large and small. They were, of course, delighted to assist.

The owner of the apartment (which is featured in the photographs) says, 'I knew I wanted a contemporary feel, and I had some colour ideas. I worked together with Fiona and achieved the right combination. I was shown



many things, and what I found exceptional were those items that I considered to have the wow factor.'

Fiona says, 'I soon understood that the client, who is a professional gentleman, was looking to create a comfortable, practical and welcoming home in a modern apartment which was unfortunately lacking in any really good natural light, and any outstanding architectural features. The task was to keep it simple, and, at the same time, make it really appealing, and draw the eye to certain statement pieces to add character.'

The other requirements were to create seating areas,

not only for watching TV and listening to music, but also for entertaining with friends and a pleasing area to sit for reading close to the natural light as possible. This was achieved using large comfortable sofas with sumptuous cushions in beautiful accent colours to add the warmth and texture. Special TV and audio units were installed to house the equipment and achieve tidy cable management.

Storage was essential for allowing all the clients belongings to be organised and tidied away. An open bookcase was designed and installed, and Tara, an in-house stylist, assisted the client with displaying his decorative objects and books of interest to their best effect.

Fiona goes on to explain, 'The hallway was particularly dark, and as it's always the first area you see when you enter, it's always important to make it feel welcoming, especially when coming home after a long day at work! That's why good lighting was essential, and a lot of time was spent selecting table lamps, ceiling pendants and wall-lighting which was not only functional but also decoratively appealing and with unusual and pleasing shapes.'

To create areas of interest, certain statement pieces were included in the rooms. Fiona says, 'I would say that among the best of these, would have to be the Terracotta warrior which I personally sourced from China when I was in Beijing. He's an Archer from the first emperor's dynasty, and is quite different from the other warriors you see around which are normally only the foot soldiers. He is in the corner and can be spotted as soon as you enter the room.'

'Another strong area in the living room is where the side cabinet is positioned. Above it is the circular mirror which I love because it simulates the look of running water flowing from the top of the mirror to the bottom. This is aptly called the 'Niagara' mirror. The lamps either side create symmetry and a sense of balance and order.'

The artwork is the client's own, and great care was taken when considering the colours of the cushions and accessories. For example, each fabric was selected on its own merit, and luxurious velvet textures and smooth silks complement both each other and the artwork, in colour and style.

One of Fiona's favourite pieces is the rug in the dark corridor leading to the bedrooms. 'I love designing and creating bespoke items for the client. Then they know that they have something individual and special, and pretty much unique. This was the case here, and a lot of time and care was taken to select the right colours which were then taken and developed in the following room which is the master bedroom.'

Fiona says, 'I am always over the moon when the client says that he is pleased with the results.' The client confirmed this by commenting - 'I am delighted, especially with the attention to detail, and the finishing touches. The one piece that stood out for me was the symmetrical rug that was designed by Fiona for my hallway. It adds a great deal to an area that would otherwise lack impact.'

With large rooms, it is important to select pieces that are in keeping with the space. With houses being currently designed and built, (especially in Surrey and its adjacent counties) on a much grander and vaster scale, many underestimate the need for the furniture to be in keeping. 'Filling a room up with lots of standard sized pieces just makes for clutter. At Sable Interiors, we try to emphasize

the need for fewer carefully selected pieces that are confident and make a big statement.'

One other important factor is timing and service. When tackling a large project it is essential that it is well planned and well organised. It's no good having a scheme that is only partially finished. Great care is taken to bring together the whole project at one time. This is achieved through streamlining and continually checking that everything is on schedule and chased up.

Fiona says, 'For this you need a good Project Manager whose sole job is to dedicate themselves to looking after the needs of the client right up to and including the installation. We quite often have clients who are moving into large properties and want everything scheduled to come together within a matter of days. We have our own storage facilities which helps tremendously and gives us the flexibility to be able to cope with all deliveries and projects of this nature.'---

All in all, achieving the desired outcome for designing your home, new or existing, can be plain sailing. Just make sure you make the right connection, and the whole process from start to finish can be a thoroughly satisfying and exciting one with amazing results!



For more information, you can contact Fiona or a member of her team at Sable Interiors. TEL 0208 398 9777 www.sableinteriors.com

