

THE METROPOLITAN BUILDER

Greater Houston Edition
themetropolitanbuilder.com



DIALOGUE WITH A DESIGNER

Selena Mackay, Principal Designer



Dialogue with a Designer

Selena Mackay, Principal Designer

International Flooring knows that dreams, reality and inspiration make a house a home. It also knows that an interior designer or interior design firm often becomes an integral part of this process. As a National Wood Flooring Association (NWFA)-certified company, International Flooring takes great pride in working with some of the finest professionals in the Houston market, providing the best quality wood flooring and carpets available and superb customer service. International Flooring offers their clients a private showroom full of exotic wood floors not found in retail showrooms.

This month International Flooring speaks with Selena Mackay, principal designer at Studio Mackay in Houston. Helmed by Mackay, her daughter Larissa Pineda and associate Amanda Holliday, Studio Mackay is an award-winning, full-service interior design firm committed to enhancing the human experience by bringing to life the possibilities in each interior and for each client. The team at Studio Mackay is a passionate about listening to the client and creating a space that is tailored to the way the client lives but curated with Mackay's expertise.

With 32 years of combined experience, Studio Mackay helps residential and commercial clients manage architectural and construction aspects of their projects by providing a full range of services, including construction specification, interior design, custom furniture design, manufacturing and fine art selection.

Studio Mackay is dedicated to excellence in design

and service. The staff researches constantly in order to keep abreast of the latest trends, the latest materials and technology. Its attention to detail, high quality and originality is the foundation of this great team.

International Flooring: What motivated you to go into the interior design field?

Selena Mackay: I am a fashion designer by education but have always been passionate about interior architecture and decoration. I grew up amongst beautiful interiors and fabrics, as my mother was a fashion designer as well. I know that a well done interior improves the quality of life of its occupants.

International Flooring: How has the field of interior design changed since you graduated?

Selena Mackay: Interior design used to be a service that was only available to a select few who could afford an interior designer. Now, good design is everywhere. We have HGTV, which has put home decorating on everybody's "to do list." We have social media platforms, such as Pinterest and Instagram, which are vehicles of inspiration from all around the world for all of us. In addition to design awareness, the drafting is now done on a computer. Computer-aided design (CAD) is a staple in every design office. It is an integral part in the process of showing the client what the finished product will be.

International Flooring: How can an experienced interior designer help custom home builders or remodeling contractors with their building or remodeling projects?



Selena Mackay: An experienced interior designer is CRUCIAL in remodeling or building projects. First, interior designers will work closely with the architect to make sure the placement of the features of the home will accommodate the proposed furniture plan before the project breaks ground, minimizing mistakes and surprises. For example, the placement of the windows may not be right for the furniture layout; there may not be enough balanced lighting in a particular room.

Second, a designer will select all of the finishes to be coherent so that the interior and the exterior of the house speak the same language.

Third, the designer helps with the communication between the homeowner and the builder so that the builder uses his/her time more efficiently in the tasks that are pertinent to him/her.

Finally, a designer will keep the budget in mind, helping the homeowner make decisions where to spend more and where it is wise to cut back on costs.

International Flooring: *What sets you apart from other*

designers?

Selena Mackay: I have 18 years of construction-specification experience and have built houses myself. I love the smell of new construction and get energized when I walk into a new build! I also spend many hours researching new products, not only furniture but construction finishes. My projects are always cutting edge in style. I am always ahead of the curve with finishes, fabrics and colors. These factors make the house remain in good style longer.

International Flooring: *What has been your most challenging project and why?*

Selena Mackay: We had a client whose communication skills were very poor. Decisions were made, and two days later we had to cancel orders and revisit the selections; a very bad case of indecisiveness. In the end, the client paid more for the hours running around, ordering and cancelling than what she should have.

International Flooring: *How do you begin the materials selection process when working with builders' and remodelers' clients?*

Selena Mackay: I begin with an evaluation of the clients' needs, their intended use of the property and the budget that I will be working with. We look at challenges that may present themselves and try to anticipate solutions to complications before these happen. Then I do a full redline of the plans to make sure that everything is drawn properly and that the spaces are accurate.

International Flooring: *What are some common mistakes made by builders and homeowners?*

Selena Mackay: The number one mistake some builders and homeowners make is to think they don't need a designer!!! People are sometimes frightened of the cost of hiring a professional, but they don't realize the cost of the



the costs and sources. That way, all parties sign off and are aware of the costs before the project begins. This is one of the services Studio Mackay provides: a detailed binder with finishes, costs, sources and applications.

International Flooring: Speaking about staying current, how to you keep yourself up to date with all the design trends happening in the industry today?

Selena Mackay: I read, read, read and read some more! I read everything related to design that appears in my inbox, and I read at least four or five architectural and design magazines front to back, word for word. I have my favorite designers. I read their stories, how they manage challenges and solve problems. Magazines show pretty pictures and that is great for inspiration, but the real treasure is in the article content.

I also go to national shows which introduce the new products for the year, and vendors come to our office to give us presentations on their new products and their usage.

International Flooring: Any last thoughts, comments?

Selena Mackay: There is no project that can't be made better by the help of an interior designer. The project goes smoothly, the costs are known from the start, and the homeowner gets a house that will remain current for many years to come.



To contact Selena Mackay, call 832-597-2303, email selena@studiomackey.com or visit www.studiomackay.com

mistakes and the unrealized potential outweighs the cost of retaining a designer. A good interior designer will know exactly where to find all the materials for a project, a large part of them available only to the trade.

Secondly, including too many styles and trends in one house is a common mistake. One has to be selective and commit to styles that work together so that all facets of the interior, the exterior, the landscape “talk” to each other.

Thirdly, there is a misconception of what things costs. Some homeowners watch HGTV, where most of the materials are donated by the sponsors, and expect to build for the costs represented in those programs. Before a budget can be established for a given project, ALL the materials and finishes have to be specified. This way there are no surprises or unforeseen costs. This is where it is imperative to have a designer that will organize the selections in a spec book with pictures of the materials,

if

international flooring

Continued on page 20

Fine Wood Floors

713-895-7562

www.ifhouston.com

Palm RESTAURANT
EST. 1926

Guests Are Family. Steaks Are Prime.
Memories Are Made.

LEGENDARY EVENTS SINCE 1926.

Prime Aged Steaks | Jumbo Nova Scotia Lobster | Classic Italian Specialties

THE PALM HOUSTON 6100 Westheimer | 713.977.2544 | thepalm.com/houston
Private Dining Rooms Available