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DIALOGUE WITH A DESIGNER

Donna M. Jarnigan, ASID, RID



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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 Donna M. Jarnigan, ASID, RID, Lacy-Boone Interiors

Donna has been in the Interior Design business for forty years and has experience in Commercial, Residential, Hospitality, Retail and Health Care Design. She is an active Professional Member of ASID, member of TAID, and is licensed by the State of Texas. In October 2012 Donna was the recipient of the ASID Medalist Award. This award is rarely given and awarded at the National level for a member that has dedicated the most time, energy, creativity and support of their ASID National and the local ASID Chapter. Donna was named on the 2013 Luxe Interiors Design Gold List and her work has been featured in numerous design publications.

Areas of specialization include Remodeling and New Construction. Donna believes that knowledge of your client and product is the critical key to creating a successful synergy between client and designer. The greatest

compliment Donna can receive is when her client's say "I love it, it is beyond my expectations!"

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

Donna M. Jarnigan: From the time I was a small child, family members would ask my opinion about color, pattern style and furniture arrangement. In college I soon realized that my natural talents really were in interior design.

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

Donna M. Jarnigan: In so many ways. Where do I begin? It has changed and evolved tremendously. We have moved 'way beyond thinking just about decor and finishes (which, of course, are part of what we do) to truly designing with the health, safety and welfare of our clients in mind. How one works, lives and uses the space is our starting point of design. Form and function are critical.

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

Donna M. Jarnigan: First, you need to meet the client and "get inside their head," so to speak, to truly understand their wants, needs and desires for the space. After we leave a project, that client has to live in that space, not us. Any project design should be done with the end user in mind. If the builder or remodeler doesn't have a client, then all my knowledge and experience should be used to make sure the design works for most prospective buyers.

International Flooring: What sets you apart from other designers?

Donna M. Jarnigan: I don't design so that my "style" is stamped on a project. I truly design with the client in mind. With my guidance the goal is to design something that truly reflects my client's style. Also, honesty and integrity are as important as the design.

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

Donna M. Jarnigan: Every project has its issues, and no two are alike. That's part of the challenge of being a good designer. You must be a critical thinker as well as creative. I'd probably say that a hospital and medical professional building are among the most challenging. If you can satisfy a Board of Doctors, meet all the health, safety, fire and building codes and do a great design and décor, then you can probably do most anything.

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

Donna M. Jarnigan: After my initial meeting with the clients, measurements and photos are taken, then the design finalized, I schedule "selection day." I take my clients to each of my "trade" showrooms and vendors, and I show them what I have in mind for their project. Each step of the way I am guiding them, making suggestions, helping them make cohesive selections' decisions. By the end of the day we have a design "board" of samples from cabinets to tile. We always take photos of our clients with their samples, and it becomes part of their project notebook.

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

Donna M. Jarnigan: Not involving an interior designer before the project begins. An interior designer is important for space planning, lighting plans, cabinet design, paint and many other specifications. A designer thinks of all the needs in that space, and that input is critical.

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

Donna M. Jarnigan: I take numerous CEUs [continuing education units] throughout the year, receive information from my professional organizations, webinars, magazines and peers. We are constantly learning.

International Flooring: What is your favorite design style?

Donna M. Jarnigan: I can do any style or look for my clients, from ultra-contemporary to very traditional, but my favorite is eclectic. I live with a very collected look. I don't like matching but love to blend French, English and Oriental with a pinch of modern or contemporary.





International Flooring: *What fascinates you and how have you incorporated that into your designs?*

Donna M. Jarnigan: People, travel, ancient architecture, art and design of all types intrigue me. As I said, a good mix is my favorite style. However, I design with my client in mind.

International Flooring: *How would you characterize your personal style?*

Donna M. Jarnigan: Eclectic

International Flooring: *What would be your recommendation for “what to do first” in a decorating project when working with the builders and/or homeowners?*

Donna M. Jarnigan: I tell my clients to collect photos of rooms that have their favorite styles. That helps me get a real sense of what appeals to them, and that is a great

starting point.

International Flooring: *Any last thoughts, comments?*

Donna M. Jarnigan: First, I want to thank you for this opportunity to share a few thoughts with you and your readers. Second, I highly recommend hiring an interior designer. An interior designer can help keep you from making costly mistakes and give you a beautiful, well-designed, functional home or office.

You may contact
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