



# THE METROPOLITAN BUILDER

Greater Houston Edition

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## DIALOGUE WITH A DESIGNER

Rainey Richardson Interiors





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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 providing superb customer service. International Flooring offers its clients a private showroom full of exotic wood floors not found in retail showrooms. This month International Flooring speaks with Rainey Richardson with Rainey Richardson Interiors.*

*Since 2001, Rainey Richardson has been passionate about interior design. She operates out of her 4,500 square foot showroom in the Houston Design Center and focuses on full-service interior design and new-build custom home projects. Rainey enjoys working collaboratively with builders and prides herself on being a “real-life” designer, which simply means that she creates spaces for her clients that are both functional and beautiful.*

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

**Rainey Richardson:** Building a custom home is a lengthy, complex process that requires multiple meetings between the client and builder. There are also literally hundreds of decisions that a client needs to make over the course of the project. An experienced designer will make a builder’s job easier by guiding the client through the entire process, managing client expectations, helping the client make decisions in a timely manner and keeping the level of excitement up throughout the project. A good interior designer also will help a custom home builder by creating a positive experience for the builder’s client throughout the construction process.

A knowledgeable interior designer also minimizes mistakes during construction. Improper space planning, variation levels in hard surface selections, busy tile, lighting or switch placement are just a few things that a good designer will help a builder to avoid.

Ultimately, an experienced interior designer will help a builder turn a custom home into a dream home for the client.

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

**Rainey Richardson:** The most common mistake I see homeowners make is that they underestimate how much time, energy, effort and money the whole building process





takes. In the age of reality TV, everything looks easy, happens fast and costs about half as much as it does in real life. Homeowners need to understand that building a custom home is a marathon, so it's imperative that they put together the right team to make their dream home come true.

The most common mistake I see builders make is thinking they can be the builder AND the designer. Interior design is more than just picking flooring, countertops and paint colors. A good designer “sees” the finished spaces with the client’s furnishings, accessories and personal items in each space and makes selection and space planning decisions with the finished rooms in mind.

**International Flooring:** *What sets you apart from other designers?*

**Rainey Richardson:** My construction experience is one of the main things that sets me apart from most designers. I’ve worked with architects, design+build firms and custom home builders on many ground-up projects over the last 17 years. I have also personally managed several remodeling projects from simple kitchen and bath jobs to complete gut renovations. I understand the challenges of construction and how important it is to manage client expectations.

**International Flooring:** *What fascinates you and how*

*have you incorporated that fascination into your designs?*

**Rainey Richardson:** Color fascinates me. I always try to find one or two colors that my clients love and then incorporate those colors into the design of a room or the entire home. The challenge comes in using color the right way without overpowering a space. Color, especially bold colors, need to accent, not dominate a room. Color glows with life and is the secret sauce of great design!

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

**Rainey Richardson:** My personal style is clean and timeless with a punch of “right now.” I prefer larger art and accessories because they create a more minimal but interesting design. I am drawn to spaces that reflect the personality and lifestyle of those that live or work in them.

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

**Rainey Richardson:** Clients need to carefully think about how they live, where they spend their time and what they value most. This information will help the designer create a design “blueprint” and give the custom home builder





direction on how to plan and budget for the project.

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

**Rainey Richardson:** From a young age, I have had a keen understanding of textures, colors and forms. I fell in love with fabrics and started designing custom draperies for clients. I then began making flooring, tile and countertop selections for remodel projects, and my business just grew from there. My motivation to go full-time into interior design came from the encouragement of my clients and the support of my husband, Tom.

**International Flooring:** *Any last thoughts, comments?*

**Rainey Richardson:** Building a custom home should be

a good experience. Unfortunately, for many people it is a stressful process that leaves them questioning why they made the decision to build in the first place. It doesn't have to be that way. Clients can have a great experience if they choose the right builder and work with the right interior designer. They can truly have their dream home.



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