

THE METROPOLITAN BUILDER

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Dialogue with a Designer



Melissa Snow Designs, LLC

Houston, TX



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BATHS OF AMERICA opened its doors in January 2005 when brothers Ali and Zeeshan Sultanali decided to start selling plumbing and tiles to the Houston market. Baths of America focuses on customer service and partners only with brands offering quality products and customer service. In addition to plumbing, Baths of America now offers door and cabinet hardware, major appliances, cabinetry, and countertops. It has turned into a one-stop shop for designers, builders, and architects, offering the latest designs and trends in the market.

This month BATHS OF AMERICA speaks with Melissa Snow, owner of Melissa Snow Designs, LLC. Melissa started the company wanting to bring a personal touch to an often cookie cutter process. Recognizing a need to make consistent, timeless designs attainable for those who seek the services of a qualified professional that will work with clients wants. Because of her unique background and expertise, Melissa is able to execute original distinctive, yet timeless designs while also delivering solid, reliable service to her clients. The company strives to bring their clients' vision into reality, giving their clients the highest level of quality in their design while providing the best return on their design investment. All of their clients have a unique

vision. Melissa Snow Designs embraces each project individually, providing fresh, innovative ideas and creative concepts for all project types regardless of the project size or budget. They deliver a custom professional approach to meeting both commercial and residential interior design needs.

BATHS OF AMERICA: *What motivated you to go into the interior design field?*

MELISSA SNOW: I enjoy the creative challenge of walking into the space with a client and they describe to me what they want and then we make it reality. I love several aspects of design, anything from the various finishes to selecting the perfect accessory for a client. I enjoy rethinking the space with a client whether it be selecting a new piece or knocking down a wall to open up a space. I enjoy each challenge because it is unique. There's always new problems and new successes. We take on the challenge and that's a lot of our motivation.

BATHS OF AMERICA: *How has the field of interior design changed since you graduated?*

MELISSA SNOW: Absolutely, the interior design field has



changed a lot. Trends like colors and styles of the interior and exterior of homes have changed dramatically. The use of technology in order for our clients to visually see spaces in 2D and 3D perspective has been a great asset in showing the final desired design for their spaces. Another change has been how we interact with clients. Zoom, texts and emails drive a large part of the ways we now interact with our clients. I also think the expectations and the education of our clients has increased. We love when they come to us with a lot of the key concepts they want to integrate into the design of their home. They expect us to make their dream space come to life and we accept and love that challenge.

BATHS OF AMERICA: How can an experienced interior designer help a custom home builder or a remodeling contractor with their building or remodeling projects?

MELISSA SNOW: Definitely an experienced interior designer can help a custom builder or remodeling contractor. We need to be on the same page. We attempt to create a functional design space that represents the beauty the client wants to see. Budgets are a top priority. We can assist them to suggest items to the client or builder that are within the budget allotted. Also an interior designer can keep the project on track to meet the set deadlines for when the selections are necessary for the homebuilder or contractor.

BATHS OF AMERICA: What sets you apart from other designers?

MELISSA SNOW: Melissa Snow Designs is a customer

service business. A key characteristic that sets good customer service apart is not to just hear but listen to what the client needs, wants and desires for their space. It is important to have a beautiful functioning space. I feel the client should have the final decision since they will be the one spending the most time in the space that is designed. The client truly leads the process in the way we approach each aspect. Our company is very flexible in the process when working with a client. The client may desire to work hand in hand with Melissa Snow Designs. The client may allow our company to select and then bring options to them to view. Sometimes we put a space together and show the client the final space completely designed. It is all up to the client.

BATHS OF AMERICA: What has been your most challenging project and why?

MELISSA SNOW: We designed a 20,000 square foot restaurant project that was a historical property and truthfully that was the most challenging. As the design team on site daily between balancing what we could rehab compare to what needs to go in new – think mechanical, electrical, plumbing, structural – and to keep it within the historical landmark guidelines it took a lot of patience and we acquired a lot of knowledge. As always the most challenging things in life and in design end up being the thing that brings us the most joy. We face challenges daily, from possibly items not being installed correctly to a paint color that needs to be tweaked a bit. In the end how you handle your challenges tends to say worlds about you.



allowing us to see what is fresh along with seeing what is consistent good quality. As the design process evolves and a similar pattern of choices emerge from the client, one can hone in on specialized vendors really developing their vision.

BATHS OF AMERICA: *Speaking about staying current, how do you keep yourself up to date with all the design trends happening in the industry today?*

MELISSA SNOW: Our company attends design seminars and trade shows, we receive several publications and discuss trends with our working partners. The web and TV have a host of resources. Clients bring new things to the table as well. It may not be a product or a finish, but a concept that is completely out of the box and we have to turn it into reality. As in any business there is a need to keep educating, growing and being exposed to the newest trends in the market.

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

MELISSA SNOW: For the client or builder – visual references such as pictures are one of the best. Think of a collage – you may not like everything in the pictures but by bringing several pictures together they end up having an overlapping continuity that can take a lot of the guesswork out of it. Besides saving ideas and pictures of what the client would like the space to become I would also suggest to take some time to educate yourself on some of the costs. For example, view some granite slabs at a supplier to get a gauge for what the material costs per square foot of what the client might prefer. This also helps to know that sometimes what we want just isn't in the budget.



BATHS OF AMERICA: *How do you begin the materials selection process when working with builders' and remodelers' clients?*

MELISSA SNOW: The client and Melissa Snow Designs usually have an initial meeting to discuss their budgets and show their inspiration photos usually saved on Pinterest, Houzz, etc. After formulating a priority and a plan we will then set out to select the perfect design elements to complete the space. The builders and remodelers have many working relationships with several locations and vendors. This keeps the material selection process dynamic

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