

# THE METROPOLITAN BUILDER

Greater Houston Edition

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## DIALOGUE WITH A DESIGNER

INTERVIEW WITH STEVE CLIFTON, ASID





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*Morrison knows that dreams, reality and inspiration make a house a home. Morrison also knows that an interior designer or interior design firm often becomes an intricate part of this process. Design professionals should be committed to creating individualized and functional designs to meet the lifestyles of their clients' families. Morrison Showrooms' staff works to inspire these ideas and is conveniently located in the heart of Houston. Morrison offers many brands and designs, all exhibited in unique settings with interactive displays. Whether it's appliances, plumbing, hardware or lighting, they have brand to fit every budget and a style to fit every design. Contact Showroom Manager for more details at 713-861-2343.*

*This month Morrison speaks with Steve Clifton, owner of Scene One Interiors. Certified by the Texas State Board of Architectural Examiners, Clifton takes great pride in working with clients from the beginning stages of their new construction project to the final implementations. After 34 years of servicing the community and in winning numerous design awards, Steve has become renowned in the field of interior design and a "go-to" professional in Houston and surrounding suburbs.*

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

**Steve Clifton:** I was interested in architecture and design from a very early age. I enjoyed walking homes under construction from as far back as I remember. At 11 years old my father purchased for me my first drafting board and supplies. I still have plans that I designed at that age, and it is fun to look at them and remember those days. Although the plans were juvenile, to say the least, they were also quite creative. I continued my interest and in the beginning went to school for architecture. During my early days of taking classes in architecture, I quickly realized my true love was interior design. I then switched studies and made that my field of choice and have had no regrets for the past 34 years I have been in design.

**Morrison:** How has the field of interior design changed since you graduated?

**Steve Clifton:** Through the years, styles, trends and colors have changed quite drastically, but it all gets back to the basics of what interior design is all about. I have been in the business long enough that, just like any other fashion industry, styles and colors have repeated





themselves. Of course always with a new twist, but for the most part the basic design elements still come into play on any project. The internet has added a great deal of information to be available at our finger tips, to allow us to constantly be seeking and working with the best products available to date.

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

**Steve Clifton:** Interior designers can help a custom builder or remodeling contractor greatly on any project as we are constantly keeping up with the latest and greatest ideas and trends. We are constantly attending seminars, conventions, markets and also state-required continuing education courses to keep us informed of what is going on in the industry. This information allows us to share with our builders and homeowners the availability of the new products that are being introduced. Many times we are able to show builders cost-effective ways to accomplish the task at hand as well as to introduce builders to being more eco-friendly with the implementation of “building green.”

**Morrison:** What sets you apart from other designers?

**Steve Clifton:** Their objectives and to bring out their personal style and taste. It is imperative for me as a





designer to always remember that this is not my home, but their personal space. I work to create for them a living environment they will be happy in for years to come. Most of my clients become lifelong friends, and the personal connection is the part of the business that I enjoy the most.

Since my early days, I have always been interested in new construction projects – starting from the plans and continuing through the complete build and furnishing of the home. I have always specialized in new construction projects and have learned how to speak the lingo of the process. To date I have assisted hundreds of clients in building their dreams. I understand budgets and continue to help my clients stay within them and also am able to explain to clients the ramifications of going outside of their budgets. I am a big believer in working hard to keep a project in or close to budget. If we exceed budget on one thing, we need to work diligently to come in under budget on other selections.

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

**Steve Clifton:** The most challenging project I have had to date was a residence in London, England. It was a \$22 million estate and there was no attention to detail that could be missed. We specified all the products for the residence, custom designing each and every element in the process. Then we worked to ship containers of home furnishings over to London for the installation. It was challenging to pull off the details with so many things out of our control, yet we made it happen.

The clients were exceptional to work with and the project was outstanding when completed. In fact, they were very happy with the results and several years later moved to a new residence and contracted with us once again to do the all of the design work. That was the biggest compliment we could have ever received!

**Morrison: How would you characterize your personal style?**

**Steve Clifton:** “Memorable” is how I would characterize my personal style. When someone leaves one of my projects, I want them to remember those incredible pieces that set off the entire feeling of the home. Those unforgettable collectables that make it all happen. The pieces that keep people talking for days. From the amazing painting or the dramatic sculpture on a pedestal, every room needs a stunning focal element.



**Morrison: Any last thoughts, comments?**

**Steve Clifton:** When hiring an interior designer for your project, just be sure they have their credentials and certifications in the field. If they have that, for the most part, they are qualified to do your work. Interview several, and when you find the one that you can relate to the most, that is the correct person to hire for your job. You are going to spend a lot of time with your designer, and you need to feel comfortable enough to tell him or her when you don't like something the designer is presenting. Your designer also needs to be comfortable enough to let you know when you are heading down a wrong path. Communication is key for the designer / client relationship.

If you are dreading your next appointment with your designer, end the relationship. You should connect with a designer that can over time become your best friend, as you know they inspire you and can create the atmosphere that you wish for your home.

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*You may contact Steve Clifton, ASID, at Scene One Interiors by phone at 713-895-8686 or by email at [S.Clifton@SceneOneInteriors.com](mailto:S.Clifton@SceneOneInteriors.com). Scene One Interiors is located at 7026 Old Katy Road, Houston, TX 77024.*



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