

Hiring a decorating professional can fit most budgets

By Erika B. Neldner

ERIKANELDNER@LEDGERNEWS.COM

Hiring a professional to help with interior design used to be something only for the wealthy, but these days interior design can be done on a budget. Experts say people usually end up spending more money piecing things together themselves than they would with professional help.

"I think there's a big stigma that people think you do have to be rich to have a decorator but you don't," Dennis Ergle of The Hill House in Canton said. "I think it's important that you have a decorator that can steer you in the right direction so that you don't make mistakes. That, in the end, saves you money."

The cost to decorate a home can vary depending on what the client actually wants.

"It depends on what your tastes are and how extravagant you want to be," Ergle said of how much it costs to have professional help. "You can do a room for \$5,000 or you can do one for \$20,000. You can spend that all on your own but the question is: Is it going to be a professional looking room or is it going to look like something you put together?"

Typical rates in the Atlanta area vary from \$50 to \$125 per hour with an additional \$125 to \$200 consultation fee, according to Joann Kandrac and Kelly Kole, owners of Woodstock-based Kandrac & Kole Interior Designers Inc.

A good interior designer or interior decorator should be able to help a client work within a budget and teach a client how to prioritize funds.

"A good designer/ decorator should be able to manage within a certain budget" said Kelly Kole. "The designer/ decorator should advise the client where to prioritize their money to be able to get the most out of their budget."

Kole suggests that people working in a smaller budget should do a little bit at a time working on a room-by-room basis.

A decorator or designer should also be able to teach clients how to do projects on their own.

"A good designer/ decorator should be happy to suggest any number of creative options for the client to do on their own," Kole said. "Many times a



This room, done by Woodstock-based Kandrac & Kole Interior Designers Inc., is part of the Governors Towne Club Showcase Home of the Year for May 2005.

partnership between the client and the designer/ decorator can be a successful option—the client can tackle what they are comfortable with and leave the more complicated items to the skills of the designer/ decorator."

When looking for professional help, a person can hire an interior decorator or an interior designer. Both do a lot of the same things, but an interior designer has a degree and may specialize in computer programs to assist in designing a home.

"Simply put, a designer is educated and thus certified in the specific field of interior design," Kole said. "A designer is certified to not only adorn a space with fashionable and beautiful furnishing, but to understand all of the elements of design while enhancing the function and quality of interior spaces."

Kole said a designer would be chosen over a decorator when the job entails working with a "wide variety of interiors," which could include office buildings,

government institutions or airport terminals.

An interior design professional should be able to listen to the client and learn his or her tastes, as well as be able to do the appropriate design for the home.

"I think it's important that it has to be a good fit," Ergle said. "The designer or decorator has to fit with the client. That's more important than anything."

Kandrac and Kole suggest finding an interior design professional with a great reputation among previous clients, who has worked on similar projects to the one the customer is planning, who listens and takes to heart what the client really wants, who is not intimidating and makes the client feel at ease, as well as someone who takes the time to stay informed about the newest designs and trends.

Some of the fall trends for home décor include clean lines, fewer and larger accessories and textured fabrics. The hot fall colors include chocolate brown, light blues and deep oranges.