

# Beautiful interiors for comfortable living

**N**ancy Slane knows that a house, no matter how magnificent its architecture or elegant its lines, is just a shell. Or more optimistically put, it is a blank canvas awaiting the color, style and details that will make it a home.

Home-decorating shows on television over the past few years have trained a spotlight on interior designers such as Slane, who says she is glad that through TV homeowners can see that they don't have to be afraid of doing something dramatic or out of the ordinary. "Color is the easiest way to change a mood," says the New York- and Europe-trained Slane, who moved to the Valley six years ago. "A lot of people have an idea about what they like, but I am there to see the big picture and put it together for them."

When Slane first meets with a client, she asks for a tour of the home, with special emphasis on the areas that will be part of the design project. She encourages clients to show her pictures in magazines that appeal to them, and discusses with them what they hope to do with the new space. "Do they have kids? Pets? Dogs that climb on the furniture?" Slane asks. "Do they entertain? Once we know what's going to be going on there and I know something of their personality, we work on colors and design.

"People sometimes forget that they are paying for your ideas, your expertise and experience," she says. "It is sometimes hard to let go and understand that even though you can't see where it's going, I can. That's what I'm there for."

Slane says that one of the most satisfying parts of her job is watching the clients when they see their new space for the first time. "It is wonderful when it is all over and they really, really love it and it works and functions the way they want," she says. "That's the best part, when they see what a difference you have made and realize that that's why they hired you."

A generation ago, people used to think that hiring a designer was only for the wealthy, but these days that is not the case. She says that even those on a budget would do well to remember how costly some mistakes are. Many people, she says, are overwhelmed by their high ceilings or open floor plan but try anyway to decorate it themselves. Only after spending a great deal of time and money do they realize that hiring a professional in the first place would have been the best thing to do.

"You can get a lot of advice in a short time," she says. "And remember, we're talking about your home, the place where you should feel your most comfortable and at-ease. What could be more important than that?"



ON LOCATION AT KRAVET FABRICS BY JENNIFER SMITH

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