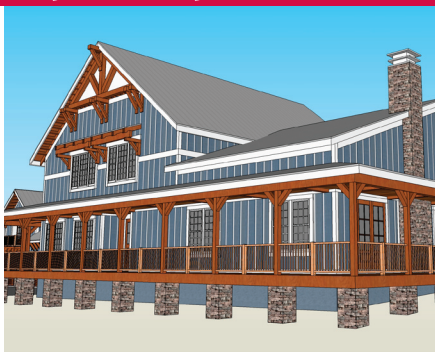


home design guide

home design: making choices



The process of designing a new home or remodel can be overwhelming if not managed properly. There are literally thousands of decisions that have to be made that affect aesthetics, cost, quality or time. A quality-minded professional home designer or builder can help guide you through the design, permitting, bidding and construction process so it is manageable and less stressful for you. Make your choice of home designer or builder wisely – it can make the difference between completing a successful project or living with some major regrets. Your hard-earned money is at stake. Make the most of it.

For my new home project, whom do I call first? A Professional Home Designer or a Builder?

Well, both. Your project is most successful when you have a team working together for your best interest. A certified professional home designer will listen to your needs, understand your budget and use his or her best skills and experience to provide you with the appropriate design of spaces, features and finishes. A cooperative builder will help guide the design with realistic cost advice and have input on the building materials and construction methods. Working together, the designer/builder team can provide you with the best design and construction value for every dollar you invest in your new home.

Should you decide to work with a professional home designer first, be sure to bring a builder into the project early during the conceptual design phase. Do not go too far without a builder on board to validate the preliminary costs of the design with your budget. The worst thing is to complete a design, bid it out to several builders and find that the cost of construction exceeds your budget. Resulting design changes will usually incur additional design fees and extra time. Design it once, design it right and keep the design within your budget by working with your team.

Should you decide to work with a builder first, ask if they can recommend reputable professional home designers. Be sure to fully investigate the recommended designer's credentials. Interview several before making your decision. Designers' knowledge, experience, talent, customer service, value and level of detail can vary greatly from one to another. You can find

certified and licensed professional home designers by contacting the local chapter of the A.I.B.D. – The American Institute of Building Design (aibd.org), the A.I.A. – American Institute of Architects (aia.org) or the Home Builders Association of Metro Orlando (hbaofmetroorlando.com).

Will the home designer help me with the thousands of decisions in my home design?

They should. He or she should take the time necessary to walk you through the design process, step by step, and make design recommendations that are consistent with the design intent. Your home design professional should help you with specifications and should select and recommend products such as windows, doors, countertops and paint colors for you to consider or approve. For some decisions, you may have to weigh cost versus quality and decide which is most important to you. If the design professional does not make the recommendations, you will still have to make the decisions on the cost, quality, size, style and finish for every component in your new home with your builder or on your own.

When hiring a professional home designer, do not just hire someone to "draft a set of plans" for the least cost. Invest in a professional you can trust with the experience and expertise to help you make the right decisions throughout the entire design/build process. Keep your new home project manageable and on budget; your new home's success depends on it. It will be well worth the investment.

Do you have questions about home design or remodeling?



Contact Tony at twereichik@canin.com or visit his company's website at www.canin.com. Years of research in custom home design, remodeling and home building has led Tony

Weremeichik, Principal of Canin Associates' Architectural Design Studio, to be a strong advocate for home buyers and home owners to get the best design and construction value for their money. He leads clients and builders through a well-orchestrated design process that provides his clients with the utmost attention and creative design solutions.