

Insight into 3 Houston Interior Designers

Part 1



Believe it or not, building a new home is only step one in the pursuit of dream home status. Next, you have to design your space. Whether you're looking for warm and cozy, or clean and refreshing, hiring an experienced interior designer can help you bring your design goals to life. Not everyone can be an interior design expert, so Georgia Grace Collaboration sat down with 3 Houston interior designers to provide insight into the design world.

My first interview is with award-winning interior designer Paloma Contreras of Paloma Contreras Interior Design and Paloma & Co.

"Delivering a modern take on traditional style—gravitating towards classic silhouettes and timeless pieces paired with a touch of glamour and an infusion of color."



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Q: How involved are your clients during the decision making of finishes and furnishings?

A: It really depends on the client. I would say more often than not, clients are generally pretty involved. I think the type of person that typically reaches out to a designer to help them with their home falls into one of two categories. First, they are design enthusiasts who love everything about design and love the process, so they can be very involved and have opinions and obviously their own taste that they bring to the table, and they love to be very collaborative. And we really enjoy that type of client. And then there's also the type of client that is extremely busy, and as a result, doesn't have the time or necessarily the interest in being quite as involved and really sort of trusts us to lead the way and bring the vision to life. That type of client is a little bit rarer. But it's also really nice to work with them because if they're trusting of the vision and the process, then they're allowing you the creative freedom to really do your best work.

Q: What ignites your creativity?

A: Oh, that's a great question. And it really depends. Pre COVID, it was always travel, just getting out of my regular routine and allowing my eyes to see different things. In fact, we were just in the mountains in North Carolina last week and the light was so beautiful through the trees. It's little things like that from nature that are super inspiring. But when you're immersing yourself in a different culture, different location, there's so many things that you can derive inspiration from like the architecture, the food, the people, and the history. So, I feel like just getting out of your routine is always helpful for inspiration. But these days, with a little baby at home and less travel with the pandemic, I would say I often delve into books. I go back to some of my favorite coffee table books and just look through them with a fresh set of eyes and pick up on different details that I may not have noticed before.



Q: What is your go to white, black/bronze and accent color paint?

A: Our go-to white that we use in many projects is **Benjamin Moore white dove**. And the reason I like that particular color is because it has sort of a warm, neutral undertone. It doesn't pull to yellow or to pink, it really is sort of the perfect neutral base, but it has a nice warmth to it. So, it works in just about any space. I have yet to find a project where it wasn't the right shade of white. For black, what we have used recently is **Iron Ore**, and I forget if that's Sherwin Williams or Benjamin Moore, but we've used that color for a couple of projects recently. And it actually is a really great color not only for exterior trim, but also interior doors. It's really pretty black or almost black. For an accent paint color would say I love sort of a moody color. **Benjamin Moore Hale Navy** is a really beautiful color. It looks great in bedrooms and libraries. And I also really like **Down Pipe by Farrow and Ball** as well as **Hague blue**. They're really concentrated and have beautiful undertones.



Q: How do you sequence the order of selections for new construction and remodel projects? Is this something established by the builder? Or do you have a system in place that you like to follow?

A: Definitely both. So, every builder has different processes and sort of a different speed at which they work. So, what we like to do when we're kicking off a major renovation or new construction project is have a meeting with the entire team. And oftentimes, that's the architect, the builder and the designer, so that we can get on the same page and understand what is required of us and what those timelines look like. From there, we put everything into schedules. It depends what that particular project calls for in terms of the project manager and the builder and which finishes or selections they need. First, more often than not, you're looking at big structural things like windows and flooring. And then pretty soon after that, plumbing fixtures because they have to rough them in. So that's usually pretty early on. And then after that, as work gets further along, we're looking at tile, cabinetry, paint colors, lighting, and cabinet hardware.



Q: Do you plan everything out from the beginning? Or do you take it piece by piece?

A: It depends on the project. If we get in early enough, where the architect has just put pencil to paper, and we have time before they break ground, that's the best-case scenario, because then we have the luxury of time. And as the architect is developing, we can formulate the interior plan and we can put together all of the different finishes and fixtures for the client to see as a package so they can see the full vision. But more often than not, either the plans are already done, or in some cases, for instance, right now, we're working on a new construction where the clients bought it as a spec house. And so, construction is already underway, and we're still able to make all of our new selections, but because construction is 40% of the way through at this point, we're having to really make our selections very quickly. So that's a situation where we aren't necessarily able to present the full picture and show the client tile, plumbing fixtures, and countertops all together. We're selecting things as they're needed based on the builder's needs. And then, as we make one selection and move on to the next, we'll refer back to what's already been chosen so the client can start to formulate that vision and see how things relate to one another.



Q: How many projects do you work on at any given time?

A: On average, we're somewhere between 12 and 15 projects, and they're all at different stages, it just depends on when we started them. And as I mentioned before, the scope is generally the full house, whether that's just a furnishings project, or, more often than not, a renovation or new construction where we're doing the entirety of the house.

Q: With so many projects at one time, who does your team consist of?

A: It's a lot of projects. So, we have a really wonderful and dynamic team. We have two design associates, and each project is assigned a design associate that works in tandem with me on the project with the client. And then we have a really wonderful design assistant who helps both of those teams with technical needs such as elevations and drawings. And we also have an office manager who handles the business end of things.



Building a new home truly takes a team, and an interior designer is an important member of that team! Stay tuned for more insights into the interior design world.