

Interior design questions answered



Photo provided

By Amanda Eck

A few weeks ago I reached out to our Lamorinda Facebook community asking if anyone had any interior design questions they wanted answered. The response was overwhelming and I am so excited to be able to tackle these questions and share them with you. With our increased access to everything online, it can be confusing trying to sort through all the noise. Between Design blogs, Pinterest, Instagram, Facebook, and Houzz it's easy to get overwhelmed. I'm looking forward to sharing my answers to your questions over the next few months.

Lighting

One question I received involved the challenge of finding lighting fixtures, especially when purchasing online. While lighting can be quite challenging, especially if you are trying to source on the internet, scale is key and even designers can be fooled by what they see online versus in person, so you are not alone. One of my favorite vendors to use for lighting is Visual Comfort. They are a to-

the-trade (meaning they sell directly to designers) company, but they also have a retail division called Circa Lighting. They are available online and have recently opened a brick and mortar store in San Francisco. It is a beautiful showroom and they have a plethora of lighting, including lamps – and they are open on Saturdays. It's definitely worth a visit: Circa Lighting, 175 Rhode Island St., San Francisco.

For a more budget-friendly lighting resource there is Shades Of Light. They are online only, but offer a huge selection of chandeliers, outdoor lighting, and lamps.

Paint

One local resident was having trouble navigating whites, since there are so many to choose from, and asked what a color expert is and how to use one. I could spend hours talking paint. And yes whites are especially tricky. You have cool and warm tones. Looking at paint on those small chips you pick up at the hardware store are no help.

Sometimes it helps to take your white paint chip and place it on a piece of white copier paper, it helps to see the undertones of

the paint color. It can have a pink, peach, yellow, green, blue, gray or violet undertone. And just because the paint name has the word "white" in it does not necessarily mean it is going to be "white."

Here are a few of my favorite whites:

Benjamin Moore
 White Dove- OC-17
 Linen White-912
 Cotton Balls- OC-122
 Decorators White-OC-149
 Sea Pearl- OC-19
 Sherwin Williams
 Snowbound- SW 7004
 Steamed Milk- SW 7554
 Creamy- SW 7012
 Pure White- SW 7005

As for paint finishes, I like to use eggshell or matte finish on walls, flat on ceilings, and semigloss for doors and trim. For cabinetry I recommend an oil based or acrylic latex, but in a matte finish. If you are looking for the high gloss lacquered look (which is trending right now); I suggest hiring a professional that is experienced in lacquer paint, since not all painters are familiar with lacquer. Fine Paints of Europe is my go-to for lacquer paint.

Apps/Tools

One question I received revolved around whether there were any apps I could recommend for toying around with some design/layout ideas – something that your average nonprofessional amateur can figure out and use. The following are a few of my favorite online resources for furniture layout/floor plans. Most of these have a free version that is simple to use and for more complex projects you can pay a monthly fee: Floorplanner.com; Smartdraw.com; and Icovia.com.

I also like Designfiles.com for visual design boards. You can use their handy clipper tool to select a piece of furniture online and upload it to create your design.

For quick room measurements there is an app for iPhone called Measure. It's not 100 percent accurate, but it does work when you are trying to do rough measurements for your space. It's also great for when you are out shopping for furniture and don't have a tape measure on hand.

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