

# Ask a designer



## HOW TO BUILD TRUST WITH AN INTERIOR DESIGNER

Words by **Elaine Skinner**,  
design director of **Camellia Interiors**



**W**e are regularly contacted by Cornwall's luxury holiday let and estate agencies to advise clients who want to let an existing property or buy something new. They are usually keen to achieve the maximum return on their investment, and want to know how to attract high-end, discerning customers who are willing to pay a premium. Your interior designer is an important part of this. Previously in this column, I've discussed how to find the right designer for you; once you have, how do you go about building trust and taking this relationship to the next level? *Here are my top 5 tips.*

### **1** Check their credentials:

Anyone can claim to be an interior designer but there's a big difference between decorating your space attractively and actual interior design: understanding the longevity of design, the need for a return on investment and a willingness to undertake any kind of renovation work. The best sign that your interior designer is reputable and knowledgeable is being registered with the British Institute of Interior Design (BIID), which is government regulated with strict guidelines and criteria to be met - membership is only awarded to organisations that undertake research at the highest level. This alone should build some trust in your designer's levels of education and experience. Talking of which ...

### **2** Experience:

I mean generally, but also specifically relating to your project. If you want to enter into the luxury holiday let industry and command the best price for your property, you need to speak to a designer who understands this competitive field. Not only do the interiors need to look great, the space should also work well for the job intended. Interiors should be hard-wearing and not date when the latest trends change. Investing slightly more in the beginning can make a huge difference to your return; a good designer will be able to explain this to you and advise accordingly.

### **3** Portfolio:

This should illustrate that your designer's experience relates to your project, giving you peace of mind. Often clients don't have a clear idea of what they want when they first approach a designer; a portfolio is a great place to check their creativity and give you the confidence to embrace it when it comes to designing a scheme that is individual to you and your property needs. This will make you stand out from the crowd and command that high price tag; don't blend in with all the rest, or choose a designer that advises you to!

### **4** Listen and keep an open mind:

A good interior designer might offer solutions you hadn't even considered, from an interior colour scheme through to structural changes to make your space work better. Sometimes this can come as a shock, but try and be open to suggestions. Remember, this is the point of hiring a credible interior designer in the first place. Their professional opinion could be the difference between a good interior design scheme and an outstanding one - one that ticks all of the boxes you wanted, plus some extras you hadn't considered, ultimately maximising return on investment for you (even if it doesn't look 100% like how you thought it would).

### **5** Comfort zones:

We all have them and getting outside of them can be a good thing. Remember, your interior designer is a professional in the field and their job is to understand what will best serve your particular project and objectives. Your ideas may clash, and that's okay. What really matters is that your designer understands you and what you want to achieve, in return you're prepared to push your boundaries (even if only slightly). Try to be open to their professional advice, for the good of the project, a good designer will help you see why certain elements need to be done and the benefits for doing them in the long run.

*Got an interior design dilemma? Contact Elaine at [hello@camelliainteriors.co.uk](mailto:hello@camelliainteriors.co.uk) [www.camelliainteriors.co.uk](http://www.camelliainteriors.co.uk) and on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.*