

CLASSIC ADVICE

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Whether you're renovating or building, kitchens and bathrooms are likely to consume the lion's share of your budget. That's why once the dust has settled, you want a beautiful, well-functioning room to show for the money you've spent. But how the heck do you get to that point?

Sound professional advice is a must. Sue Jory of Susan Jory Interiors says she likes clients to bring ideas to her so the room she helps them achieve is a personal reflection of themselves. She usually starts the ball rolling by urging clients to keep "tons of pictures" of rooms they like. That way, they bring their own ideas to her.

"I find there is nothing more individual than taste," she says, adding that another way to start the process is simply to ask clients for a checklist of what they don't want, such as an

all-white kitchen or dark-stained wood.

"I then help them understand the whole process and various ways they can spend their money," she says.

It's up to the clients to think carefully about where their priorities lie. If they are putting in a new kitchen, for example, Sue advises them to give lots of thought to selecting construction materials.

"While you'll never miss wooden, dovetail drawers if you don't have them, you'll never regret spending the money if, of course, you've got it to spend," Sue says. "Otherwise melamine and metal box drawers will function as well."

As for countertops, stone is lovely but so is a combination of stone and laminate if that's better on the budget.

Sue remembers growing up around

beautiful things, the result of her mother's fabulous taste and passion for decorating and redecorating the family home and cottage. That rubbed off on Sue who took to redoing her bedroom "every weekend and driving my mother crazy," she recalls. Eventually her creative bent led her to the professional home and design world, first running The Very Thing, a design source for children's rooms, then, 10 years ago, founding Susan Jory Interiors.

Sue, who is also an interior design consultant with Westhaven Homes Inc., and works closely with her husband, local contractor Andrew Walker, says people should beware of trends when they are spending big on kitchens or bathrooms. Her advice is to be realistic about whether or not they will like the "look" of their cabinets and countertops 10 years later.



"Classic design, whether traditional, modern or contemporary, is considered classic for its lasting appeal," Sue says.

Decorative items, however, can be another story. It's much less costly to change backsplash tiles, accessories and paint colours if they go out of style. Sue suggests adding soft furnishings, also relatively easy to replace. "I can't stress how comfortable a cushioned bench or upholstered chair will make you feel," Sue says.

As for bathrooms, don't get carried away with bells and whistles. If you are renovating, you must consider your plumbing infrastructure. Can it handle fancy extras like shower jets? And think about size. How much space is really required? If you keep size under control, Sue suggests, the bathroom can be where luxury, like a heated floor, is most affordable. She added glam to a small bathroom in her own home with a marble inlay floor.

Finally, be a little unpredictable with your finishing touches. Sue suggests art in the bathroom and books in the kitchen, as well as a mix-up of collectibles and groupings from different eras and styles. They are personally pleasing and add those necessary layers to make your house a home. **OH**