

SUN HOMES AND DECOR

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ON THE COVER: Designer Sara Bederman says the ideal client is someone who wants two or three concepts presented to them and is ready to say, 'I love it, I'll take it' or perhaps, 'Let's combine the three.' Seen here: A fireplace serves as the focal point and is complementary to the surrounding decor.

Plan the ideal reno

Realistic expectations key to successful renovation

LINDA WHITE

Special to Postmedia Network

After months or even years of being an arm-chair renovator, you've decided to tackle a renovation of your own. Just don't get tricked into believing it will be as affordable or completed as quickly as a renovation on your favourite home improvement shows.

Those words of caution come from Rebecca Hay, president and principal designer of Rebecca Hay Designs in Toronto. She has worked as a show segment designer on HGTV's *Income Property* and *The Property Brothers*. "They don't always give you a full sense of what a renovation costs. A lot of materials are provided for free and that's not communicated on screen," she says.

Nor do those shows factor in the cost of a designer, which is picked up by the producer and not the homeowner. And those timelines? "They're fast paced. You pull in favours and people work on the weekend so you can complete a full renovation in six weeks but that's not realistic," says Hay. "If you can't find something, like tiles, you choose something else to meet the TV deadline."

So how do you pull off a successful renovation with Instagram-worthy results? Consider the following tips:

Set realistic expectations. Begin with a detailed budget. Hay recommends creating an Excel spreadsheet and entering in every single item you'll need for your renovation, including contractor costs.

"It's always better to know ahead of time what things will cost than to be surprised halfway through the process," she says. Hay also recommends a contingency fund of 15 to 20% of the cost of the entire project to cover surprises that might be lurking behind walls or unexpected structural issues. Also, set realistic expectations regarding the project timeline.

Sara Bederman, principal designer of Sara Bederman Design in Toronto also values a detailed budget. "I like to offer my clients a detailed budget so they understand where their money is going and where they can save if they start to like something that's more expensive than what was originally budgeted and they don't



Working with a designer can be invaluable because he or she will help you create and fulfill your vision.

want to spend more overall." Whether you're working with a designer or contractor, begin your project with a clear contract that outlines all fees, a payment schedule and billing practices.

Plan properly. Failure to do so is the most common cause of stress and delays in reno-

visions, Hay warns. Select your finishes and order them ahead of time — not a couple of days before your contractor tells you s/he needs them.

Working with a designer can be invaluable because s/he will help you create and fulfill your vision. "Picking one item you love is great but

it's just one piece of the puzzle," says Hay. "You might design an entire room around one piece of fabric but if it's out of stock, that will impact other design decisions."

Be flexible, decisive and tolerant. "Things will change and you'll have to roll with the punches," Hay says. "Indecisiveness can impact the length of time it takes to complete a project. A contractor will replace the flooring if you change your mind but you will pay for that in time and money."

"You have to find a tolerance level you may never have known you had when undertaking a renovation," says Bederman. If you're ordering natural products like granite, marble or wood, for example, the item delivered to your home may not look exactly like the sample or picture. You'll need to decide if it's acceptable or if you'd rather re-order the product and extend the renovation timeline accordingly.

"The ideal client is someone who trusts their designer and doesn't do too much of their own homework," she says. "The ideal client wants two or three concepts presented to them and is ready to say, 'I love it, I'll take it' or perhaps, 'Let's combine the three.' People need to put a stamp on where they're living."



You may have to find a tolerance level you never know you had when undertaking a renovation.



Designer Sara Bederman says she likes to offer her clients a detailed budget so they understand where their money is going.



Failure to plan is the most common cause of stress and delays in renovations.



Don't get tricked into believing your renovation will be as affordable or completed as quickly as your favourite home improvement shows, says Rebecca Hay.

Walls that worth a second look



CARLY HEUNG
STYLISH SPACES

As a designer, I love creating visual interest and adding personality to a room.

Truly, one of the most effective ways to make an eye-catching design statement within your home is to create accent walls through use of natural stone veneer panels, slabs, or tiles.

Statement walls always make you look twice and I appreciate the overall aesthetics that come from the lines and cuts created by using natural stone materials.

Not only will you create character by adding in rustic wall materials, it can also provide an added sense of more visual height to your space.

A timeless world design staple, stone materials never go out of style and carry with it a sense of history, strength and everlasting beauty.

One great local resource is Canadian company Erth Coverings, they provide an extensive offering of lightweight stone veneer products and styles for both indoors and out that are both environmentally friendly and come with a lifetime warranty.

My designer pick and one of the most popular choices today for a more contemporary and stylish look are their White Wolf 3D Panels in marble.

Try using these behind the TV, along an accent wall or surrounding a fireplace. The variations of white and dark grey from the stone help create visual interest, depth and texture to a room.

For a more traditional and subtle and muted accent wall, look at working with their darker Grey Wolf stone panels.

If you live in a smaller studio apartment or an open-concept space, consider selecting an elegant pale grey Limestone accent wall.

One great option is the Silverfox LedgeStone Panels to use along a living room or dining room wall or to make a bolder statement consider using their

slate black Lavastone Large Strips

One of the most overlooked areas of our homes are our hallways and this type of product is the perfect complement along any stairway wall or corridor or high traffic area of the home.

Looking to bring in some natural elements and personality into your own interiors? Using natural materials will bring in a sense of tranquility that often comes with spending time in nature itself. There is no bigger statement than an accent wall using natural elements,

This year, take a second look at your beige walls and start adding in some textural and natural elements into your design mix ahead. You will never look at your walls the same again.

— *Carly Heung is an interior decorator and principal for 1smallspace and is known for creating simple, modern, and functional spaces. Visit [instagram.com/1smallspace](https://www.instagram.com/1smallspace) and 1smallspace.com.*



An accent wall brings visual warmth and sophistication and is the perfect complement for any hallway, corridor or high-traffic area of the home.

Show your kitchen some love



SARA BEDERMAN
LIVING BY DESIGN

Love is in the air this February! Whether you're attached or single, have some fun in the kitchen this month and let St. Valentine inspire you.

There's a good reason that the kitchen is always the hub of the home. Particularly during these long winter months, it's ever the hot spot for cooking, dining, entertaining, work and play, late-night family time and early morning alone time.

As a designer and an admitted kitchen connoisseur, here are some of my favourite kitchen essentials that you're sure to fall in love with, too. Set up your kitchen for some fun, love and inspired cuisine — and spoil yourself while you're at it!

The right tools

As all great chefs can attest, to make great food you need a set of quality knives. Deck out your kitchen prep area with the comfort and style of Henkels.

This five-piece set offers all your basic necessities, with now colour options like this block in a fiery shade of red — a great addition to any countertop!

Before we eat with our mouths, always remember that we eat with our eyes. Ensure you're serving up a sumptuous sight with a set of chic, oven-to-table covered dishes for your favorite baked entrees and sides.

A great addition to your kitchen on any day of the year, nothin' says lovin' like a heart-shaped cocotte. One of my favorite oven-safe dishes: the Heart Cocotte by Staub is a cast iron cocotte perfect for cooking meat and fish at slow and lower temperatures

Of course, no meal is complete without a little something sweet. Arm your kitchen with something that's sure to bring 'heart' to your baking — a simple (and affordable!)



Nothin' says lovin' like this heart-shaped cocotte from Staub.

heart-shaped cake pan and cookie cutters.

Available at any big box or specialty store, you'll use these more than you think. these are definitely a kitchen essential in my home.

Finish your meal with coffee... or tea! Sip a steaming cuppa, freshly brewed in this Breville Smart Tea Infuser. (www.breville.com/)

For the coffee lovers in the house, Breville hasn't forgotten about you, either. The Barista Touch espresso maker not only looks impressive on your countertop, but it brews a mean cup!

Personal barista

This machine features commercial-quality performance — the next best thing to having your own personal barista at the ready, and it's faster than a Starbucks line! The Barista Touch has a three-second



Five-piece Henkel set covers all your needs.

heat-up time, for when you need that espresso 'yesterday.'

The kitchen is, by far, the hardest-working room in the home. Everything happens in the kitchen. Life happens in the kitchen. As you go through your day to day, appreciate the little things in life and make time for the special ones around you.

Odds are that you'll be spending some time with them in your own kitchen — entertaining, dining, dreaming about tomorrow. Show this space some love and indulge yourself, while you're at it. You deserve it.

— *Sara Bederman is principal designer for Sara Bederman Design, known for creating stylish, thoughtfully curated and livable interiors. Visit her at sarabederman.com.*



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