

# Decorating Trends

## “He Said, She Said:” Interior Designers On Renovation Projects With Significant Others

(NAPSA)—Designing or renovating your home can be stressful—especially when your significant other is involved. Many designers have stories about couples who refuse to compromise. “The role of a designer often involves being a psychologist,” says Connie LeFevre of Houston’s Design House, Inc.

Designers combine elements from each partner’s ideas to create a unique balance, employing drastically different styles, materials and suggesting compromises to stay within budget. “Men will spend anything on stereo equipment and rugs,” says Michael Foster of Michael Foster Designs in New York City. Other designers report that men often gravitate toward glass, steel and leather and women favor draperies, stone and wood.

Foster once created a French Country room that housed leather club chairs, lace curtains and absolutely no toile to create a happy medium for a bickering couple. At other times, he recommends that clients choose more economically priced materials, such as laminate countertops instead of expensive engineered stone or granite. “Choosing today’s new laminates lets couples afford higher-end appliances and cabinets,” says Foster. In fact, Wilsonart International recently launched Topaz, a collection of laminate patterns that resemble engineered stone.

Below, prominent designers provide key points for couples to derive home improvement and design projects:

- **Determine budget, scope and quality.** Shop around and



**Stylish, yet economically priced new laminate countertops are something most couples can agree on, say designer experts.**

read magazines. “You will have a clearer picture to base decisions on,” points out LeFevre.

- **Research manufacturer offerings.** Manufacturer Web sites and brochures offer product and design tips and new ways to look at things. Foster says the Wilsonart Web site provides tips on mixing laminate with other materials, such as metallic finishes on countertop backsplashes, in addition to information on upscale edge treatments that remove the brown seam associated with laminate.

- **Consult with a designer.** Seek the advice of a professional. It may cost you a few hundred dollars, but it will be money well spent. You can even go to a home center to talk to a staff designer. Many stores apply consultation fees toward the cost of purchases.

- **Make the commitment and don’t get frustrated.** Expect that it will take time, have fun with it and don’t get discouraged.

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