



FUSING DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION TO CREATE THE PERFECT SPACE

By Alexandra Anastasio

INTERIOR DESIGNER CARRIE MCCALL HAS HAD A LOVE FOR FASHION AND A KEEN EYE FOR DESIGN SINCE CHILDHOOD. A 15-YEAR CAREER IN THE FASHION BUSINESS PAVED THE WAY FOR HER TO START HER OWN BUSINESS, CKM HOME DESIGN, FOUR YEARS AGO. "WORKING IN FASHION TAUGHT ME ABOUT COLOR, FABRIC, AND TEXTILE, SO IT WAS AN EASY TRANSITION GOING FROM ONE AREA TO THE OTHER," SAYS THE DESIGNER AND LICENSED BUILDER, WHOSE BUSINESS IS BASED IN SUMMIT, NJ.



McCall has worked on everything from custom built homes in New Jersey, to a \$2.5 million-dollar apartment in New York City, and is now gearing up for her next project, a home in Chicago. “By year’s end I hope to have a few states under my belt,” she says.

BELLA New York sat down with the multi-talented McCall to learn more about how she fuses together her love of design and construction to create the perfect space.

As an interior designer and a builder, what makes your company different than others? I always tell potential clients it’s better to pull me in earlier than later because if there is a construction element to the job I can work with the architect while the plans are being laid out. Having experience on both ends allows my clients to get the best of both worlds. Whether it’s a one-room renovation, filling an entire space with furniture, or a custom-built home, we can do it all. The possibilities are endless with design and construction.

What are your design philosophies? I always try to fuse the old with the new, vintage with modern, and mix higher-end pieces with more affordable furniture and accessories. I approach the design process with the thinking that this will last a long time, so I go for comfort as well. I like to bring one color throughout the home; without knowing, your eye travels from room to room, so there’s cohesiveness. And I always introduce candles – there has to be warmth and an inviting aroma in the home. I also love to use the color black. Everybody looks at white as a neutral but I look at black as a neutral and then add a pop of color. Things change seasonally, so black goes with everything.

What advice do you share with clients when you begin working together on a project, big or small? A house evolves and it’s not going to be ready overnight. I let them know we’re going to be married to each other for a while. It’s a collaborative effort, and I am always accessible.

As a designer what are your first steps? When I first meet with a client, I always look at what they’re wearing, their furniture, and find out what they want to do so I can get a sense of their style. I share the work I’ve done so they can get a sense of who I am. Then I’ll create a checklist of what they want to accomplish and a mockup of the budget. Since it’s a joint effort we’ll talk and come up with a plan together.

Some clients leave everything in my hands while others want to be a part of the process. I love Pinterest and we create a lot of Pinterest and mood boards; that way, we can go back and forth and get an overall look together before we begin. My job is to push them slightly out of their comfort zone and take some risks. At the end of the day you want to have a warm, inviting space to come home to.

Any particular project that stands out for you as a favorite? On the design end, I’d say the apartment in New York City. It was the most challenging due to the quick turnaround that was required. After the seller closed we literally had four days to get everything ready before we handed over the keys.

From a construction perspective, it would be the house in Summit, NJ that I recently finished building. It’s the first custom design build home for CKM Home Design. I worked with the architect from scratch; we knocked it down and turned it around. I ran the whole project so it is near and dear to my heart.



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What are the most challenging and the most rewarding aspects of the job? The most challenging part of the job is working with couples; whether it’s as a mediator, coach, or counselor, it’s helping them see the direction we’re going in and for both to be happy with what we’re doing. And the reward to all of this is when a client says, “Thank you – you did exactly what I wanted you to do.”

This past June you launched your own TV show, “Design Talk with Carrie,” featured on Summit’s Home Town TV; what can viewers expect? We’ll be airing half hour episodes, once a month, where we introduce up-and-coming projects along with sharing tips viewers can apply in their own home. We’re also going to incorporate food and cocktail recipes, making it more of a complete lifestyle show. The show will be breaking down the walls of design and construction and because of my background I think it’s going to be unique and different. I love what I do and I’m super excited to take the business to the next level. **B**