

# The Real Value of Your Home

By Daniel Ian Smith

People often renovate and redecorate their homes to maximize resale potential, but I believe true value comes when we get the most out of a home while we are living in it.

On every project the client eventually asks me, "Well, what would you do?" And I always answer the same way — by reminding them that it's their home, not mine. Of course, I offer my advice, but it comes from sizing up the clients and getting their space to work for them.

The West Village presents a variety of challenging settings — from old, cramped walk-ups to ultra-modern lofts. As the owner of Village West Design, I've come to see that the problems are varied, but the solutions are always the same — add value to the space.

We automatically think of value as monetary. However, our homes are central to our lives, and there is great value in the extent to which we can entertain, be productive, feel secure, get organized or just relax in them.

Everyone's first question is, "What's interior architecture?" I explain that interior design and architecture must work in concert — one informs the other. Interior design teaches us about the end use of a room: How will it feel? Where's all your furniture going? Architecture inspires us to think outside the box — to challenge existing conditions and even to challenge the client's own self-assessment.

Sometimes we have a vague notion that something is off, but we're unable to put a finger on it. Most folks struggle to make good spatial decisions. When I come in with some perspective and an organized eye, we can turn the place



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around...and it actually ends up feeling more like home — sort of "you," only "better."

While some neighborhood buildings simply reflect the ego of the architect, I believe that a good designer will shine through even when the focus remains on the client. We invest a lot in our apartments, so they better meet our needs and suit our tastes.

Our homes reflect who we are and where we want to go. But while the inhabitant defines value, a professional must first ask the right questions. Do you have a growing family, or are your kids grown and you wish to reclaim space? Is it finally time to get your own furniture, or have

you tired of the welter of accumulation and need curatorial intervention? The aim is to create beautiful spaces that are warm, inviting and which increase property value. But the "enjoyment factor" is priceless.

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