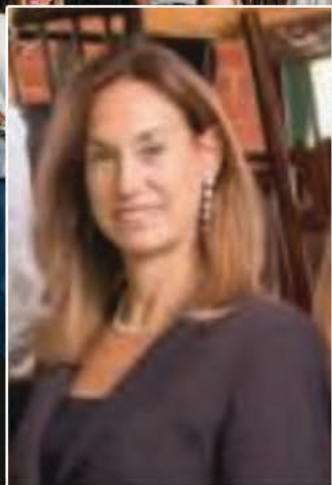


DESIGN + DECOR

CONNECTICUT
NEW JERSEY
NEW YORK

THE DESIGNER ISSUE







When asked what her design obsessions are, Lara Michelle quips, "Things that are in stock." She's joking, but not entirely.

Owner of Lara Michelle Beautiful Interiors, Lara is a lover of unique finishes, furniture and materials, and has a soft spot for custom work that brings one-of-a-kind, specialized items to her client's home. But that enjoyment is a boon in these times of lengthy delays and impossible-to-find items. "I can do unique things with custom pieces," she says, "but now it's out of necessity, and I can do them easier, without waiting weeks on ends."

Lately, she has been keeping her upholstery workroom busy, which allows her an eight-week turnaround instead of the six months that seems to have hit the industry in the throwback of COVID-19. She's also keeping her carpenter busy with cabinetry by doing everything through him. "He does a lot of really cool custom finishes quickly, instead of taking four, six or sometimes eight months," she says. "So I'm a big fan of custom right now."

Lara's range of custom work is vast, including mudroom built-



ins, kitchen cabinetry, bathroom vanities, tiles, stone and wood. For all these designs, her team creates unique patterns, such as an intricate starburst by playing with the wood grain, impressive custom fireplace surrounds, and mantels with a variety of stone—think golden onyx for an extraordinary vibe. "You can't get specialties like these through regular furniture companies," she says. "It's so much more creative; you can basically do anything. My client's budget and my imagination are really the limit."

Lara has done hundreds of home renovations over the past 20 years. She says it's essential to hire an experienced designer because of all the moving pieces involved in a typical project. Her specialty is the design and oversight of whole home scale renovations, which means ensuring everything and everyone are running smoothly and efficiently.

"I've gotten feedback from clients who say they love working with me," she notes. "I select beautiful items that express their tastes. I'm easy to work with, and have an easygoing attitude. I'm detail-oriented and manage projects well. I have very good taste, and my clients love the way their homes turn out."