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# JINX McDONALD

... leaves her design mark on interiors around the world

Jinx McDonald of Jinx McDonald Interior Designs has always brought a quiet sophistication to her projects. From major new construction and models to smaller redesigns, she has brought her uniquely talented eye to projects not only locally, but to international locations in Canada, Ireland and her native Jamaica. *Luxe Living's* Michael Korb spoke to her about her profession and experiences.

**Q: Is there a moment you can look back on that was the moment you decided you wanted to be an interior designer?**

A: As a child I had always shared a bedroom with my younger sister. Then when I was about 11 years old, my mother let me have my own bedroom and allowed me to decorate it the way I wanted. I loved the experience and was pleased as punch with the results. After that, there was no stopping me. I became very sensitive to my surroundings, always trying to re-organize things to suit my taste.



Jinx McDonald  
VANESSA RODGERS / COURTESY PHOTO

**Q: Where did you learn your craft?**

A: I think it is a gift I inherited from some very talented designers/architects in my family. I was also given free reign in the garden and learned how to make beautiful flower arrangements. As a young girl, I helped many of my friends decorate their rooms.

It was no surprise when I decided to study interior design at college in London. I married young, and as I moved from cottage to little house to bigger house, people would always "ooh and ah" over the gardens and interiors I created. That was in Jamaica. When I moved to Atlanta, I did a two-year course in interior design at Atlanta Area Tech and then opened my own business, International Accents Inc.

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# Q&A

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**Q: Tell us a little about your design experiences.**

A: Naples has been my permanent home for more than 25 years now, and I am really proud of the achievements and reputation of my company. I've done some truly exciting projects over the years, and all so different, from a completely green — totally off the grid — family compound at Governor's Harbour in the Bahamas to a picturesque home in the Iriah countryside of Connemara, complete with conservatory and a tea station overlooking the most magnificent view of the Atlantic.

I designed a huge mountaintop home in Colorado, with a heated driveway and an incredible barn, fully stocked with horses, donkeys and goats (I will never forget you, Gladys!).

I have delivered and installed furniture to several holiday homes on Block Island, R.I., by ferry (totally stressful); delivered and installed furniture by buck-hoist to condos in Naples high-rises under construction; renovated the old Spanish fort, ringed with the original cannons, on the point at Discovery Bay, Jamaica.

I have been flown by private jet to New York with clients who have had famous designers and stores open privately for our shopping; and I've done one of the five most expensive seaside estates in the United States.

Overall, it has been a lot of very un-glamorous blood, sweat and tears, mixed with moments of sheer terror and/or ecstatic joy.

**Q: What questions do you ask clients during your first meeting?**

A: There are a couple of crucial questions I ask a potential client at the first meeting: What is their lifestyle? Do they live formally or do they lounge around with feet up? Do they have children? Is this going to be their permanent residence or a holiday home for a few weeks per year? What is their budget? How much do they imagine spending on their new home? These are all equally important questions, and I don't move forward until they have been sorted.

One client took me so seriously she flew me and my assistant to Vancouver for 24 hours to view their lifestyle.



Unfortunately, the Canadian immigration authorities didn't quite get this, and we spent many valuable hours being interrogated at the airport before we were allowed entry to Canada. Anyway, Vancouver was checked off my bucket list.

The budget question is, of course, a very sensitive one, and most people have no idea what finishing and furnishing a home can cost. I am extremely

thankful for the clients who have done a little research before calling me.

**Q: Do you have a formula for how you build out a room?**

A: The very first thing I consider when designing a room is the outlook: Which direction does it face and what is the view? I am always wary of west-facing rooms on the Gulf of Mexico with lots of harsh sunlight on huge glass windows or doors. This will have a big impact on my choice of fabrics, colors

and window treatments.

The purpose of the room is extremely important, too. If it is to be the main TV room, then that affects the direction the seating units must face and makes the specification of window treatments even more crucial. I think it is skills in anticipating and solving potential problems like this that differentiates a good designer from a poor one. ■

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