



Decisions, Decisions

"EVERYONE WAS ALWAYS ASKING ME for decorators' numbers," says Karen Fisher, a former magazine editor and the author of several books on decor, who started Designer Previews as a service for those in search of an interior designer. According to Fisher, three key areas in which a client and a designer *must* be simpatico are taste, personality and budget. "They are things that make or break any marriage," she says. "Some people call me their decorating psychiatrist."

Fisher's matchmaking process involves an hour-long phone consultation. First, she queries clients on their aesthetics. For my hypothetical project (a two-bedroom house for a single, 31-year-old man), I told her that I am drawn to a contemporary look, but that I also appreciate such elements as antiques, Persian rugs and darker colors.

Then she directed me to her web site, and guided me through a test based on my preferences. She showed me one image at a time, culled from projects by the 300 designers she works with nationwide, and I told her what I liked—or disliked—about each one. Based on my reactions, Fisher then presented additional rooms from the designers I liked the best, and we eventually honed it down to my top three choices. "Everybody should meet with at least three people," Fisher says. The designs by my favorite of the three, Alan Lindenfeld, truly made me regret that my project was merely hypothetical. —CHRISTIAN GULLIKSEN

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A library, top, and living room, opposite, by Alan Lindenfeld display with remarkable precision the aesthetic that the writer was looking for.

