

Forbes

Karen Fisher takes the stress out of finding the right interior designer.

Since she founded Designer Previews in 1985, she has methodically signed on the best of world-class designers and the most promising of young talents.

For a process that can be fraught with unexpected surprises, Fisher's process is stunningly simple. For a hundred dollars, Fisher, like a skilled therapist will prod you gently for information about your taste, your personality, your lifestyle, and what you can afford to spend.

Then she puts on a slide show that's a cross between a Rorschach test and a whirlwind tour of the inner sanctums of the rich and famous. There are living rooms, bedrooms, kitchens and dining areas with styles spanning the range from contemporary to traditional and every shade in between.

Fisher notes which images elicit polite compliments - there isn't an ugly room in the bunch - and those that get euphoric whoops. That's her cue to pull out portfolios of the designers who match a client's "look" and price range. ∞