

"We, as designers, must be able show the clients what our vision is. With the 2020 Design 360° Panorama, the client is fully submersed into the design." —Donna Alexander



KITCHEN RENDERED IN 2020 DESIGN



2020 Customer Spotlight

Donna's interest in interior design began at a very early age when her middle school teacher told her she would make a great designer. She started designing rooms in her parents' home when she was in 7th grade, and she kept designing throughout high school until she went off to attend college to study interior design.

"Starting off in the design field was a challenge for me," says Donna. "It can be difficult to prove yourself in this industry, and successful designers have a good reputation." She kept trying different aspects of interior design until she finally found her niche in kitchen design after starting a job at The Home Depot. "It was there that I first learned how to use 2020 Design," explains Donna, "and found my love of kitchen design."

Donna now works for SJL Design Ltd, and, in 2017, they received the Platinum-level Reader's Choice Awards from The Hamilton Spectator for both the kitchen and interior design categories. SJL Design Ltd is also nominated for two Business Excellence Awards in both kitchen company and interior design.



About the Designer

Donna Alexander

SJL Design Ltd

Favorite industry site/blog:

Houzz.com

Favorite designer: Barbara Barry

Favorite design style: Transitional

Favorite quote: "I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel." —*Maya Angelou*

Question & Answer Session

Q: When did you start using 2020 Design and what were some of your reasons for choosing that software?

I first started using 2020 Design when working at The Home Depot in 2005. I have had the opportunity to work with several design applications over the years, but when I started SJL Design Ltd, I knew 2020 Design was the best software for my business.

Q: What are some of the most helpful features you use in 2020 Design?

I find that the best features of 2020 Design are the ability to import any texture into a design and the 360° Panoramas. The panoramas really help my clients visualize the design and better understand how the concept will come to life.

Q: What was the inspiration behind the design you submitted for the 2020 contest?

The client felt that their kitchen was too small and restrictive; the counters did not extend throughout the space they had available to them, and they had limited storage. They needed a kitchen two people could cook in. I hope to inspire others with the idea that small kitchens can be functional and noteworthy.

Q: Describe your creative process. What questions do you ask your clients? Where do you get your inspirations from?

My process starts before the first client meeting. I usually ask clients to send me photos of designs they like and inspiration on sites like Pinterest or Houzz. I use this to prepare myself to better understand what inspires them: styles, colors, textures, etc. During our initial meetings, I ask several questions to learn how they work in the space. At this point, I learn if there are any special needs or mobility issues and tailor a design that is functional for them. I gain inspiration from the client's personality, needs and likes to design them the best possible space.

Q: Do you design spaces other than kitchens and bathrooms?

I will design just about any room in the home. I will help a client design a basement, closet, home office, bar, laundry room...the possibilities are endless.

Q: Do you use any 2020 Cloud decorative items? If so, which ones?

Yes, I love this feature! I enjoy putting a few accessories in my designs to make it feel more like home such as artwork, dishes, rugs or candles. I like knowing that catalogs will be updated automatically—I know I have the most current items in my designs.

Q: What are some of your favorite catalogs to use in your design projects?

I always try to put in the actual appliances used in the room, if possible, or the closest that I can find. It really helps give the client the best feel for their space. I also love that I can use items from SketchUp.

Q: Which catalogs were used in the design you submitted for this contest?

The catalogs in this design included Cambria, GE, Kohler and Sensio. While the client chose to change a few of the finishing details, I feel the overall design of the project turned out very similar to the rendering.

Q: What guidance would you provide to any designer who is considering 3D CAD tools for interior design?

We, as designers, must be able show the clients what our vision is. I would say 3D CAD tools are the best way to help the client get the feel for the space. With the 2020 Design 360° Panorama, the client is fully submersed into the design.

Q: Tell us something unusual that has happened in your career.

I have been designing for over 20 years and cannot say that I have run into anything that I would deem "unusual", as in bizarre, but eccentric requests happen all the time. Usually through a discussion, I can understand if a request is genuine or if it is coming from a lack of understanding of the concept.

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