

FINDING AN EXPERT

Here are a few tips for finding the right expert for your dream project.

Hire a designer. Designers have not only the contact information for experts, but also the skills to work closely with them to ensure you get what you want. **Look in the Where To Find It section of STYLE AT HOME.** If you see something you like in the magazine, turn to the back of the issue to find the source.

Ask for recommendations from friends, relatives and colleagues. However, you should still examine the individual's or company's work to make sure it meets your needs.

Consider hiring someone even if they aren't in your city. Specialists are often willing to travel, ship their goods or work long distance using e-mails, couriers and faxes. It may, however, mean added costs.

Try contacting professional associations, or searching the Internet or Yellow Pages. These methods require a bit more legwork but can be equally fruitful.



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After training in England for a year, Camal Pirvhai moved to Canada and started La Beauté Designs. He indicates how they do things differently in Europe: there are people whose sole job is to dress curtains – “They poof curtains, pleat, steam and puddle them on the floor,” he says. “There’s a whole art to that.” Here, sewers often don’t come to an installation, he says. “That’s like being a chef and not eating.”

EXPERTISE Hand-sewn, couture-quality sheets, duvet covers, bedskirts, shower curtains, draperies and other window treatments, like Roman and Austrian blinds.

WHAT SETS HIM APART Designers bring Camal the fabric and he matches the patterns so they’re centred on the window, something that can’t be done if drapes are mass produced. All the drapes are also lined and interlined – lining protects

fabric from sunlight, and flannel interlining gives a panel extra weight and allows it to fall beautifully.

BENEFIT TO YOU Forget about struggling with brackets, hooks and other hardware – Camal handles all that, but it can take hours: in old houses, floors are often uneven, so window treatments can look off-kilter. “We cheat, so everything looks straight,” says Camal. Hardware is always customized, as are valances.

MARK OF EXCELLENCE Hand-stitching gives the three pieces of fabric some give. “That’s the biggest difference between doing it by hand and by machine,” says Camal. Any trim is applied on top of the layers. “Hand-stitching makes it look like the trim just floats on top.” The result? A fine, softly falling fabric with a natural look. Blinds also get a boost from this treatment. Camal’s Roman blinds get their structure from the lining, into which dowels are sewn, so there are no stitch lines. “You don’t see anything,” says Camal. ▶