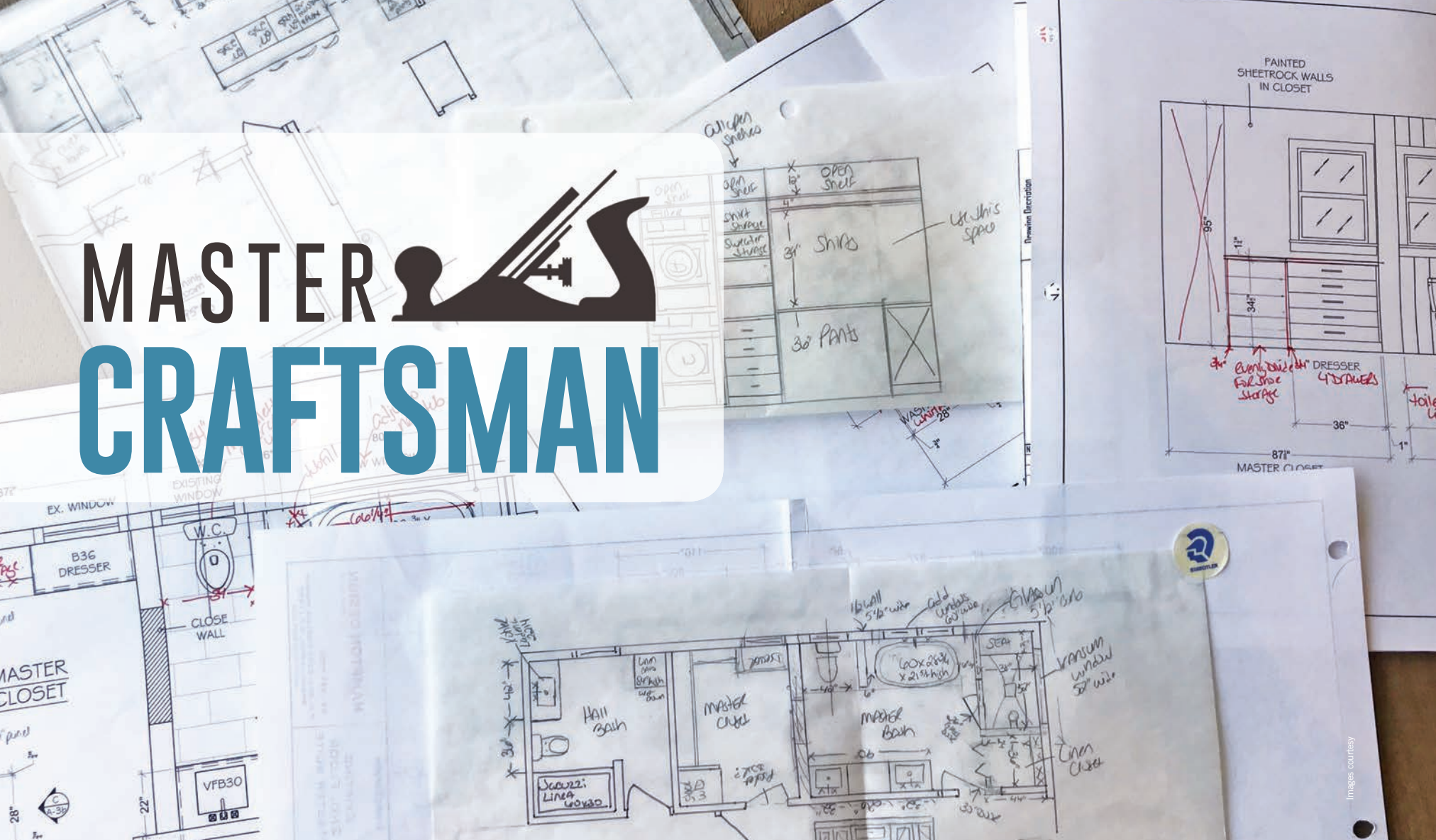


MASTER CRAFTSMAN



MASTER CRAFTSMAN LAURA SANATORE, INTERIOR DESIGNER, HAMPTONS DESIGN

Whether one is building a new dwelling or reimagining a more historic structure, taking care to design and appoint its interior spaces with both form and functionality can be the difference between creating a house or a home. To make something truly one's own, a homeowner must be part of the delicate calculus combining lifestyle, taste and budget for ultimate success.

Hampton Design lead designer Laura Sanatore takes a holistic approach to her work, balancing all these factors and listening to her clients with the keen ear of a seasoned caregiver. She was, after all, a trained nurse before shifting careers—first into finance and then as a domestic aesthete.

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To make her interiors take shape and function properly, Sanatore works with a host of experts—including contractors, fine craftsmen, tradespeople and the many other talented folks who help put a luxury home together. "When you have a good team it kind of all pulls together really well," she says, but it begins with consultation and taking stock of a homeowner's needs and desires.

"It's understanding how they live and to listen to what they want," Sanatore says, describing the process before she begins drafting the kitchens, bathrooms and other interior spaces for which she's hired. "You need to know how they live," she continues, sharing the kinds of questions she typically asks: Do they entertain often? Do they have children? What are their tastes? What's right for their life overall?

Sanatore joined Hampton Design on the financial side of things more than a decade ago, but as she came to know the firm intimately, her interest turned toward their creative endeavors. "If you want to know how a



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A glass topped table lightens the mood in a severely modern kitchen

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business is profitable, you have to know where the numbers come from,” she says, noting that her knowledge of costs, profits and the like gave her an edge when it comes to design.

Hampton Design owner Peg Fruin, who founded the company in 1999, guided Sanatore to this new department where she eventually flourished.

A process-oriented designer, Sanatore says she rarely has a complete vision for a space until she actually begins to draw. “All of it starts with pencil to paper,” she says. And after 12 years, she still keeps her project sketches and drawings. “I’m proud of the work,” Sanatore admits. “It’s a cool reminder for the client as well,” the designer says, noting that she also gives them away.

Sanatore and Hampton Design don’t stick to one particular style. She says the majority of local homeowners seem to lean toward the “quintessential Hamptons kitchen” with white, Shaker-style cabinets. “They work for a reason—because they’re timeless,” Sanatore says. “If you make something too trendy it looks good for now, for the time being,” she explains, but five

years later, her clients may find themselves saying, “I’m so finished with that.”

More than anything, “We build cabinets to suit the space,” Sanatore says, pointing out that younger homeowners tend to take more risks with different ideas and materials. Wood elements are coming back, as are farm sinks and a “more organic and natural” approach.

Other popular choices include quartz countertops, which Sanatore calls “more transitional, less traditional,” and porcelain tile for bathrooms. “It works, it looks pretty...you’re not breaking the bank,” she says. No matter how wealthy the client, “You want to spend your money smart,” Sanatore says. “I respect budget. If it’s unrealistic I will let you know.”

Along with translating her homeowners’ desires and practical necessities into excellent design, Sanatore’s goal is to make a house cohesive. “It all has to work and blend together,” she says, noting earlier, “My job is to point them in the right direction.”

—Oliver Peterson