

Triangle

OCTOBER / NOVEMBER 2017

# HOME

DESIGN & DECOR®





Contributing Editor  
ROOM SERVICE



DAWN  
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ETHAN ALLEN  
DESIGN TEAM



## WORKING WITH A DESIGNER

Finding a gifted and discerning designer who “gets” you can be one of the most satisfying aspects of decorating your home. It can give you the confidence you need to push your creative envelope. It can mean the difference between a good experience and a great one. Just ask real estate agent Jennifer Coleman.

Jennifer has lived with her husband Sean and their children in their home in Apex for five years. They decided it was time to make some changes to the home’s dated decor starting with a new sofa. “We’d put decorating on the backburner for a long time,” she says. “We liked where we lived, but it was time to love our space.”

By the time Jennifer saw Daniel Sawyer’s profile on Houzz, she’d already fallen for the Mansfield sofa. Daniel, who had been with our Ethan Allen Design Center in Cary for a year







and a half, says Jennifer had done her homework before they met. “She brought sketches and dimensions and had her eye on certain pieces. Because she is in real estate, she was able to articulate her style,” Daniel explains.

“I see a lot of high-end homes, so I knew the look I wanted,” Jennifer says.

“I just had no idea how to piece it together.” That’s where Daniel came in. Their first meeting lasted more than three hours. “I embrace the ‘first date’ philosophy with a client,” Daniel says. “I like to learn about them in a very genuine way – what colors they like and hate, what they like about their space, and what needs improvement.”

They scheduled a home call for the next day, and before long, Jennifer started thinking beyond the Mansfield. Her furniture list grew to include accent chairs, ottomans, a rug, lighting, and a (mandatory) leather recliner for Sean. When the conversation

turned to accessories, Jennifer wanted to hit the pause button. Even so, Daniel still took copious notes about what might work and where it could go.

On installation day, he and his manager loaded their cars with artwork and accents. “At one point, we asked Jennifer and Sean (who works from home) to go to their respective offices for an hour while we placed everything,” he says. “And in the end, they kept everything but a single floral!”

Jennifer was pleased with the result. “I’m good at the big picture but not accessorizing,” she says. “It’s too easy to spend a fortune on things you will never use.” By install time, Jennifer had complete confidence in her designer, so she didn’t hesitate to have Daniel tackle the master bedroom. “Remember, we really didn’t plan to do more than a piece or two,” Jennifer laughs. “But I think we’ll do the dining room next!” ♦

Stop in and meet the Ethan Allen design team. It’s their job to help you design the home of your dreams—doing as little or as much as you like. And remember: Their services are always free. For inspiration and ideas, visit [www.ethanallen.com](http://www.ethanallen.com) or the two local Design Centers: 5717 Dillard Drive in Cary, 919-233-9190 and 4380 Lassiter at North Hills Avenue in Raleigh, 919-781-9431.