

Four Reasons Why Designers Need Professional Photography

You've designed a beautiful space, and your client is thrilled. Time to snap a few iPhone pics and move on to the next project, right? Not quite. In a visually driven industry where magazine photography budgets are increasingly slim to non-existent, hiring a professional photographer to capture your work has never been more crucial.

At the same time, it can be an intimidating investment, especially for a growing interior design business—a good photographer can cost anywhere from \$5,000-\$10,000 or more per day, depending on the scope of work. So we spoke to three top interiors photographers for tips on navigating the process: Read McKendree, Karyn Millet, and Annie Schlechter, whose collective work has appeared in *Architectural Digest*, *Vogue*, *Condé Nast Traveler*, *Veranda*, *Luxe Interiors + Design*, and *House Beautiful*—to name a few.

Here are four reasons to invest in professional photography (and what factors you should consider along the way).



Photography by Read McKendree (1) Designed by Workshop APD as seen on the cover of Cottages & Gardens (2) Designed by Lise McKenna featured in Architectural Digest, styled by Frances Bailey. (3) Designed by Workshop APD as seen in Elle Decor (4) The Asbury Park home of Matt Berman, founder of Workshop APD

1. Build A Portfolio

A visual portfolio of work not only honors your creative achievements, but provides rich fodder for your website and other marketing materials. Photography that accurately represents your talent will enable you to attract a higher volume of qualified clients—ones who understand and appreciate your unique style and abilities.

The pros recommend being strategic about the timing of your shoot. "If the homeowner has young kids that like to write on the walls and tear apart furniture, you want to shoot sooner than later," McKendree says. "But if they have great tastes that align with your design intention, the space will feel more lived in once they've filled it with their own objects over time. It's about finding a balance."

2. Create An Enduring Record Of Your Work

Having a professional record of every project on hand keeps the door open for future monographs. "You might think you'll never do a book now, but ten years down the line if you change your mind, you'll regret not having preserved your work in a high-quality way," notes Millet, who recommends choosing one photographer and sticking with them over the course of many projects for consistency of style.

Schlechter agrees most people work with one photographer over their career, but also points out the value of a more diverse collaboration. "Having multiple interpretations of your projects may appeal to different audiences," she says. But if you choose to go that route, she advises, make sure the photographers you choose have complementary styles.

The best way to choose the right photographer, Schechter suggests, is to browse design magazines and flag any images that catch your eye. From there, compile a list and explore the websites of your favorite contenders.

McKendree recommends choosing someone who treats light in a way you appreciate. "Some photographers create happy, bright, washed-out photos and some create moody, darker images with lots of shadow. And then there's lots of people in between."

