

# purchasing items via aston design studio

- *how it works* / [CarlaAston.com](http://CarlaAston.com)

Most of the products we sell through the studio have some customization to them. Window treatments, furniture, custom sized rugs, and much more can be ordered for your project.

In addition to our design fees, I have a minimal mark up on items purchased through my studio. The mark up is somewhere between 15-35% depending on the item, cost and quantity. I do not completely give my discount away to clients as there are just too many opportunities to lose money that way. I've written a blog post about the "Designer Discount" that will be published in January of 2013 on [CarlaAston.com/designed](http://CarlaAston.com/designed). It should help explain more about how discounts work in this business. The information below is here to help you understand how the whole process works.

## OBTAINING QUOTES

Quotes for furnishings items we present can be done at the hourly rate. Once you put a deposit down on an item, I don't charge any more for time spent on that item. Time spent is included in the cost.

## WHEN PAYMENT IS DUE

I require a 75% deposit on all items purchased through my studio. Nothing is ordered until we receive your deposit and it has been cleared for use in our account. So, if you pay via paypal, when we receive payment from paypal, normally a few days after the fact, then we will proceed to process your order.

**Balance is due at installation.** Not 5 days or 10 days or 30 days later. I'm already out the money for your product when it's installed, as almost all products need to be paid in full by me prior to your install. If I don't get paid promptly for the products you have in your home it can dramatically hurt my ability to do business. The balance includes the final 25% as well as charges for freight, delivery and installation.

## FREIGHT, DELIVERY, AND INSTALLATION

Furniture purchased from manufacturers requires shipment to a warehouse with a dock that is always staffed during business hours. They will not ship to a residence. I use Classic Moves or Thompson's in Houston, both are insured and have all the necessary equipment and manpower for receiving, warehousing, delivery, and installation. All designers use these types of services unless

they have some kind of a dock at their own business locations. When your piece of furniture comes in, it is uncrated, inspected for damages, I am notified with a picture and a report, and then we either store your item until the rest of your things come in or we schedule delivery for the item at that time. The cost of this service is added on to the final billing, and it's really dependent on how many items and what type of items they are as to how much it all costs.

Freight charges from the manufacturer to the warehouse is additional. It can vary depending on the size, type of item, and weight. Sometimes I can get freight charges estimated at the time of the quote and sometimes I cannot, it really depends on the manufacturer.

## COMPARATIVE PRICING

Many of the products I sell through my studio are available online through online retailers. I try to be competitive with those retailers, but I'm not usually cheaper. They have buying power I don't have as a single designer studio. I'd like to have you purchase from me so that I can make the profit rather than the other retailer. Like I said, I'm not usually more expensive, and if you give me a documented quote including shipping cost that you'd like me to try to match, I can try that. Sometimes though, the profit is not worth the time spent trying to offer that particular product, so I'm fine with you buying it elsewhere if you want.

For example, I can purchase Lee Industries upholstery for my clients. Layla Grace also offers Lee, as do many other retailers, online and in physical stores. I can offer more customized details however through my sources, like an upgraded construction package, additional details, etc. So, while they may look cheaper online, they might not have some of the extras in there that you could get through my studio.

## CUSTOM PRODUCTS

Most of the items purchased through the studio have some customization to them.

Upholstery is always done with a fabric we choose that works best for your project, there are always, trim options, finish options, details, etc. that are customized for you. I have several tried and true sources I use for upholstery, with great construction and a showroom available in Houston where you can go sit in some of the pieces.

Window treatments are always custom, because no two windows are ever alike it seems! Either I will measure or I have an installer that measures your windows, and I quote everything, fabric, labor, hardware, etc. In some instances you can pay my installer directly for the installation, he is very reasonable.

With casegoods, there are usually many options for finishes or details. If a piece is customized it may take longer to arrive.

## LEAD TIMES

Lead times vary greatly from manufacturer to manufacturer. I have no control over their lead times. We can check stock ahead of time and see if something is available and at the time of order placement, but if something is out of stock, it might take longer than expected. When I give you estimates of a time frame, I'm giving you honestly what they have told me (I always check), but it is something I cannot guarantee. Also, if I have to wait several days for paypal to clear your payment, I cannot guarantee that the in stock item will be there when your payment has been processed.

## YOU CAN BUY ON YOUR OWN

Again, I try to compete with other sources out there, I'm not trying to gouge you. However, if you only want design and want to purchase items yourself through your own sources, that is completely fine with me. I would appreciate knowing up front about your desires so that I don't spend time looking in sources that might be unavailable to you. Since you're paying for my time, I think you'd like that.

I hope this clears things up a bit about purchasing. If you have further questions, just let me know!

- Carla ;-)

## RELATED LINKS:

- <http://www.apartmenttherapy.com/to-the-trade-dying-concept-or-design-mainstay-177846>