

Decorating Your First Home: Go for Quality



▲ Sherry Ways schools baggard homeowners on building their own castles



Courtesy Photos

▲ Home décor can be hassle free and rewarding.

HIRE A DECORATOR

If decorating for you is too much of a hassle, consider engaging a good designer or decorator. Many first-time homeowners feel as if that they cannot afford it. However, there are many good designers and decorators out there who are much more affordable than you realize. They can save you an enormous amount of time and money, as they know where to shop for the best deals. Also, take advantage of staff design consultants who are available in stores that sell furnishings or window treatments.

I walked through the color-selection process recently with my new client, a new homeowner, who recently bought a brand new home in the Henson Ridge Development in Southeast Washington. She wanted

advice about paint and color. Before I start working, I would ask a client about his or her budget. Like many new homeowners, she could not spend much but she wanted some professional advice on the best colors to paint her rooms. We creatively found a way to work within her budget, including finding a paint contractor willing to help.

Remember decorating your first home can be fun! Enjoy yourself and always make quality choices for your home.

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For years, you have lived with the decorating styles of your parents, siblings, roommates and landlords. Now, finally, it is time to decorate your own space as a first-time homebuyer. The process can be intimidating to the novice and can become a scary and stressful experience. However, I tell my clients to follow a few key steps that will guarantee a home that leaves a lasting impression.

When decorating your home for the first time, it is often hard to know where to begin. Also, it is worthwhile to keep in mind that after purchasing a home, generally, your resources may not be as plentiful. Therefore, you have to think intelligently about where to best place your resources. There will always be a temptation to buy cheap, trendy furniture and other items just to fill the space. This is fine if you keep in mind that in two years, the quality of the furniture and the style may no longer be appealing to you. So, I suggest that you start first with the basics and always go for quality, not quantity. So, if you are shopping for a bedroom, buy the set you really want, and add the complementary accessories later.

BEFORE YOU GET STARTED

Even before you start decorating, I encourage my clients to do a couple of things to help them get started. The first thing is to think back to your childhood and determine what you liked or did not like about your home. Do you remember the color of nana's couch, whether it had plastic on it or not? Do you recall the style of the draperies in your mother's house? Consciously or subconsciously, you determined whether, as an adult, you would embrace their decorating styles or create your own.

Now, some people still do not know what particular decorating style they prefer. They may have an idea but may not be sure of how to express it or how to describe it. There is a simple way to get over that – buy a décor magazine at your local drugstore, bookstore

or magazine shop. Buy several. Look at the photos of rooms; cut out the ones you like and those you do not like. Make notes to yourself on why some rooms appeal to you and why some do not. Make a file of those you like and study them. Look at the colors, the furniture, the accessories and the ambience created in each photo. This will help you to begin developing a decorating style that is uniquely yours.

Once you have done this, visit furniture stores, accessory stores, hardware stores and paint stores. You will most likely see something similar to what you have seen in the magazines or you may see something you have not considered before. Think about how that piece of furniture would fit in your home. Measure the rooms in your house and draw a floor plan to make sure that the furniture you ultimately buy will fit properly in your space.


WHICH COMES FIRST?


When it comes to which room to start decorating, the advice I give is this: start with your living room first. The living room is the first place visitors see upon entering your front door. Some people use the living room to entertain. It is the heart of the home and it should leave a lasting impression. Second, decorate the dining room because this is where we gain our nourishment while enjoying our families and friends. Third, decorate your family room. This is where the family comes together for fellowship. Fourth, decorate your bedroom. Make it a peaceful refuge from the outside world. Fifth, decorate your children's rooms. Finally, for the sixth and seventh, decorate and design your bathroom and kitchen. Why should they be last? If you are rehabbing an old bathroom or kitchen, they are often the most expensive rooms to decorate and enhance. You want to save money by doing those rooms last. Often, homeowners tackle those rooms first and then have no money left to adequately furnish and decorate the other rooms.

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