



Designer FYI

By Kris Linder

Design tips à la carte

Most issues, I spend this column focused on one subject. This month, however, I thought I talk about a bunch of quick ideas for many different areas of your home. Consider this my "à la carte" design tips column:

ENTRY

No matter whether it's formal, small or non-existent, create a welcoming area at your front door by adding a piece of furniture, an area rug, a piece of art or a plant in a great decorative container.

PAINT

Select three colors you like for a room. One should be the color you like the most. The second should be a shade or two lighter. The third color will be a trim color, so an off-white or cream shade will work well with almost any color. Paint the walls in the first shade, the ceiling in the second shade, and the trim in the third shade. Also, try to use a color primer as your second shade instead of using white to lighten the first color down, which is often done. This will help enhance your colors' richness instead of merely watering it down.

FLOORS

Keeping continuity in flooring is essential to give the appearance of an enlarged space and to keep a comfortable flow throughout the home. If you can use the same product, all the better. If not, keep the colors in the same family. For example: beige tile in the entry, beige carpet in the living room. You can always use an accent color as a border, or place other design elements in the entry flooring (such as inlaid patterns) if you feel beige-on-beige is too bland.

CARPET

Carpet today, as well as the warranties on them, are so varied that it can be confusing. Here is a good hint: For any carpet you are considering buying, first ask for a welcome mat-sized sample of it. Sometimes this takes a week to get, but it's worth it. Take it to your house and use it. Yes, use it just like you would carpet: step on it with dirty shoes, let the kids eat and spill on it. Then see how easy it is to

get spots up with a clean rag and warm water (no soap). If it's easy to clean and holds up to your family's use (or abuse), then you have chosen a good density and stain-resistant style.

FABRICS

All fabrics today can be "fiber sealed," protecting against stains and spotting without changing the nature of the fabric. The best news for fabrics is the teflon coating, the double rubs, and other stain-resistant properties imbued right in the fabric. Look for these on the label of any fabric you are considering, or just add your own fiber sealant after the purchase. Here's a caution: try not to purchase fabric for seating that looks good, but doesn't feel good — you might find yourself looking at it rather than sitting on it!

FURNITURE

Scale your furniture to your room to help a room look larger. Mixing woods in a room can sometimes work, but it's not usually recommended. Light and dark wood finishes on furniture is a difficult mix to achieve and usually gives a disjointed appearance to the room.

BATHROOMS

Don't go too crazy with different colors or products. Keeping the palette in the bathroom fairly monochromatic, quiet and neutral allows for you to change colors for towels, art, and accessories more easily. If you do use a big mix of color in your bathroom, try to pick colors that look good on you (hold the colors up to your face), as if you were selecting clothes. That way, there is less of a chance you will tire of them.

These are just a few ideas from Designer FYI. Stay tuned for more throughout the year. ↑

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