

design elements, Lybrand says the mood in the room will change completely and her client will have saved a lot of time and money.

Redesign tips

Here are some of Lybrand's top tips for redesign on a budget:

◆ Start with a clean slate by removing everything from the room, from floor to ceiling. "Pictures, furniture, rugs, china — everything goes," Lybrand says. "And be ready to literally let [an item] go, or find another use for it if it doesn't fit your new vision. Less is more."

◆ Painting walls is a quick, inexpensive way to completely change the look of a room. Applying paint to only one "accent wall" will add interest to a room in a snap. Lybrand says to choose whatever colors make you happy — unless the house is about to enter the real estate market. In that case, white is the best choice.

"White walls make a room look clean, almost sterile," Lybrand says. "It's safe. White walls appeal to buyers because they know they can live with it and not have to fix it right after moving in."

◆ Return the furniture to the room and rearrange it until it is

pleasing, creating comfortable, functional seating areas.

◆ If the old furniture simply must go, do-it-yourself redesigners can take this tip from a pro — don't rule out buying pre-owned furniture. Lybrand says she has seen some incredible bargains at consignment and thrift shops.

She cited the example of one savvy bargain hunter who scouted thrift shops and came home with a gently used, high-end living room set that typically costs \$3,000 new. After a bit of haggling, Lybrand said he paid only \$300 for the set.

◆ To get the most mileage out of pricey items like sofas, Lybrand says to avoid fads and the latest trends, choosing neutral colors and clean lines instead. Shots of color and personality can then be added using inexpensive, changeable accessories on and around the sofa.

"It's the same thing with clothes," Lybrand said. "Some are fun and cute at the time, but fads don't last."

◆ "Shop your house" for accessories. Lybrand recommends going from room to room and searching closets, cabinets, and the garage for anything that could be put to

good use in the new decorating scheme.

One of her favorite tricks is taking items that are meant for one purpose and using them in a different way. A basket that once contained fruit or cookbooks in the kitchen could be a great magazine or remote control holder in the living room. A rarely used glass water pitcher could double as a vase for cut flowers on the dining room table.

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