

home

Seek a fresh set of eyes

REDESIGN / From 16

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.

"Accent pillows that were in a bedroom can be moved to the living room," Lybrand said. "Pillows and throws change the

whole look of big ticket items like a sofa. In fact, in one redesign I did, the only thing we bought was a throw."

◆ Hang an inexpensive mirror on a wall. "Mirrors make a room look larger," Lybrand explained. "They open up the room and make it brighter. Think about where to hang it to reflect natural light the best."

◆ Bring a bit of the outdoors inside. Lybrand says plants soften a room and create visual interest without being obtrusive, but she issued the following caveat: don't overdo it.

"Foliage and greenery create warmth, but you don't need much," she said. "Live plants are best, but even people who usually kill plants should get a nice artificial or two. Place them up high on a hutch or cabinet. It draws the eye up and around the room."

◆ Candles add instant drama and romance to a room. "Especially when a house is for sale, we'll light candles during the open house," Lybrand said. "It sets a mood; it's soothing. And candles are cheap so you can change the color scheme easily."

◆ Ask a friend (or a certified redesign specialist) for help and advice. "Sometimes it takes an outside person to help make sense of it all," Lybrand said. "A fresh perspective can make all the difference."

Lybrand said she loves redesign because the result is always a reflection of the homeowner's personality.

"When you use existing furnishings in a fresh way, you always end up with a sense of your personal style," Lybrand explained. "You create a style that's more your own rather than what the industry says you should have."

"And you save money, too."

To learn more

◆ To contact Maria Lybrand of Lybrand Redesign, call 292-2682 or 561-351-4191 or visit www.lybrandredesign.com. In addition to redesign and staging, she also assists in moves, organizing, and personal shopping.
◆ Visit www.weredesign.com to see a worldwide list of certified redesign and staging specialists. The site also gives information on the training requirements for becoming a certified redesign or staging specialist.

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