

## Thrifty tricks help lift home's tired decor

Small changes -- cutting clutter, subtle restyling -- can make a big difference

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CALGARY - It's a familiar story for many busy suburban families.

Tired furniture, cluttered corners -- and the eyesore that everyone in the house detested.

In this case, it's the dated green carpet in the living room, dining room, up the stairs and on the upper floor of an '80s era Calgary two-storey that's home to a couple, their three children and a dog.

They've tolerated it for four years now.

Every Halloween though, the owners cringed at opening the door to the neighbourhood because visitors would see the scary flooring.

It took a designer with a focus on restyling interiors to roll the family out of their rut.

Adene Lucas owns Accent on Design. Working with a relatively modest budget, she de-cluttered, made the most of existing furniture, shopped for new accessories and gave the owners the framework of a style they can continue building on.

When Lucas first visited the house, during income-tax season, the dining table was piled high with file folders. In the family room, the mantel and every shelf in the built-in cabinets had accumulated far too many knickknacks.

Elsewhere on the main floor, excess pieces such as furniture and file boxes had been piled in corners -- neatly, but none of it was needed.

To keep the makeover thrifty, Lucas didn't buy any major pieces. She shopped for a starter kit of accessories while staying within the family's budget of \$1,500. Now the owners can add to the mix with pieces from a shopping that Lucas supplied.

The budget wasn't enough to tackle the entire home, but by buying from stores such as IKEA and HomeSense, the changes helped bring the basics of a pulled-together style to the main floor and the master bedroom.

The designer began by cutting the clutter and eliminating surplus furniture. She bought storage containers for the kids' CDs and DVDs, keeping them handy but tidy.



CREDIT: Jenelle Schneider, CanWest News Service

Post-restyling, the living room feels less cluttered, with a new area rug, art and fewer pieces of furniture.

The living room furniture had been accumulated by the man of the house during his bachelor days. With judicious editing and new contemporary accessories, these not-so-fashionable pieces now look more current and finally reflect something of a woman's tastes, too.

Some items didn't pass muster with the designer and were turfed. "Adene had issues with the grandma coffee table," says the woman of the house.

The hopeless oval table went out the door, but the more palatable matching end tables stayed.

"When I met with the owner, we came up with a list of things that were important to her, what she wanted to achieve," Lucas says. "She wanted colour, she wanted some texture and grownup accessories."

Lucas also purchased the neutral-toned synthetic rug that's durable but nicely unifies everything in the revised living room layout.

In the dining room, another new light fixture immediately pops the deep tray ceiling into focus.

The sideboard-console table was pared down to hold just a few attractive accessories. Above, an undersized print was replaced by a large mirror with a chunky metallic frame. The homeless boxes and furniture in the corners have made way for a tall, handsome piece of pottery.

The classic white kitchen was instantly updated when shiny brass pulls were removed and replaced with brushed-nickel ones, an inexpensive update that takes only minutes.

In addition to the designer's budget, the homeowners completed several top-ranked projects from their to-do list. They budgeted for fresh paint, new light fixtures and new flooring to replace the four different types on the main floor.

Lucas provided guidance in design, harmonious paint colours and flooring, as well as advising the couple on where to shop and referring them to dependable tradespeople.

The new flooring stepped up the redesign's impact. Gone are the days of turning their gaze from the green carpet. Lucas helped select a more attractive alternative, a dark laminate that can stand up to the dog while still capturing the look of hardwood flooring.

The couple liked it so much, they chose to extend the laminate up the stairs, along the upper hallway and into the master bedroom suite.

The redesign took roughly a month to complete.