



Decorating in a day

BY ADENE LUCAS | ACCENT ON DESIGN

SOUNDS LIKE YET ANOTHER TELEVISION SHOW WHICH BEGINS WITH A CREW OF PROFESSIONALS ARRIVING TO ASSIST THE HOMEOWNERS. MAGICALLY, THE HOUSE HAS BEEN DRAMATICALLY TRANSFORMED IN A TELEVISION HOUR. EVERYONE HIGH FIVES AND THE OWNERS HAVE THEIR FRIENDS OVER TO SHOW OFF THEIR NEW PAD. YOU, THE VIEWER, NOW LOOK AROUND YOUR HOME AND THINK, I WISH!!

Here is the reality. Sure your home can be transformed in a day but it depends on many elements including, the scope of the work and the budget (a word never uttered in the land of television). There is also lead time to consider which can be anywhere from 4-12 weeks on select flooring, furniture and bath fixtures. Once everything has been decided, and you have exceeded your budget because you just had to have that (insert word here). All that is left is to find a qualified individual to install everything. How difficult can that be in Calgary, a city that is booming? Don't despair, there are still ways to decorate your home in a day that will drastically improve the look, for a fraction of the price! The first step is to solicit help. It can be a friend who is creative and honest enough to tell you that you really should take the plastic off the lamp shades.

If you don't have a friend like that, then look into hiring a designer/decorator. Start with the following: Ask friends and associates, look online and/or the Yellow Pages, ask for referrals, then check their rates and look at their work to get an idea of what they are capable of.

If you do hire a professional, you first must listen, take notes and be prepared to do some of the work. I recently hired a dog trainer to come over and provide tips on training my misbehaving dog. I listened, took notes, bought the "right" leash, did the work for a few days and

now the dog is... exactly the same. I simply wasn't prepared to do the work. Unless you are going to be receptive to change and willing to do your part, don't start. The relationship with the decorator/designer is a partnership.

Now that the ground work has been laid, I'll share with you a few of the decorating basics that can be done in a day.

Start by taking a photo of the room in question. This is similar to taking a picture of yourself as you see things differently in a photo. How does the room look? Is there flow throughout the room, or is it a bit of an obstacle course? Is the furniture close enough for conversation, or is the distance too great? Is all the furniture pushed up against the walls, leaving gaping holes in the rest of the room? Finally, do you use the room, and if not why? These are things to consider when deciding on furniture placement.

Now that the furniture is situated, make sure to re-hang art. Furniture acts as an anchor for art and without it the piece appears to be floating on the wall. Consider scale when placing pictures. If there is a large sofa and wall behind it then the art needs to be on the larger side. Without a large piece consider using a grouping of art. Less is more and yes bigger is better when it comes to accessories and artwork.

Lastly, accessorize with a light hand. If you have a collection, pare it down and rotate the collection seasonally. Place the

collection on a nice tray and elevate the look. Also, consider using one color as an accent. Cranberry red for example has a lot of impact and when used sparingly looks sharp. Continue with the accent color in vases, pillows, throws and even fresh flowers to create a unified look.

For bigger decorating in day projects consider the following options. Change your light fixtures, starting with the most prominent ones, dining room, foyer and kitchen. Cartwright Lighting has the best selection. Replace outdated knobs and hardware on kitchen and bathroom cabinetry available at so many places throughout the city. For something unique, have a look at the Art of Hardware, Banbury Lane Design Center or Britannia Ornamental.

Painting in a day can be done, although I suggest a professional paint consult available from most designers and decorators because color is so critical with regards to how you feel in your home. I also recommend a professional painter who can get the job done in an efficient manner.

If you are still not ready to tackle this on your own, hire a designer or decorator. For a one hour consultation, the information sources and resources will save you money and time and perhaps frustration.



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