

# Spring fling

by ADENE LUCAS

**WITH WARMER WEATHER COMES THE** opportunity to lighten up the décor in your home. It is time to shed some of the excess that kept you insulated and cozy over the winter and to lighten up and freshen up your home.

A bathroom is a great place to start as typically it is an undersized room and small changes can make a big difference. Change out the towels to brighter spring colours or change the scheme to all white. If you have a shower curtain, update it with bright colours that tie in with the towels or simply replace the hooks with a funky colour. Replace dated artwork or add a new piece that is oversized and bright. Select a new soap pump and coordinating accessories and don't forget a

new bath mat. If you want to make more of an impact, change the mirror. Over the years I have seen countless homes and the one thing they all have in common is a builder grade mirror. Not framed, not even bevelled, just a basic, lifeless mirror. Typically, you can find a nicely framed mirror for less than \$100. This one change alone can update the look of any powder room and provide personality to a drab space.

The master bedroom is another overlooked area that can be simply updated for spring. Begin by purging things stockpiled on dressers and night tables. All the books you planned on reading over the winter, the knitting that lays in a basket, the lotions and potions that you needed over the dry winter months can all find



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a new home. Now is also the time to reorganize the closets and dressers, be ruthless. Donate or pack up unused items to clear some space. If the task seems too much, hire a professional organizer or better yet go to a storage store where products to contain clutter are available. Drawer organizers, jewellery storage and even under bed drawers for seasonal items can help eliminate crowded closets.

As the temperatures warm up there is no need for a heavy down filled duvet. Change the bedding to a coverlet or lighten up on the colour and material. Choose cotton and read the labels to make sure the bedding is machine washable. All white bedding is a fresh look but may not be practical so look for bed linen that has some white and use white accessories as an accent. If you have heavy drapery, replace it inexpensively by adding two to three lighter weight panels on either side for a full look. Big box stores sell panels in a variety of colours and textures. If updating the bed linens is not in the budget, add toss cushions and a light throw in a brighter colour or a vibrant

print. Add fresh inexpensive, seasonal flowers to a night stand and cross this room off the list as complete.

The living area is the most fun to do because the transformation can be dramatic. Look at how the furniture is grouped, is it centered on the fireplace, can it be changed to face a window instead? Think of furniture groupings in terms of how you use the room - entertaining, reading or watching TV. Once the layout of furniture has been set, it's time to roll up the heavy pile shag rug and replace it with a natural fibre sisal or jute style rug that is light and perfect for the warmer months. You could also try a cotton rug in a whimsical pattern to add life to a neutral room. If all the furniture is upholstered in heavy fabrics such corduroy or velvet, try adding one inexpensive occasional chair in a brighter colour or a lively print to freshen things up. If you have a wood burning fireplace, clear it out and add candles to the box or cover it with a decorative screen.

Change up the bookcases and replace heavy dark items with lighter pieces you may already own, rotating collections

## FEATURE



can create a new look. While you are reworking shelves, now is the time to toss all dusty artificial plants that collect dust and are supposed to look real. Silk plants take away from the look of a home and they lack personality and creativity. We all know the plant is a fake when it is above cabinetry! Try using a couple of collared vases, an urn, family china or even a water pitcher instead of the tried and true bogus plant. Bring in fresh plants or flowers in bright containers. If you are not good with plants ask your local greenhouse what they suggest that is low maintenance and kill proof. Failing that, display a bowl of fresh fruit or simply a bowl full of lemons in the kitchen to create a fresh feel.

Fabric and linens also impact a room and should be changed seasonally. Think of tea towels, table runners, table cloths, and placemats. Rotate seasonally so you have a winter collection and a summer collection. Start purchasing them as the season winds down so that you catch the sales!

Another affordable and immediate change is reupholstering. I know it sounds involved but if you are just changing the seat of dining room chairs it is quite simple and yet has a high impact. I like to buy drapery panels or fabric from a Sari shop to create a custom appearance by changing just the two end chairs to an appealing new fabric that gives the dining room an original look for the cost of one drapery panel and your time.

Lastly and most commonly, the biggest way to change the look of any room is

paint. Paint one wall a bright colour or an accent colour to instantly add flair. A trendy idea in painting is called colour blocking. Try painting a few blocks of similar colours in the shape of large rectangles on one wall. They can be horizontal or vertical and it adds visual interest to a room. This idea works best in a child's room or a more contemporary home. Choose complimentary colours to create an artwork effect. If trends are not appealing, then stick to just painting a wall or two. When picking a colour there are a few factors to consider. Colour is a powerful tool in terms of communication and the mood of a space. The basic distinction in the colour world is warm colours or cool colours. Warm colours such as red and orange create a feeling of comfort, intimacy and creativeness. Conversely, cool colours create feelings of calmness, security and comfort. People tend to gravitate towards one end of the spectrum or the other but it is also important to think of how you want the room to feel as well as how the colours you choose make you feel. Some colours have a more masculine feel while others such as pink are traditionally a feminine colour. Paint selection is so much more than a few paint chips. Give it a lot of thought; look at your wardrobe as we tend to wear the colours we like. Also, consider getting professional advice for your colour selection.

Hopefully, this summer we will all be outside more than inside, but it is always nice to come indoors at the end of the day and feel relaxed and refreshed in our homes. By following a few of these ideas you can create a new look in your old home.



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