

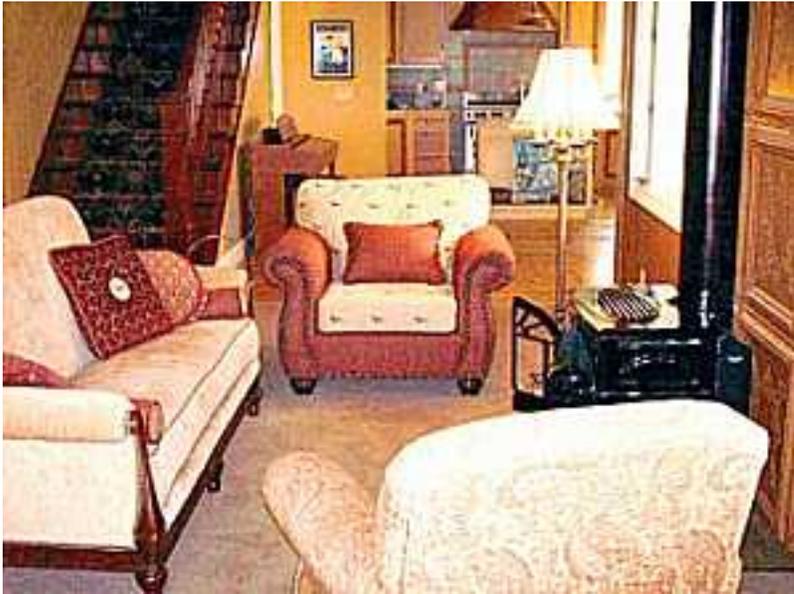


Getting cozy

Use color, lighting and furniture placement to warm up a room

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"Sam" Jernigan of Renaissance Design Consultations in Auburn worked with Connie Parsons and Greg Archibald of Nevada City to transform their living room into a "cozy" space in their 1880s-era Broad Street Victorian.

Photo by: S.A. Jernigan



The same room is shown prior to the transformation.

Photo by: S.A. Jernigan

With the days shorter and the temperature dipping, it's time to focus on cozying up, warming up and getting down to enjoying the indoor season.

With winter comes an opportune time to look at adding color or resituating common areas as we move indoors for the season.

To help with that, Auburn interior designers "Sam" Jernigan of Renaissance Design Consultations and Gaytrell Lapp of Gaytrell Lapp Design each offer up ways to warm up the home this season with color, accessories and scents.

Warmer color equals a warmer home.

"Color is the single most important element in our decorating tool kit. Not only does it literally set the tone for the room, but the mood too," Jernigan said recently.

The "array of colors" is divided into two camps - warm and cool, she explains.

"So if you want your surroundings to feel cozier, that often requires enlisting warm colors," she said. "Ivory, cream, golds, salmon, peach, orange, terra cotta, the entire red family from candy apple red to deep burgundy, rich russets, and on into camels, cocoa and the full spectrum of browns will contribute significantly when creating a warm-feeling atmosphere."

But some homes may need a different approach.

The room's décor might clash with warm colors. For those homes, Lapp suggests using slipcovers.

"They can change a Tuscan or pastel setting," she said.

Sometimes just rearranging the room can enhance the feeling of warmth. Look for ways to add a cozy chair, reading lamp or side table in a favorite corner.

It is common for homes to have a summer placement and winter placement for furniture.

"People tend to want to cozy up to the fireplace instead of having a gathering on the patio," Lapp said. "The fireplace is the central place in the winter room."

When looking at going beyond cozying the fireplace area, today's architecture with much larger rooms can present a challenge.

"A large room is also often enhanced by dividing its use into smaller areas," Jernigan said. "Three small seating areas in a large space will immediately lend a more intimate atmosphere to a spacious room than one large formal arrangement - and be far more conducive to actual conversation, too."

For living rooms or family rooms, Jernigan suggests thinking of pairs of chairs or a game table with side chairs. In a small area, use a chair, an ottoman and a small accent table just large enough to hold a book and a cup of tea or glass of wine.

"Small, otherwise unused spaces like a foyer or stairwell landing can sometimes lend themselves to this sort of opportunity," she said.

Lighting

Lighting is also a factor in these spaces. A lamp can bring in the focus.

"Low-level lighting - like an antique bridge lamp - provides ideal task light for reading or knitting," she said.

Throw pillows and accessories

Nothing says "come snuggle up with me" more than a woven afghan over the most comfortable chair in the house.

Jernigan likes to incorporate soft underfoot throw rugs or area rugs made of luxurious fibers.

"These all help our surroundings nurture us through the long winter months ahead," she said.

Clever use of blankets or even sweaters that "have seen better days" might be a way to put a warm and special touch on a room.

"Recycle them into slipcovers for pillows in a variety of shapes," she said. "You might try the same with a favorite flannel shirt or old jeans for a Ralph Lauren-inspired touch."

Plants

Bringing the outdoors indoors also can brighten the home.

"In addition to fresh evergreens, look around to see what else you might retrieve from a walk around your property or a short drive," Jernigan said. "Try a wooden bowl filled with fresh chestnuts with their gorgeous mahogany-colored skins or a bowl of persimmons that are unexpectedly bright and lush."

A wintry sprig of a woody stem with bright red berries placed in a bark vase is a great way to brighten a tabletop of bathroom vanity, she added.

Pinecones are also a favorite accent this time of year.

Lapp is fond of winter groupings of flowers. They can be a neutral accent for a room that would be too complicated to redecorate or wouldn't lend itself to warm accents.

"Flowers go with everything and there are wonderful mixes this time of year," she said.

Displaying wood in a container by the fireplace also adds warmth to a room.

Scents

There's nothing quite as nice as the aroma of baked goodies in the winter.

Adele Wise, owner of Wildflowers in Auburn, said candles and infusers fly off the shelves this time of year as people crave smells like apple-cinnamon and spice.

"When homes are more closed up, people look for ways to create fresh smells," she said. "Candles are always popular this time of year."

Jernigan's ideas for adding scents to the home are scented candles, electric air fresheners, bowls of potpourri, a simmering pot of mulled wine on the stove or something baking in the oven.

For that traditional holiday scent, a fragrant wreath or fresh garlands on the mantle or tabletop can also augment or take the place of a traditional Christmas tree.

"From the muskiness of cinnamon and nutmeg, to the nostalgia-laden scent of freshly cut evergreen boughs, a good dollop of seasonal smells will say 'welcome' to your guests as soon as they walk through your front door," Jernigan said.