

S.A. "Sam" Jernigan Special to The Union

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S.A."Sam" Jernigan: Fast fix-Ups for under \$100



As this photo illustrates, using paint to define and highlight architectural details is cost-effective, quick, and can provide dramatic results as well.

Yet again the holidays are rounding the bend.

So before Aunt Bertha scrutinizes various rooms of your home en route to your Thanksgiving spread, here are some fast fix-ups that will leave you with money left over for that fancy imported chutney she adores.

Paint

Nothing changes the entire personality of a room like a strategic injection of color.

Abandon the beige blahs and minimally highlight a focal wall or architectural feature in a hue that says you.

Tip: ask for larger swatches (e.g. “architectural samples”) from your paint vendor. Those are especially useful, as those sample strips with white separator bars in between the values wreak havoc on one’s ability to correctly judge color.

When in doubt, a safe bet is opting for smokier hues which look rich and sophisticated.

Declutter

It’s amazing what a difference editing makes — and this is also the key to successful real estate staging, too.

Take away all but the essentials from a room, then examine the furniture arrangement to see if it can be improved, re: traffic flow/access to seating, etc.

By removing stacks of magazines/newspapers, items from overstuffed bookcases, cluttered table tops or mantles, you can then carefully and selectively decide what you want to showcase in a room.

Remember, “less is more” (plus this enhancement’s free!).

Buy an indoor tree

Most rooms benefit from the addition of strong vertical lines; this is especially true of older homes with 8-foot ceilings.

An artificial tree is an easy-care option — although live trees also improve the indoor air quality.

Just be sure to select a specimen suited to the level of daylight available.

Buy or build a fabric screen/room divider

Fabricate a simple wood frame using 2- by 2-inch stock, creating a minimum of three panels hinged together.

This adds coziness/visual interest when placed in a corner behind a large club chair, for example.

This type of folding screen can house artwork/photos, painted designs, wallpaper or taut fabric panels — or even something more imaginative made of leather or metal.

You decide — plus this is an ideal upcycling project.

Paint, stain or create a distressed finish on the frame.

If choosing fabric for the panels, remnants can be affordable — plus not much yardage is needed.

Select prints, solids, textures (even burlap) or something lacy/sheer depending on your style, as well as whether you're trying to conceal something behind the screen.

The easiest technique is to wrap/staplegun fabric to the frame.

For a more finished look — especially when utilizing as a room divider — hot glue gimp to conceal staples on the panel backs.

Lighten up

For rooms used primarily in the evening, adding a wall sconce or table lamp can brighten the space.

Plus it can provide task lighting for better reading and ambiance. Or, consider an upright wall wash for nighttime drama.

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