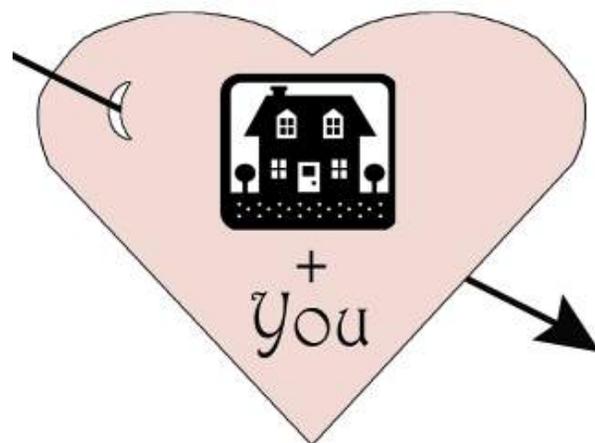


**S.A. "Sam" Jernigan
Special to The Union**

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S.A. "Sam" Jernigan: How to fall in love — with your home!



Personalizing your home will make you fall in love with it.

Colored by over two decades of experience in the home design trenches, I have to admit I have a supersized pet peeve — namely consumers being railroaded into a narrow range of perceived “choices.”

From backsplashes, to sofas, to flooring, to color palettes — sometimes it seems our HGTV'd world is becoming scarily homogenized.

And, to yours truly, that's the polar opposite of how I want homeowners to think.

While there have always been design trends — dating from antiquity — today it's easy to be immersed in wall-to-wall makeover shows on TV

particular.

However, there’s a key point to remember and it’s tidily summed up in one word: sponsorship.

Therefore it’s no wonder we see these ubiquitous materials popping up again and again.

Manufacturers have ponied-up significant advertising dollars to have their products positioned as “selections” by the design teams for these shows.

In reality, production companies have budgets like every other business entity and often partner according to their bottom-line best interests vs. depicting the most innovative design solutions.

My concern is that this “one flavor on the menu” type of orientation quells creativity and, more importantly, personalization.

And personalization should be the guiding principle when feathering one’s own nest.

So with my mini tirade dispensed with (whew, I feel better!), I invite you to consider alternative possibilities.

Admittedly, your timeline for resale is a key consideration with one of my favorite outlets for expressing individuality: tiles.

Especially here in western Nevada County with our Gold Rush era homes, there are reproduction or vintage tiles which would be ideal and — hold on to your hat — these extend well beyond subway tile, folks!

Another favorite option I recommend is having tiles custom made — especially as these can so effectively be used as accent tiles and interspersed with solid-colored companion tiles.

For my own home, I had tiles made from our honeymoon in Paris architectural photos (shot in black/white).

These are 6” x 6” porcelain tiles placed in a 5’ high wainscoting application in a master bath.

The same vendor also created tiles for my kitchen backsplash which feature vintage French food ads I sourced on tumbled marble tiles (resource: AliciaTappDesigns.com).

Other unique backsplash materials are virtually limitless.

For example, another favorite of mine for our vintage homes regionally is “pressed tin,” available in stainless steel or a paintable polypropylene.

These easy-to-install panels can also be used in a variety of other applications, including adding period-styling to ceilings.

Plus, they’re also available in contemporary patterns as well.

But there’s really no end to the plethora of choices.

Those can even include quirky materials like wine corks, buttons, coins, shards of vintage plates repurposed into a custom mosaic, etched polymer panels, mercury glass mirror, recycled wood or cedar strips topped with an oil-based sealer for a kitchen-friendly finish.

I’ve relished seeing entire walls papered in sheets of vintage music.

I also recall a fascinating technique of decoupageing torn brown paper bags with irregular edges onto a wall which was top-coated with a slight tinted glaze.

Truly, the possibilities are limited only by your open-mindedness — it’s your home, what would you like to see everyday?

With our global marketplace just a click away, why not think outside the HGTV box?

This goes for the vast universe of countertop, flooring, furnishings, lighting, window treatments, and plumbing options as well.

Early in my design career, I saw a charming photo in a magazine that really struck me at the time.

The wall was painted a soft blush pink and adorned with a collection of antique hats. The vignette featured a circular table draped in a some sort of vintage fabric or lace and charmingly accessorized.

The point is you don’t need costly art pieces per se, something as simple as hats can be “art” when imaginatively arranged.

What’s your hobby or avocation? Passion? Favorite travel destination? Family history?

Inspiration can be derived from anywhere.

Perhaps you’d like to add a cherished quote or poem directly onto a wall?

I also encourage you to embrace patterns you’ve always liked, whether checkerboards or palm trees.

The fact they’ve already had staying power with you ensures you won’t tire of them which should be another guiding principle when making your selections.

Resale timelines should of course be a consideration in your decision-making, and rightly so.

However one advantage of not going the beige box route will be the benefit of making your house more memorable.

When well-executed, distinctive style can actually increase its appeal to would-be buyers (like when my own house sold in five days in a three-way bidding war).

Not following cookie-cutter trends also has the added advantage of not date-stamping your house.

So puhleeze don’t allow yourself to be spoon-fed some sort of standardized “look” by whatever perceived authority — or made to feel you don have the whole crayon box of color choices.

After all, this place you call home is unlike anyplace else.

It’s your haven, and should welcome and enfold you visually, bringing comfort and a sense of nurturing to your very soul.

Embrace whatever spins your clock and — if anything — budgetary challenges simply become opportunities for more imagination yet in repurposing, upcycling, and DIY’ing your way to making your casa happily your own.

Embrace unconventional, innovative, resourceful and clever vs. opting for connect-the-dots decorating decided by some style guru or a production company whose sponsors have deep advertising pockets.

Because when you shake off the shackles of sameness and summon the courage to give wing to your own vision of what’s altogether appealing that’s when you too will fall in love with your house.

A house that’s now truly a home.

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