



Thibaut

INSTANT
STYLEMAKERS:

10
Easy
UPDATES

by Nancy Atkinson

WHETHER IT'S THE FIRST HINT OF a crisp fall breeze that inspires you, the turning of the calendar year, or the March issue of *Vogue*, when the seasons change we are all ready to give our wardrobes and our habitats a boost.

Decorators call it a “refresh” or a “fluff,” when clients call them back after the big-budget work is done to tweak what they have and make it look and feel new again. The changes don't have to be expensive. They could be as simple as wallpapering a ceiling or painting a wall. Whether done with your decorator or on your own, a refresh is just enough to make you fall in love with the room once again. A few common elements define a successful refresh, involving color, light, furnishings, fabric and paint. We've compiled some industry secrets for successful room updates and asked our Front Range business friends and designers for their advice.

1 EDIT

It's the same whether you're reorganizing your closet or refreshing your rooms, you should start by creating a clean slate. Focusing on one room at a time, go through the items in your rooms and ask yourself two questions: Do I need it? Do I love it? If you don't answer yes to either question, out it goes.

Exchange those items for something in a richer, warmer texture better suited for the fall and winter months ahead. Consider adding more lamps to increase the amount of light in the rooms as the days get shorter. Lovedy Barbatelli, part of the Designer Premier team asks clients three poignant questions; "How long have you had this? Have you used it in the last two years?" and "Does 'this' serve any meaningful purpose in your life know?" Lovedy says that a good designer will help a person "with an objective viewpoint and the right questions. The action of letting go of an item is easier when they accept reason from a third party that is not vested in an object for an emotional reason. The fact of the matter is we are all inundated with so much stuff". Barbatelli's sound advice and the opportunity of starting with a clean slate makes a great outcome all the more likely.

2 MAKE ORGANIZATIONAL ORDERLINESS BEAUTIFUL

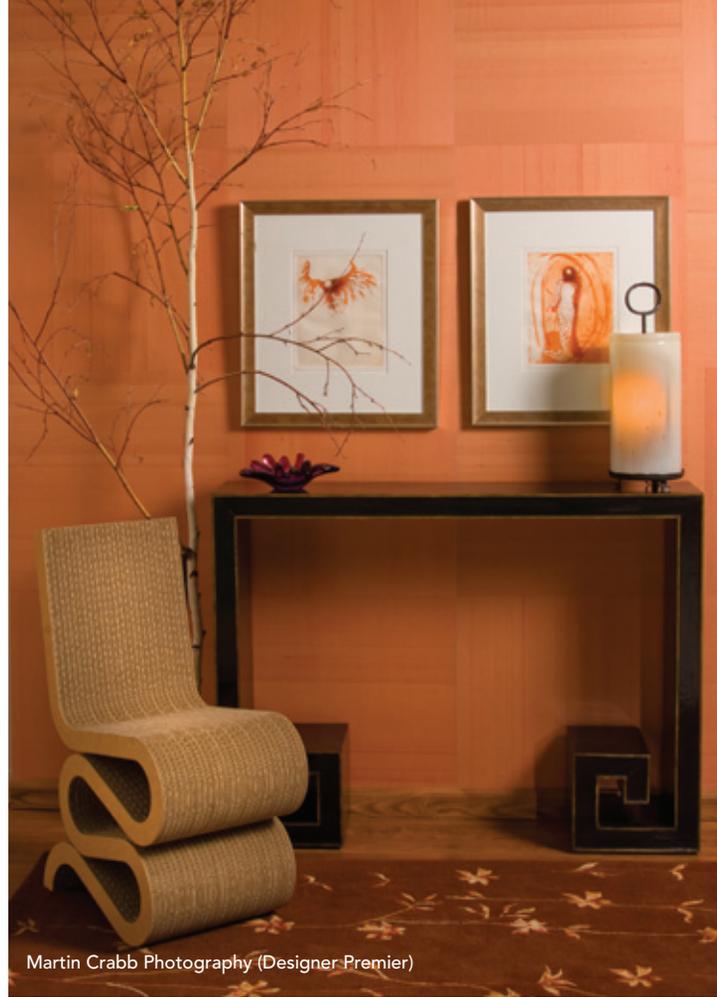
We accumulate lots of 'stuff' each year. We can't get rid of it all, but we can find ways to organize our things more beautifully. The items that organize your life don't have to be ordinary or sterile. From using big, woven baskets to hold magazines or toys in a family room or playroom, glass trays for your jewelry, or a kitchen rail above a stove to keep cooking utensils handy, look for ways to make the functional more beautiful and interesting. 'Storage containers can be just about anything,' says Bryan Pulte, owner of Bryan Pulte Interiors.

"Purchasing similar baskets or storage containers is an easy fix. Another option could be organizing items by color, shape, and size." Try label-free gallon paint cans and attached them to a bathroom wall with rolled up towels. Another idea is to collect all your picture frames, paint them in the same high gloss color and re-group your photos on one wall rather than having numerous table top dust collectors. The key is to enlarge your photos to show the detail. All the unused photos can now be in the coffee table book you are more likely to pick up and look at.

3 TWEAK THE CLASSICS

Little details can make the biggest change. One of the quickest, simplest ways to transform the look of your rooms is by changing the hardware on your existing furniture. Add a modern, squared-off handle on a traditional chest of drawers. Or maybe switch to clean Lucite pulls on a Victorian dresser to take your furniture from stuffy to stylish.

If the old mahogany furniture you inherited from your grandmother is starting to feel frumpy, give it a quick update by having it professionally stripped and bleached. Paint it with glossy enamel paint in a bright, bold color that stands out from the room and makes a statement. The look of an unpredictable color, something in the same tone but slightly off really works well. Painting an old piece a random color in the room gives it a modern twist and new life. A high gloss lacquer adds that bit of shine that calls your attention to interesting curves and lines. Consider that gaudy flea-market find in a fun pop of color with a new fabric and you've instantly added a conversation piece that is one-of-a-kind. A key member of the Designer Premier team is Jenn Medoff. She says that "The art of incorporating design elements from different ages creates a wonderful mix of nostalgia and excitement. We can achieve this in two ways; by mixing separate pieces from different eras, such as a sleek wooden dining table lit with a Victorian crystal chandelier, or by mixing elements within one piece, such as a coat of tangerine paint on an antique demilune dresser." Jenn also advises that "Such simple tweaks can be easily applied for a big impact."



Martin Crabb Photography (Designer Premier)



House Beautiful Blue - Photo by Eric Piasecki



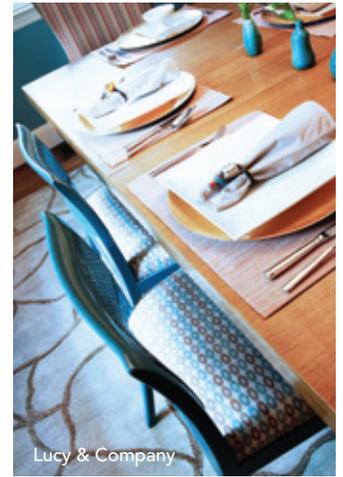
Hickory Chair



Thibaut



Lucy & Company



Lucy & Company



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Bedside Manor

Getting the details right

One gallon of paint covers approximately 400 square feet of wall.

Place light switches 36 inches above the floor and .5 to 2 inches to the side of the door trim.

A kitchen island should be taller than the countertops (typically 38 inches high) to be comfortable for prep.

The bottom of a dining-room chandelier should hang 36 inches above the table.

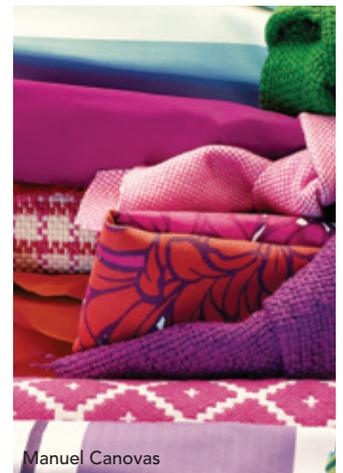
Hang curtains as-high-as possible to give the room height. Let them break 1.5 inches on the floor.



Lucy & Company



Lucy & Company



Manuel Canovas

4 REPURPOSE THE FURNITURE

Sometimes an update can be as simple as moving your furniture into another room or using it for a different purpose in its current location. In the bedroom, use your chest of drawers as a bedside table to create a convenient surface for a lamp or a stack of books. Move a sofa and chairs into the kitchen. Possibly place a dining room sideboard in a hallway where it is out of context and seems younger looking. When furniture stays static for too long it can become stale. Look at your pieces with fresh eyes to open the door for unexpected possibilities. Pulte says "Repurposing furniture is all about creativity and allowing yourself to step outside the box. Often we will restyle, reupholster, or refinish an item to give it a new look for the same or different room." He goes on to add that "tables are almost the easiest thing to recreate or repurpose - a dining table can easily be converted into a large desk with no adjustments or an old door on top of two low file cabinets can make a large desk as well. Wall décor may be the second easiest thing to recreate. By taking a room screen and mounting it on the wall you have now given a room a large piece of wall décor. I have also used dining chairs as night stands and cut the legs off tables to make cocktail or side tables. Smaller items like serving dishes can be used as decorative bathroom accessories as well."

5 GET PERSONAL

Think about what has changed in your life since you last decorated. Are there new passions or hobbies that interest you? Are there any new colors that you find inspiring or change up your stereotypical style? Your home should be a reflection of your life, so take this opportunity to celebrate the new things you love. If you collect crepe-paper party hats from the 30's and 40's, or vintage cowboy hats, hang them on the wall. Adding new photos, artwork, colors or motifs will make your rooms richer and more interesting through your unique personality and style. Again, part of Barbatelli's approach is to put the client in the position of having to candidly and objectively analyze what they have and what their goals are. She asks "What do you value most about yourself as unique?" and "What is the first word that comes to mind when you think about your lifestyle?" These questions get people really thinking in a fresh way about their home because they are not walking down the same old comfortable path.

"At first they might feel daunted, but with some time they come around with a renewed passion." Often times people figure out something that works great. The problem is they go back to the same well too often and a great designer can liberate you and help you embark in a new journey of discovery. Lovedy has learned that "Fear dictates a lot of our thoughts. I always urge people to try to differentiate fear from not knowing. She concludes by saying that "One paralyzes us and the other spurs questions and ideas of how things can change and be just perfect."

6 CREATE A NEW FOCAL POINT

It might be the biggest piece in the room, the most expensive, an inherited family heirloom, or something that you truly love. Whatever it is, it is staying because it has meaning to you. In this case, you might as well make this signature piece the focus of your room. Sometimes you can totally change the room by giving a different piece the spotlight and letting that dictate what happens next. It is vital that every room has some sort of focal point. For those of us who do not have the traditional fireplace as the focal point, all hope is not lost. Focal points can be created by using graphic wallpaper on one main wall in your space or hanging a very large painting on a center wall. "Focal points are simply what you see first when you walk in a room" says Medoff. "They guide your eye to something impressive, and when designed correctly, take you visually through a space." Jenn notes that focal points can be created with objects or enhancing areas. "By using strong colors, dominant lighting, or arranging furniture to lead the eye to a resting point, we can create or change a focal point."

7 GO BIG ON THE SMALL STUFF

Since you are not actually redecorating, you can splurge on smaller items that add luxury to a room, like fantastic pillows, a rug with wow factor or an unexpected accessory. Consider having custom-made reversible pillows with a spring and summer fabric on one side and something with a rich texture, such as velvet, on the other, for the cooler months. The impact of fresh pillows is endless. They can quickly transform a room for any gathering or simply for a seasonal update. Ideas might be to add a vintage brooch, oversized monogram or a velvet ribbon to your pillows. Your pillows don't have to match. Vary the size and shapes to increase interest. Don't be afraid to go bold with unexpected color, pattern and texture combinations. Medoff says that the use of "Color is one of the greatest design tools we have to impact the individuality of a space. By changing even one wall in a neutral room to a bright color and adding multi-colored throw pillows, a space can quickly take on an entirely new feel." Just have fun and reflect your personality - the sky is the limit! For even greater impact, consider bringing a staircase to life with something wonderful and unexpected. Zebra stripes are one of nature's coolest patterns. Try a zebra, leopard, or other eye-catching carpet running up the stair in the entryway to add contrast and drama in a neutral setting. Mirrors are another glamorous way to update your rooms and expand your space, catching the light and acting like interior windows. Starburst mirrors have been increasing in popularity in recent years and are a modern way to add style and elegance to any room. Back your bookcases with mirrors or add an antique mirror with a beveled edge to your tabletop. Any raised panel door can have an inset mirror inserted for an entirely new look. Don't forget to add random mirrors to your photo wall grouping in various sizes and styles. Jenn's experience has "found that light fixtures are also capable of expressing big personality. A fairly conservative, modern loft space can be made feminine, sleek, rustic, playful, sophisticated (or all of the above) with the proper lighting selection."



Jenn Medoff



Ron Ruscio Photography (Designer Premier)



Ron Ruscio Photography (Designer Premier)



Jeff Garland Photography (Bryan Pulte Interiors)

8 PUT YOUR OWN TWIST ON TRADITION

Contrasts make a room more exciting. Throw an antique Persian rug into a contemporary room for example. Try a modern graphic rug in a traditional setting to lay an interesting foundation for any room. Playing on tradition is a skill many designers claim to have but can't pull off because they can't make it look fresh. One who can is another member of the Designer Premier team, Pam Kelker. Pam says that "I love to mix traditional and contemporary pieces. My favorite is contemporary art in a traditional frame and setting." A classic trick that works time and again is to take an old book case, for example, paint it a contemporary color, and watch the way a modern feel is molded to a traditional flavor.

9 FRAME YOUR FAMILY TREE

Looking for a different way to display your family photos? You can reinvent your family photos by popping them out of their existing frames and re-framing them in unifying frames of all one color. Consider converting the photos to black and white and enlarging them, then putting them all in red frames or your favorite color to create a family gallery on one wall. Pulte suggests coming into the modern ages as well: "In this digital age, a great way to redefine photographs is to utilize technology. For digital images; enlarge, crop, and reprint from color to black & white." Turning photos into Christmas ornaments or scrapbooking can be a fun activity with family and friends.

10 PAINT WITH ABANDON

Sometimes a shot of color is all you need to give a room new life. Try painting one room (make it one you don't go into every day like your dining room) in a strong colored high-gloss enamel. You can also paint the room facing back wall of a bookshelf, keeping in mind that it is typically dark back there - a strong color with some punch will look interesting and create some visual depth. Lining the back of a bookcase or shelves with wallpaper is another detail change that can make a big difference. You can also wallpaper the ceiling, just be careful to avoid a pattern that's directional, like toile. Try a graphic pattern with a small repeat. Keep in mind your trim and door color in rooms with a strong color. Consistent trim color throughout the house does not have to be the rule. If you're wallpapering in a busy pattern in the dining room, for instance, it's a good idea to pick a trim and ceiling color that blends with the wallpaper or highly contrasts it. Another great idea by Kelker is that the whole room does not need to be painted and great things can be done with focused detail. Pam adds that "Painting a bold strop on the walls uses paint in an entirely new way. A sense of drama with a wide horizontal strip creates a room with a major statement."❖

RESOURCES

Bryan Pulte Interiors	www.BPulteInteriors.com	303-399-8866
Designer Premier	www.DesignerPremier.com	303-916-9515
The Fuzzy Antler	www.TheFuzzyAntler.com	303-666-7864
Colorado Concept Lighting	www.ColoradoConceptLighting.com	303-234-0460
Vida Riche	www.VidaRicheDesigns.com	303-571-9377
Indochine	www.IndochineHomeImport.com	303-444-7734