

Decorating an Apartment

Decorating an apartment is possible despite popular belief. I know that more often than not, you aren't allowed to do any painting. Often times, putting holes in the walls can be a problem, so giving your space a few personal touches can be quite challenging. Well, Matt and I have both lived in our share of apartments, and we recently had the opportunity to work in one with the expressed challenge of adding some pizzazz.



Our first project to tackle was the living room. It was the first room you entered when you opened the door from the hall, so here is where we wanted to make a real difference. Our apartment owner had a very nice off white sofa and loveseat. Thus, in an all white apartment, it made no impact at all. The first thing we did was to find some inspiration in something we could add to the room. Our thought was that an area rug on the hard wood floor would be great for comfort and color, and we found one that had a great contemporary style to it in colors that would really breathe some life into the room.

For more impact, we placed the furniture on angles in the room, and set the rug underneath on a completely different angle. This brought motion and interest to the space even before we tackled the walls. Since we couldn't paint, fabric was the next option.





So, I sewed up several panels of solid color fabric that matched some of the colors from the rug. I put rod pockets in the top and bottom of the fabric banners, and we shirred the fabric on rods. We then tied clear fishing line to the ends of the rods, and hung the fabric banners using one tack in the lower edge of the crown molding around the room. Holes weren't an issue in this

apartment, but we did our best to keep them to a minimum. By hanging the banners unevenly along the long wall, we created a design that required the white wall background for contrast. Then, with the off white furniture against the bright colored banners, even the furniture took on a richer appearance. Not to mention the softness and sound absorption these panels added to the space.

Next came the windows.

Fortunately they were set in enough to leave a couple of inches to install pressure tension rods inside the window openings. This allowed us to first install a set of sheers gathered at the top and the bottom, which added privacy but still allowed light to enter the room.

Then, over the top we added a short fabric valance that was simply draped over another tension rod. This overall look was clean and nice for the space, and it caused no damage at all to the windows of the room.





We used a similar technique in the bedroom. Here, the window covering was made with a strap and button system that allowed the shade to be unbuttoned, which let the fabric down and the room could be darkened. When the fabric was buttoned up, it created a soft curved design, and light shone through.

Using our apartment dweller's bedspread as inspiration, we crafted a very simple headboard out of birch plywood. The edge was left natural, and we painted an inset of black to give the bedspread a striking background. A little polyurethane for protection, and then the headboard screwed into the frame of the bed.



To save a few dollars, we purchased an unfinished night stand and finished it ourselves to match the headboard. The natural top, with a black cabinet and natural drawer pulls looked great in the room!

So, I guess my point to apartment dwellers...be depressed no more...decorating an apartment is possible...add some color, add angles, use creative ways to hang fabric on walls and at the windows, make your own furniture and accessories.....and enjoy!

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