

One Room - Two Ways

Maybe it's because I was born in the '50s, with parents who lived through the Depression. But I've grown up thinking it's necessary to use and reuse ... everything. And since Matt is from the same era, we do try to give each room we decorate - options. For instance, we'll figure out different ways to arrange the furniture or additional accessory ideas that can be changed seasonally to give a room new and different looks with minimal effort.

One room that comes to mind when I think about this concept is a living room we decorated several years ago. It was to the left, off a nice-sized entry, so it had two windows at the front of the house and it opened to a family room at the back of the house. Our homeowners had an off-white sectional, off-white walls, a travertine-based, glass-top coffee table and an off-white occasional chair.



To add a little punch to this room, we decided to paint the full wall opposite the entry in a dark chocolate brown. Immediately, the sectional popped into the room, finally fully visible. We placed it in the room with the corner to the wall so the sides came out into the space on angles. The glass coffee table was put in the center, and then we went shopping ... in the rest of the house!

We moved the off-white occasional chair into the family room and brought a couple of neutral plaid chairs from the family room - into the living room. They really picked up the brown of the accent wall and gave us the inspiration to purchase a variety of black, brown and light neutral pillows. The pillows added more than just color to the sectional; we selected them for their texture and design.





Additional accessories were a wrought-iron natural paper screen, a piece of art done in all charcoal and brown tones, and a small contemporary side table we brought in from the den.

When we were finished, our homeowners were thrilled with the results, but they had one favor: Could we give them an option for upcoming holidays?

Here's how we started, and you could do this in your home too when you're trying to get a fresh look for the season:

We began by removing all the accessories. This gets the room down to the bare bones. Are there any furniture pieces left that could be switched out with others elsewhere in the home? For us there were. We returned the plaid chairs to the family room and brought the off-white chair back into the living room. With only the chocolate-brown wall and the cream upholstery to deal with, we brought in a rich-colored area rug as our new inspiration and built the rest of the room around it.

We started by changing the position of the sectional, making it square with the room. This allowed us to place the rug on an angle. The glass-top table was a perfect fit for a rug with a center medallion design, and the brass bars holding up the glass pulled the golden tones out of the rug.





We built on this gold-and-brass theme by adding two gold-framed cherub prints to the accent wall, and then embellished them with gold roping. Golden garland swagged over the sheers along with rich golden and holiday red pillows added sparkle and richness.

We topped off our holiday decor with a silk tree, wrapped in white twinkle lights, in the corner. The effect in the evening was fabulous, perfect for promoting the spirit of the holidays.

Our switch from contemporary to holiday took about an hour, and the amount of accessories we had to store for either scheme was fairly minimal. Most things stored well in boxes in the attic; it was only the alternate prints that posed a challenge. Artwork doesn't do well in a variety of different climates, so we stored the pieces that weren't being used under the bed in the guest bedroom. There they stayed flat, cool and out of the way.



But don't wait for a holiday to make a change; a new season or just a change of pace is reason enough! Moving furniture around and changing out a few pictures can do the trick, and it doesn't put a big dent in your wallet.

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