

INTERIOR REDESIGN

• A Fresh Idea for Your Living Space

I have sold two homes in my life, and both times all those household tasks that kept getting put off over the years somehow got completed within a couple of weeks before going on the market.

Those houses looked absolutely perfect and sold quickly. What's up with that? Why do we put off home beautifications, only to have someone else reap the benefits? This process of getting your home ready for sale is called "staging," and at a minimum, involves rearranging furniture, putting away clutter and choosing inviting lighting and accessories. Although this process is crucial when your home is on the market, it is NOT the only time that your home can look its best!

Let me introduce you to "interior redesign" – the art of reinventing a living space to achieve maximum functionality, while creating a pleasant surrounding using the furnishings and accessories that you already own. The key is not in what you own, but how it's arranged. If a certain room is not giving you that "feng shui" feel you desire, or the whole darn house is just not working for you, a redesign may be in order.

If you need help with your redesign ideas, talk to an interior redesign consultant. With an eye trained to look at balance, scale, texture, color and light, an interior redesign consultant will view your furnishings and accessories, as well

as the space in which they are placed. Then, they work their magic!

Rita Athanacio and Teri Mangel, owners of Refresh & Refine, start off with a home consultation. Every home is obviously unique and

presents different challenges, characteristics and personality depending on the architecture, style of décor and needs of the family. Next, they completely empty the room and start with a "clean slate." This helps them assess the architectural elements and traffic patterns, and then determine the focal points and best placement for your furniture. Using their professional skills, they can give your room a makeover in just a few hours, using all of your own belongings. So, the finished product won't feel like somebody else's home, just a better version of your own!

There are a couple of decorating "no-no's" that they tend to see frequently. The first is hanging a mirror above the fireplace. When your family and guests are seated, all that is visible in the mirror is the ceiling and whatever else is up there, such as fans or light fixtures. Not what you intended, surely! Another common mistake is placing furniture only on the outside walls, thereby defining the perimeter of the room. This tends to limit the traffic flow patterns and breathing space of the room. Be daring and less conventional - "float" a couch or table by placing it away from the walls. You may be pleas-



Living room (1): This arrangement needed little more than lightening up the dark corner behind the piano. Moving the dark chest to another room made this room feel lighter and larger.

Living room (2): Furniture placement in this room blocked the traffic flow. Changing the placement of furniture and rearranging accessories gave this room an entirely new look.



▲ **Entry way:** Moving the dark chest from the living room to the entry way, utilized the space more efficiently, and brought warmth to a previously empty entry way.



Fireplace: Swapping out the client's own accessories brings this fireplace to life.

antly surprised with the results and how your room can actually look "bigger," as opposed to the preconceived notion of "smaller." Rita also says that, "many people make the mistake of hanging their art too high. Art should be hung at eye-level or a little lower if people using the room will be mostly standing. If the room is used mainly for sitting, some designers feel the art should be at eye level while seated. The truth is there are no hard and fast rules, only guidelines, because every home is different."

As I write this, I am realizing that I am personally guilty of that last "no-no" and about a dozen other home décor faux pas. It may be because I have three young children and, literally, not enough home space for all of our "stuff." Also, although I am creative, home decorating is not my forté. Hey, maybe I'll feel like I have more room and style with a little interior redesign help. Mmmmm... something to think about! For more information about this fantastic new industry, check out the "Interior Redesign Industry Specialists" (I.R.I.S.) website at www.weredesign.com, or go directly to www.refreshandrefine.com. ❶

— Elizabeth Morabito



Bathroom: Simply adding some color with accessories found in other parts of the home changed this bathroom from neglected to luxurious.



Desk: Clearing away clutter can make a big difference. Adding light always helps.