



BEFORE: (above) A traditional mahogany dining set, crystal chandelier and pink granite fireplace surround did not have the contemporary look Phylliss desired.

AFTER: (left) Painting her granite surround and existing chairs (and recovering them in a serape stripe from Calico Corners) saved money. A new table, mica pendant light, seagrass rug and commissioned artwork over the mantel reflect Phylliss' taste. A rich pumpkin wall color steals the show...for pennies.

BY JOETTA MOULDEN

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JANET LENZEN

Dr. Phylliss Chappell had just purchased the home of her dreams and needed help furnishing it. A friend put her in touch with me and we met.

FROM BARE TO beautiful

PERSONALIZED FURNISHINGS TURN A HOUSE INTO A PLACE THE OWNER FINALLY CAN CALL 'HERS'

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"A famous artist once said that the most difficult thing to face is a blank canvas," says Phylliss, mother of two pre-teen girls. Her house, with its pale gray walls, was virtually empty except for a mahogany dining room table and chairs that she never actually liked and her daughter's piano. Phylliss wanted something beautiful and livable, but had no idea how to start.

She had made costly mistakes in a previous home with an interior designer who had a vision for a beautiful, traditional home, and she convinced Phylliss that her vision was the right one. "The only problem was the rooms never reflected my personality or my tastes, and I never truly felt at home there," she says.

CLIENT INPUT

Phylliss knew when I asked her to start collecting pictures of rooms that appealed to her that this time the experience would be different. "I knew that you were interested in helping me create a home that reflected 'me,'" Phylliss explains, "and not 'you.'" Preparing for our first visit produced an added bonus for Phylliss: It helped her clarify the kind of soft contemporary space she wanted to create.

During our first meeting, I carefully listened to her wish list and found out how she liked to entertain, how many people she needed to provide seating for in the living room and measured off the downstairs for AutoCAD floor plans. When she explained she thought she should replace the pink granite fireplace surround with

dark granite, I suggested a more affordable solution: Have Sammie Cockrell of Faux FX paint the granite instead.

After studying the magazine pages she had chosen as her "inspiration" rooms, she liked Sherwin-Williams' "Straw Doll" #SW 1365 as the main paint color and Behr Paints' "Amber Wave" #260D-5 for the dining room. For continuity between rooms, we decided to repeat the dining room's pumpkin color on the rear wall of the living room's bookcases.

"I had never considered that I should also be complemented by the colors in my home. It was interesting to have the paint colors held up to my skin," Phylliss says with a smile.

She felt the first visit was exciting because she was left with a detailed list of homework assignments, including painting sample boards of the two paint colors to be sure they worked.

TIP: Since I cannot be there at night to see what happens to the color, I find this to be an important step.

Phylliss also received a written master plan with specific item numbers from catalogs, like westelm.com, for her breakfast table, chairs and rolling storage cabinet, which she loved and could purchase immediately. She had resources for shops she could visit for specific items or just browse for accessories that pleased her.



DIY DECORATING



BEFORE: (above) *The Tiffany-style chandelier definitely lacked the contemporary “snap” Phylliss was after.*

AFTER: (left) *Paint, a new light fixture and furniture from westelm.com transform the breakfast room into a showcase for Phylliss’ collection of colorful glassware from Eclectic Home.*



Soon after, floor plans arrived with specific sizes to facilitate shopping for furniture. “As the furniture was delivered, I could see that it was the beginning of something beautiful,” she says.

TIME TO SHOP

We set a date for shopping together. At Urban Leather, Phylliss had discovered an artist, Alonso Bedolla, whose 3-D paintings she loved. We bought one on the spot for the home office and commissioned a long, 25-by-65-inch horizontal piece to go over the dining room mantel. A mica fixture from Restoration Hardware replaced the formal, traditional chandelier.

She fell in love with some pricey, black Barbara Barry “Script” dining chairs in a magazine photo. After recovering from sticker shock, I assured her that Sammie Cockrell could paint her existing Chippendale chairs black, and we could use contemporary Barbados leather chairs from Jaya as the host and hostess chairs, plus buy a black dining table from Restoration Hardware — for a fraction of the cost of two Barbara Barry chairs.

TIP: If you don’t like the finish on your chairs, consider painting them.

A dramatic palm from China Silks, a seagrass rug from homedecorators.com and an oversized “Alkov” basket from Ikea, filled with star fruit from Crate & Barrel, finished the dining room.

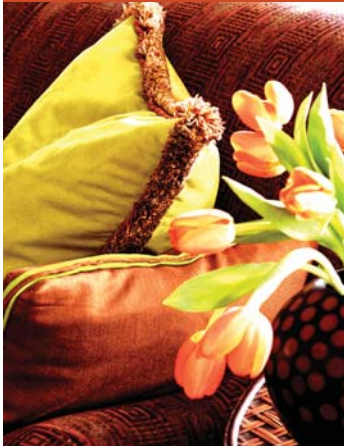
“Painting the chairs was one of my favorite ideas,” Phylliss explains. “By painting the old chairs, we created something beautiful at considerably less cost, and I loved the idea of using what I already had to create the new look I was after.”



BEFORE: (above) *With the empty living room’s pale grey walls and pink granite fireplace surround, Phylliss was “stuck.”*

AFTER: *By following an exact floor plan and shopping with Phylliss, we created a colorful, comfortable living room that reflects her personality and interests.*

TRADE | secrets



- Hire a professional to create a floor plan before shopping. With professional space planning, you can be confident that the furniture and rugs you buy will fit and look great.
- Paint consistently gives more “bang for the buck” than any other change you can make.
- Think outside the box. Perfectly good dining chairs can be painted for pennies on the replacement dollar.
- Sometimes the most effective strategy is not to buy more furniture and accessories for your home, but to rethink the pieces that are already paid for.

In the living room, we found a closeout contemporary buffet at Z Gallerie to use as a TV cabinet, bought a print transfer painting for the mantel and included a \$50 black wood candlestick that I asked Alcon Lightcraft to make into a custom lamp.

TIP: You can turn just about anything into a custom lamp if you “think outside the box.”

We ordered a sofa from Crate & Barrel (ordering extra “Jigsaw Spice” fabric for chair pillows), a tall ceramic vase for the mantel and Rio chairs from Storehouse. We also purchased extra chair fabric to make color-complementary throw pillows for the sofa.

TIP: It is a great idea to order extra fabric from the manufacturer to visually pull fabrics around the room and tie store-bought furniture together in a “custom” way.

At Crate & Barrel, we found a pair of “Abstract II” framed paper pieces — one to hang over the buffet and one to lean on top of the breakfast room’s grid shelving.

On the floor, a contemporary “Agrippa” wool rug purchased through Crate & Barrel’s online outlet store unified the living room’s cozy seating arrangement. Phylliss found glassware for the nearby breakfast room’s rolling storage cabinet, as well as a pair of leather and wood stools for the living room, from Eclectic Home. We found a very affordable “Taylor” leather ottoman from Cost Plus World Market to use as the coffee table and a wicker side table and round, wooden side table at Pier 1 Imports. A bronze floor lamp from M&M Lighting illuminates the room.

FINAL TOUCHES

Because Phylliss loved the acid green in the mantel’s large artwork, my intern, Judy Graeper, and I selected acid-green microfiber faux suede and trims from Interior Fabrics and had custom throw pillows made for the sofa and chairs. My workroom added the same green as a double welt to the smaller sofa pillows that match the Rio chairs. A tropical palm from China Silks softens the angular corner and is a practical choice for this busy mom.

“Friends who have seen the house consistently comment on its beauty and often remark how much it reflects ‘me,’” Phylliss says, “which is exactly what I wanted. It now feels like home.”

Joetta Moulden offers home makeovers using your own home furnishings to create the home you’ve always dreamed of. Joetta believes your pieces that have been collected through the years are a reflection of your personality and can be artfully arranged.

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