

Redo A Room With Ease

By Kate Ward



Before



After



Janet Shepherd

JOHN REILLY PHOTOGRAPHY

Accessories, paint and textured pieces transform this living room from okay to “Oh, wow!”

For interior designer Janet Shepherd, change is good. Though there's certainly no place like home, Janet, who owns Just Re-Arrange It Interiors, knows that a balanced and eye-

catching house is a big step to creating an even more comfortable living space. She understands how a few simple changes can reinvent a room to make it reflect both class and comfort, and shows us how she did just that to a house in suburban Hazel Crest.

How long does the typical transformation take? The transformation could easily be done within a month's period of time, although some are complete within hours.

How do you reinvent a space? What are the key elements? The largest, encompassing element of a room is paint, which is all contingent upon the other elements in the room. You also have to look at carpeting and flooring. That's the biggest element. Then you examine the fabrics on the existing furniture.

What's usually the missing component? The biggest key item people lack is accessories. They don't know about artwork; they don't know how to hang it; they don't know how to put elements together. Accessories make or break a room, without a doubt. It's like taking two women in a black suit. A scarf, your jewelry, all of it makes or breaks the outfit. It's exactly how we dress and exactly how we make a room.

What about mirrors? First of all, I always tell my client, make sure when you hang a mirror you're aware of what it's going to reflect. If it's going to reflect your stairs, why do you want to look in that mirror every time to see your stairs? But if it's going to reflect, say, plants, foliage, artwork, or something that's pretty and interesting, that's good.

Tell us about furniture placement. You always have to create a conversation area. You need traffic patterns in between furniture and you need to create balance. Pairs balance everything: pairs of chairs, pairs of lamps. So if you have one chair, the room is off, and if you have one lamp, the room is off.

Where should a bed be positioned in the bedroom? A lot of times people put their bed in the wrong place, and that's where feng shui applies in a certain way when you walk into a bedroom. When you enter the room, the main focal point wall is where the bed should be.

What about mixing textures? Textures are great. They really bring warmth to a room. It depends on the theme of the room. If you have a den, and you want something more masculine, you can use those kinds of elements that draw interest to the room.

And window treatments? You have to take into effect the other elements in the room. You can dress them up and dress them down, depending on how contemporary the room is. I tend to do bamboo blinds. They're great in family rooms or in libraries that have more masculine elements. My den, for example, has bamboo blinds and it adds an amazing amount of texture.

How do you get people to trust their decorator? They have to have faith in their decorator that you know what you're doing. If they trust you, and loosen up their reins, they get something they would've never thought of.

Where are your favorite places for great finds? The Merchandise Mart. You can't go wrong because it's the best of the best of designers you can find. And I love to go to Asian House for antiques. That's the first place I go. If there are places to look that have different things, go and do it, because I don't like everyone's house to look the same. Have it be a little interesting. ■

A Room To Remember

To infuse some spark to this living room above, Janet Shepherd added color and introduced bold accessories for a *voilà!* transformation. Here's how:

Problem: Too monochromatic. The white walls and white carpets made the white sofas appear pale pink. **Problem solved:** Paint the walls a light brown color, giving the room a more diverse feel.

Problem: Poor accessorizing. The small mirror appeared awkward against a large sofa, and reflected nothing of significance. **Problem solved:** Add a touch of culture with two pieces of artwork that balance the size of the sofa.

Problem: Drab pillows that blended into the sofas. **Problem solved:** Replace lighter pillows with darker shades, mixing up colors and

textures to create more depth and contrast.

Problem: Awkward lampshade size. **Problem solved:** Replace small shade with a larger, more textured shade, balancing out the base.

Problem: Too much empty space. **Problem solved:** Add brown silk ottomans that emphasize the color pattern of the room, making it more eye-catching.

Problem: An unbalanced room. **Problem solved:** Give everything a twin. Have two paintings, two ottomans, two lamps and two sofas to maintain a balance. ■