

DECORATION

the ultimate in luxurious living ideas

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Sculptor

Anachar Basbous

Eclectic Elegance

Hattan in the Lakes

Hotel Eleven

Modern mountain resort

dream
chalet

Harmony with mother nature

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technical tips

Small Wonders

The art of quick fixes



Marie-Noëlle Swiderski, a design professional since 1993, set up the Blanchard Design House in Dubai in September 2006. Her aim "to comfort her soul with beauty".



In this market where new is perceived as better, it is hard to believe there are very few people who seek to make the most of what they have or to improve it with a few key initiatives. Here are a few clever tricks one can apply that will transform a space.

Lighting. I will never say it enough: light quality and quantity is what makes a room. The key to lighting is to layer wherever possible. Ignoring the over-

bearing high level lights that come with the property, a combination of task and ambient lighting will create areas of interest. For task lighting, table lamps or tall standard lamps with sufficient wattage (minimum 60), can be installed at side table height near seating for reading, writing or working. Interesting, quite sculptural lamps can also feature at console height, in a corridor, against a wall or by a sofa. Simple pot lights or up-lighters that can be individually plugged

into a standard 13 amp socket, cleverly hidden behind a sofa or a chest of drawers, on top of a dresser or in a niche, so that the source of light is invisible but the effect a visible yet subtle scalloping, will sweep over the wall finish, the detailing of a cornice or a feature.

Colour. It might seem obvious, but a rather easy path into renewing the energy and character of a room is colour. Painting all or some of the walls can be

a straightforward, cheap and relatively moderately labour-intensive solution for impact. One step further is wallpaper, which can be a slightly more pricey proposition as the material can be expensive and it is wiser to incur an installation charge by hiring a professional – and I do mean ‘professional’. Wallpapers on offer these days range from everything the traditional definition of the word entails to all sorts of revolutionary interpretations, involving crystals, leather, metal, fabric, to name but a few. Colour can be injected into a room, if the idea of any sort of DIY rebukes, by the simple means of cushions, throws, rugs, pots, accessories of course. Deciding on a scheme of no more than 2 colours, 3 if they are all of a similar palette or if one of them is a neutral value (black, anthracite, cream or white), is advisable and much more impactful than Harlequin’s polychrome! Unless all the furnishings are white or black, chances are the interior will never feel quite restful or welcoming.

Texture. Another argument in favour of repainting or wallpapering is the possibility to introduce texture in an otherwise flat room. If the floor is, as is often the case here, a rather polished tile or stone and the walls flat emulsion paint, the eye captures it all on the same level; there is nothing to create interest. Installing an embossed or crystallised wallpaper, a rough plaster paint effect, will allow both polished floor and textured walls to come alive, offsetting each other.

Detail. That is the essence of any good design: the finishing touches. Changing the knobs on a piece of furniture, or the doors themselves, for example. Ironmongery defines the style of a piece and can bring it from dating heirloom to classic reinvented. It can mean also updating the pole, finials and tiebacks that hold curtains rather than the curtains themselves. It can mean changing the rhythm of displayed items: acquiring another 2 of the same pot/candlestick/dish/frame so that there is a triptych of objects loved. This will give the room a feeling of balance and abundance. The trick is to never leave a décor to be static – anything and everything can be changed, even slightly.



“I strongly believe that it is smart to do so much and to accept that, in some cases, it is best to call on a specialist.”