

Top 10 Secrets to Successful Interior Design

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The interior design profession has captivated consumers for decades now, but with the constant barrage of design magazines and television shows on this subject, combined with the endless resources available on the Internet, you may be more confused than enlightened. How do you know exactly what you're doing without the help of a professional? Interior designer Shane Inman explains his secrets to creating a WOW factor, capitalizing on return-on-investment, or just adding low-budget, instant drama into any interior space.

Walls – Add tile from floor to ceiling to any focal wall to really make a statement. In a bathroom, take floor tile right up the sink wall to the ceiling and watch your bathroom be transformed from ordinary to extraordinary.

Flooring – Lay wood and tile flooring on the diagonal to make any space seem twice as large. Diagonal lines take the focus off a room's square footage by highlighting savvy design decisions.

Lighting – This is the most important element of design. Take a dark kitchen with small windows or no windows at all and install under-cabinet and in-cabinet lighting to emphasize countertops and open shelves. Place lights close to walls and get a scalloping effect on the wall, or place lighting away from walls and get a glowing effect.

Cabinetry – If your budget is tight, opt for inexpensive cabinets and spend your hard-earned dollars on a stone countertop. When guests or potential home buyers spot an expensive stone surface, they will automatically assume that the same great taste used on the countertop was carried through to the cabinets as well.

Furniture – When reviewing your furniture budget, keep in mind that built-ins such as banquettes, shelving and cabinetry cost just as much as freestanding options. The only difference is that your built-ins are filled with character, come with your house, increase resale value, and are a very wise return on your investment.

Paint – Painting a room is the most cost-effective and easiest element of design in transforming any room. Paint everything and anything that resembles dated terracotta brick or yellow oak using fresh colors – it will increase your resale value immediately. Paint walls a darker hue to add a level of sophistication, paint ceilings anything other than white to make a room feel larger, and paint a room's focal wall an accent color to achieve a professional designer look.

Moldings – Apply decorative moldings onto cabinet doors, walls and interior doors to add visual interest to any room. Add instant character to your home by adding crown molding to walls and upper cabinets. Molding can be expensive, however, so if you are on a tight budget, use MDF material instead of wood.

Storage – This has been statistically proven to be the most demanded item on the home buyer's shopping list. Built-in drawers under the bed, hidden storage under the toe-kicks of kitchen cabinets, adjustable shelving in pantries, and the most prized possession of all – a perfectly organized master bedroom closet – are all guaranteed to calm household chaos.

Helpful Hints to Save Money –

- Have the scraps from new wall-to-wall carpet professionally bound and placed as entrance rugs.
- When shopping for tile, order in-stock tile versus special-order tile to save on shipping and freight charges.
- If your budget isn't large enough to warrant radiant flooring, try using heating mats that are placed under tile at dedicated areas like in front of a vanity and toilet.
- Purchase porcelain tile that is computer generated to look like natural stone and total up a significant savings.
- When determining what metal finish to carry throughout your project, keep in mind that chrome is still a timeless, cost-effective solution, whereas specialty finishes such as brushed nickel, oil-rubbed bronze and brushed brass can cost much more.
- In the bedroom, try a custom-made, padded headboard with two bedside tables from a second-hand shop rather than a full furniture set. The more unique the pieces are, the more custom your space becomes.

A Word To The Wise – It's important to refrain from skimping on anything today that could cause you problems and even more money later!

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