



After



Before

One Day Decorating

Minimal money. Minimal time. Using items you already own, change the look of your home in less than 24 hours.

By Stephanie Arasim Portnoy

There's a reason why people love home makeover shows: the big reveal. A project unfolds over the course of 30 minutes instead of months, any blood, sweat and tears involved in the renovation aren't yours, and your reward for sitting through it all is when

Photos: Courtesy of Use What You Have, Inc.

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AFTER THE EASY FIXES ARE ACCOMPLISHED, interior refiners leave the home and draw up a detailed *design plan* for the client to execute over time, *which* includes suggestions on painting, lighting, *window treatments*, flooring and accessorizing *without clutter.*

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everything comes together in a moment of divine design. Believe it or not, you don't need to go on television to experience the big reveal in your own life -- with the help of an interior refiner, you can change the look of your home in less than a day and in most cases for less than \$500.

Interior refining or Use What You Have® decorating began 26 years ago with a former interior designer named Lauri Ward, who is considered to be the pioneer of the concept. When working with high-end clients in Manhattan, Ward often found that they wanted to use the furniture or accessories they already had, not only because they liked them but also to save money. Intrigued by this trend, Ward developed the concept of Use What You Have decorating and founded the Interior Refiners Network®, a listing of providers who have been trained and certified in Ward's decorating techniques.

Sandra Cook, owner of Home Stylist in Cherry Hill, NJ, is a certified interior refiner who provides Use What You Have decorating and home staging services throughout the South Jersey area. Every project begins with a consultation, where she finds out how her clients are currently using their space and how they want to be able to use it in the future. Any instant solutions that can be made to the room are put in place, like moving furniture, refining accessories or re-hanging artwork.

"I don't just make changes, [but] I tell them why we are making



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the changes," says Cook. "Does [their dissatisfaction with the room] have to do with poor furniture placement? Is it because the room lacks a cohesive look? Is it because of lighting? It could be a variety of different things that make them feel uncomfortable."

After the easy fixes are accomplished, interior refiners leave the home and draw up a detailed design plan for the client to execute over time, which includes suggestions on painting, lighting, window treatments, flooring and accessorizing without clutter.

Patty Kendall, an interior refiner and owner of Creative Décor in Hatfield, PA, follows a similar plan of action when working with her clients. "You always go out with the intention of making whatever changes we can make for the client while we're there," says Kendall. "[But] part of our visit always includes a design plan because ... there might be recommendations of things you can do when the client's time and budget allows." Kendall also offers resources in her design plans on how to find everything from accessories to furniture at the best prices available.


Carol Bass, owner of Rooms Retouched in Cherry Hill, NJ and Nashville, TN, is a proponent of a similar decorating technique called One Day Decorating, a concept she teaches to design professionals throughout the tri-state area. Similarly to interior refiners, Bass consults with her clients, takes pictures of the room and finds out what the homeowner likes and doesn't like about a space. Then she looks around the house for the components that she'll need for the redesign: artwork, greenery, furniture, accessories and lighting.

After developing a design plan and sending the homeowner away for the day, Bass "shops" the house, pulling in the items she finds in other rooms. In what will be the new space, Bass rearranges existing furniture and artwork, reworks the room's accessories, lighting and bookcases, and creates tablescapes on all the tables, adding floral arrangements and candles where needed. When the homeowner returns, typically in about four hours, they are treated to the big reveal of a brand new space.

"[A one-day decorator's] job is to show you the room's potential," says Bass. "Even though I may bring a lamp in from

your bedroom, and we know that the lamp goes back to the bedroom [after the big reveal], it's one thing for me to say, 'Helen, you need a lamp on that table.' It's another thing for me to show you the light."

One advantage to this type of decorating is that the process educates homeowners on some very specific design rules that they can carry through the rest of the home. Ward and other redesigners say that it offers solutions for common decorating problems that homeowners face: rooms that lack a cohesive look, poor furniture placement, uncomfortable conversation areas, improper placement of artwork, ineffective use of accessories and incorrect use of lighting.

Bass likens the "before" rooms of her clients to having a beautiful navy blue suit, but not having the right jewelry to go along with it. "What I do is add jewelry to the room," says Bass. By showing homeowners how to use what they have, "we are there to make the room function and give it as much beauty as the room allows." 

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