



ACCESSORIZE

by Victoria Flores

There's a phenomenon that I have both witnessed and experienced for the past several years. It happens as the cicadas whir in September, as Kansas temperatures in the fall bounce daily between 60 and 90 degrees. As the squirrels dart about gathering food for the long winter to come, women across the country begin to feel a powerful and inexplicable urge — the urge to accessorize.

Home accessories are like jewelry for your house. A new belt, necklace, scarf, handbag or shoes can quickly update an outfit that had long ago been pushed to the far end of the closet. Likewise, accent fabrics, lamps, florals, a well-chosen piece of art and personal embellishments can update a room when there is no time or budget for a complete makeover.

One of the best ways to assess the areas of a room that require attention is to take photographs. Pictures force us to change our perspectives; we must look at the room from a more distanced, more objective point of view. Little flaws that might slip by us on a day-to-day basis are abundantly clear through the unbiased eye of the camera.

Next, clear away all the things you find you no longer need. An empty space is infinitely preferable to a clutter of objects void of utility or personality. Avoid contracting what we professionals often refer

to as "Little Stuff Disease." Filling space is a far cry from functionality.

New artwork is one of the home accessories that can make the most dramatic change to a room. The selection of a piece that you want to live with must be personal. While the old adage of matching artwork to your sofa does have some merit in the fact that you don't want the colors or style of either to do battle, the one true requirement is the art makes your living space more pleasant.

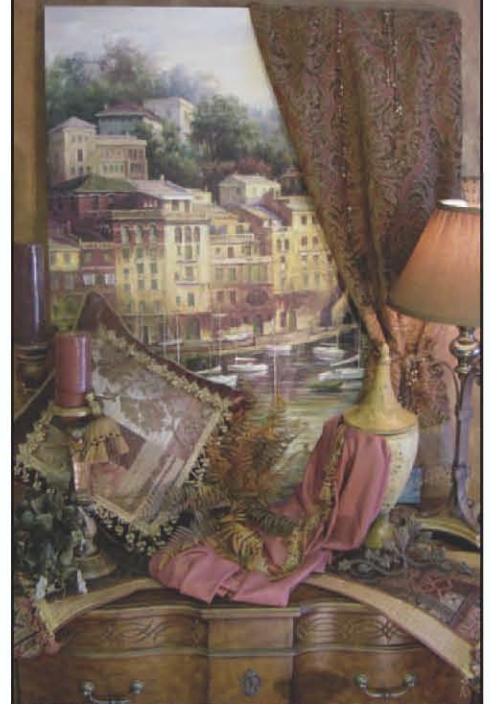
Walls can be adorned with framed art, wrapped canvases, tapestries, metal art, wreaths, sculptures, and even family pictures. Take into account that size, scale and placement must all balance with the other elements in the room. Remember that the contrast of texture emphasizes the uniqueness of each individual piece.

Area rugs, scatter pillows, table runners and quilted throws can wrap a space in rich textures and create a warm, comfortable environment anyone would be happy to call home. In the same way, elements of lighting can both help to set the mood and add sparkle to your personal space. From candlelight to reading lamps, your light sources are as important to your home as a perfect pair of shoes is to a new dress.

Faux foliage is very much like costume jewelry. Simulated trees, plants and flowers add fun splashes of color and texture to a

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room and, unlike the real thing, don't require much care. Don't be afraid to mix the faux and the fresh. A beautiful arrangement is unquestionably another form of art.

However you decide to use accessories to rejuvenate a room, remember it's your space and your own sense of beauty that needs to be satisfied. In just the same way that our wardrobes display a little of our own personal styles, our homes should ultimately be a reflection of who we are and what we love. ■

Victoria Flores, allied member of A.S.I.D., is a designer for The Studio at Accent Interiors.