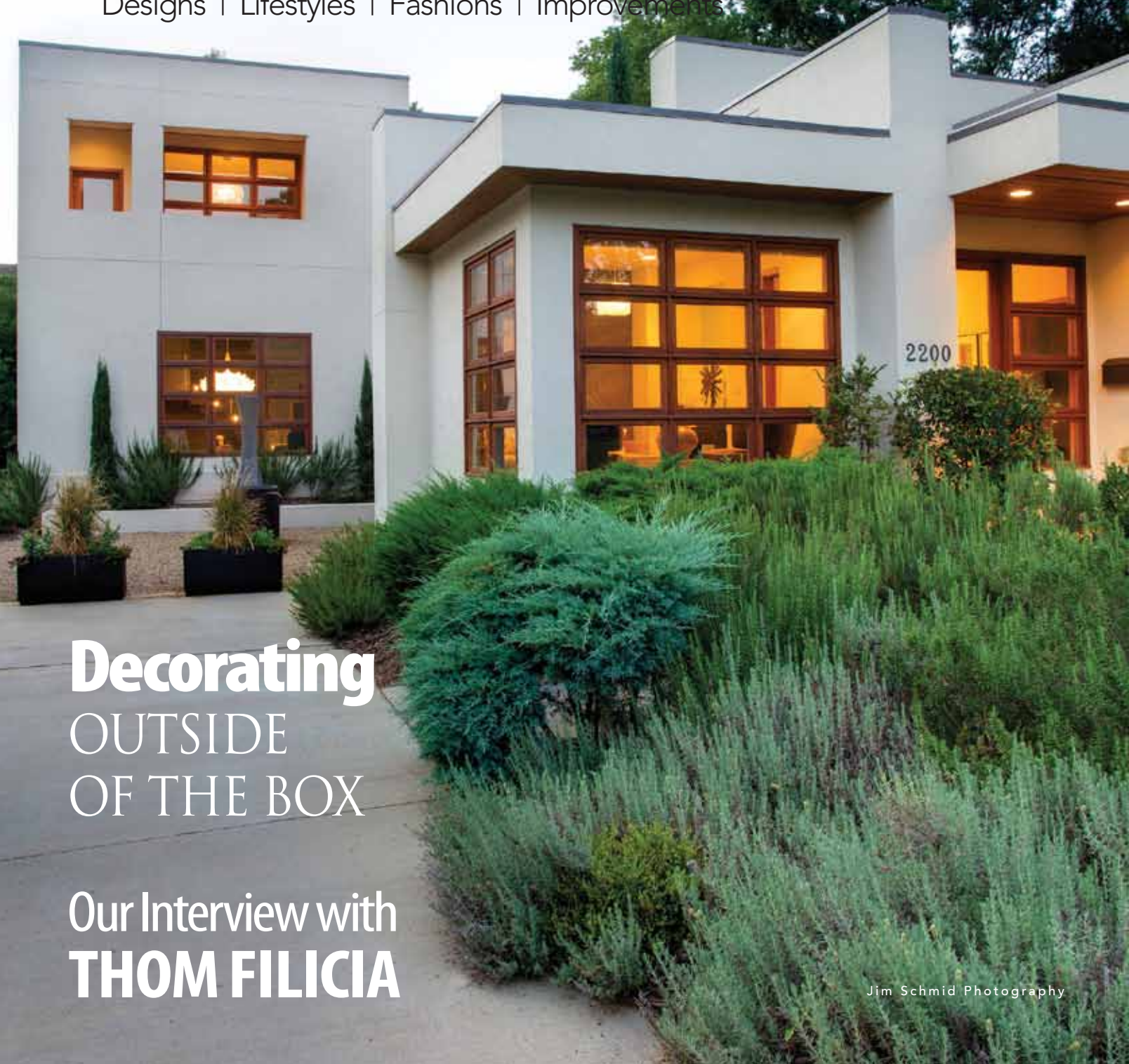


CHARLOTTE URBAN

HOME

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2011

Designs | Lifestyles | Fashions | Improvements



Decorating
OUTSIDE
OF THE BOX

Our Interview with
THOM FILICIA

Jim Schmid Photography



INSTANT
STYLEMAKERS:

10
Easy
UPDATES

by Nancy Atkinson

WHETHER IT'S THE FIRST HINT OF a crisp fall breeze that inspires you or the September issue of *Vogue*, when the seasons change we're all ready to give our wardrobes and our habitats a boost.

Decorators call it a "refresh" or a "fluff," when clients call them back after the big-budget work is done to tweak what they have and make it look and feel new again. The changes don't have to be expensive. They could be as simple as wallpapering a ceiling or painting a wall. Whether done with your decorator or on your own, a refresh is just enough to make you fall in love with the room again.

A few common elements define a successful refresh, involving color, light, furnishings, fabric and paint. We've compiled some industry secrets for successful room updates and asked our Charlotte designers for their advice.

1 EDIT

It's the same whether you're reorganizing your closet or refreshing your rooms, you should start by creating a clean slate. Focusing on one room at a time, go through the items in your rooms and ask yourself two questions: Do I need it? Do I love it? If you don't answer yes to either question, out it goes.

Exchange those items for something in a richer, warmer texture better suited for the fall and winter months ahead. Consider adding more lamps to increase the amount of light in the rooms as the days get shorter.

"It is always easier to envision a room complete when there is a clean slate," says Eric Ennis, designer at The Furniture Connector in Charlotte. "Having a cluttered space creates a cluttered vision and will make it hard for you to achieve your design goals."



Lucy and Company



Lucy and Company

2 GET PERSONAL

Think about what has changed in your life since you last decorated. Are there new passions or hobbies that interest you? New colors that inspire you? Your home should be a reflection of your life, so take this opportunity to celebrate the new things you love. If you collect crepe-paper party hats from the 30s and 40s, or vintage cowboy hats, hang them on the wall. Adding new photos, artwork, colors or motifs will make your rooms richer and more interesting through your unique personality and style.

"Having pieces in your home that are a part of who you are will give your home a more intimate and personalized feel," says Ennis. "This can be as simple as taking your grandmother's old marble lamp and giving it a new shade."

3 TWEAK THE CLASSICS

Little details can make the biggest change. One of the quickest, simplest ways to transform the look of your rooms is by changing the hardware on your existing furniture. Add a modern, squared-off handle on a traditional chest of drawers. Or switch to clean Lucite pulls on a Victorian dresser to take your furniture from stuffy to stylish.

If the old mahogany furniture you inherited from your grandmother is starting to feel frumpy, give it a quick update by having it professionally stripped and bleached. Or paint it with glossy enamel paint in a bright, bold color that stands out from the room and makes a statement.

Beth Keim, artist, designer and owner of Lucy and Company, has a passion for transforming furniture with paint. "I love the look of an unpredictable color, something in the same tone but slightly off," she says. "Painting an old piece a random color in the room gives it a modern twist and new life. A high gloss lacquer adds that bit of shine that calls your attention to interesting curves and lines. Consider that gaudy flea-market find in a fun pop of color with a new fabric and you've instantly added a conversation piece that is one-of-a-kind."



House Beautiful Blue - Photo by Eric Piasecki



Manuel Canovas



Hickory Chair

4 REPURPOSE THE FURNITURE

Sometimes an update can be as simple as moving your furniture into another room or using it for a different purpose in its current location. In the bedroom, use your chest of drawers as a bedside table to create a convenient surface for lamps and stacks of books. Move a sofa and chairs into the kitchen. Or place a dining room sideboard in a hallway, where it is out of context and seems younger-looking. When furniture stays static for too long it can become stale. Look at your pieces with fresh eyes to open the door for unexpected possibilities.

"I recently took a vintage loveseat, had it recovered in more than one fabric and pulled it into a bay window surrounding an oval dining table," says Keim. "It instantly added visual interest to that somewhat plain bay window and table. Try that same idea at the foot of your bed or place an odd, yet eye-catching chair in the foyer."



Hickory Chair



Thibaut



Lucy & Company



Lucy & Company



Lucy & Company



Bedside Manor



Lucy & Company



Lucy & Company



Manuel Canovas

5 MAKE ORGANIZATION BEAUTIFUL

We accumulate tons of stuff each year. We can't get rid of it all, but we can find ways to organize our things more beautifully. The items that organize your life don't have to be ordinary. From using big, woven baskets to hold magazines or toys in a family room or playroom, glass trays for your jewelry, or a kitchen rail above a stove to keep cooking utensils handy, look for ways to make the functional more beautiful.

"Storage containers can be just about anything," says Keim. "I have used new label-free gallon paint cans and attached them to a bathroom wall with rolled up towels. Another idea is to collect all your picture frames, paint them in the same high gloss color and re-group your photos on one wall rather than having numerous table top dust collectors. The key is to enlarge your photos to show the detail. All the unused photos can now be in the coffee table book you are more likely to pick up and look at."

6 CREATE A NEW FOCAL POINT

It might be the biggest piece in the room, the most expensive, an inherited family heirloom, or something that you truly love. Whatever it is, it's staying. You might as well make this signature piece the focus of your room. Sometimes you can totally change the room by giving a different piece the spotlight and letting that dictate what happens next.

"It is vital that every room has some sort of focal point," states Ennis. "For those of us who do not have the traditional fireplace as the focal point, all hope is not lost. Focal points can be created by using graphic wallpaper on one main wall in your space or hanging a very large painting on a center wall."

7 GO BIG ON THE SMALL STUFF

Since you're not actually redecorating, you can splurge on smaller items that add luxury to a room, like fantastic pillows, a rug with wow factor or an unexpected accessory.

Consider having custom-made reversible pillows with a spring and summer fabric on one side and something with a rich texture, say velvet, on the other, for the cooler months.

Sandy Fulginiti, a designer and one of the "Material Girls" at Front Door Fabrics in Charlotte, says the impact of fresh pillows is endless. "Pillows can quickly transform a room for any gathering or simply for a seasonal update," says Fulginiti. She recommends adding a vintage brooch, oversized monogram or a velvet ribbon to your pillows.

"Your pillows don't have to match. Vary the size and shapes to increase interest," she says. "And don't be afraid to go bold with unexpected color, pattern and texture combinations. Just have fun and reflect your personality – the sky is the limit!"

For even greater impact, consider bringing a staircase to life with something wonderful and unexpected. Zebra stripes are one of nature's best patterns. Try a zebra, leopard or other eye-catching carpet running up the stair in the entryway to add contrast and drama in a neutral setting.

Mirrors are another glamorous way to update your rooms and expand your space, catching the light and acting like interior windows. Starburst mirrors have been increasing in popularity in recent years and are a modern way to add style and elegance to any room.

"Back your bookcases with mirrors or add an antique mirror with a beveled edge to your tabletop," says Keim. "I have added mirrors to door fronts, with glass knobs. Any raised panel door can have an inset mirror inserted for an entirely new look. And don't forget to add random mirrors to your photo wall grouping in various sizes and styles."

8 PUT YOUR OWN TWIST ON TRADITION

Contrasts make a room more exciting. Throw an antique Persian rug into a contemporary room, or a modern graphic rug in a traditional setting to lay an interesting foundation for any room.

Eric Ennis says a play on tradition is one of his favorite designer tricks of the trade. "This can be achieved with very little effort," he says. "One of my best tips is to play on color. Take the classic white bookcase for example. When you paint it in a modern color such as a blue/gray, it has a much more modern feel, even if you keep the contents very traditional."

9 FRAME YOUR FAMILY TREE

Looking for a different way to display your family photos? You can reinvent your family photos by popping them out of their existing frames and re-framing them in unifying frames of all one color. Consider converting the photos to black and white and enlarging them, then putting them all in red frames or your favorite color to create a family gallery on one wall.

10 PAINT WITH ABANDON

Sometimes a shot of color is all you need to give a room new life. Try painting one room (make it one you don't go into every day like your dining room) in a strong clear, color in high-gloss enamel. You can also paint the back of a bookshelf, keeping in mind that it's dark back there, a strong color with some punch will look better. Lining the back of a bookcase or shelves with wallpaper is another detail change that can make a big difference. You can also wallpaper the ceiling, just be careful to avoid a pattern that's directional, like toile. Try a graphic pattern with a small repeat.

"Keep in mind your trim and door color in rooms with a strong color," says Keim. "Consistent trim color throughout the house does not have to be the rule. If you're wallpapering in a busy pattern in the dining room, for instance, it's a good idea to pick a trim and ceiling color that blends with the wallpaper or highly contrasts it." ❖

Getting the details right

One gallon of paint covers approximately 400 square feet of wall.

Place light switches 36 inches above the floor and 1½ to 2 inches to the side of the door trim.

A kitchen island should be taller than the countertops (38 inches high) to be comfortable for prep.

The bottom of a dining-room chandelier should hang 36" above the table.

Hang curtains as high as possible to give the room height. Let them break 1½ inches on the floor.

RESOURCES

Bedside Manor	www.bedsidemanor.com	704-442-4006
Classic Attic	www.classicattic.biz	704-521-3750
City Supply	www.citysupplycharlotte.com	704-347-2489
Distinctive Fabrics	www.distinctivefabricsandfurniture.com	704-895-6275
French Heritage	www.frenchheritage.com	704-529-1288
Front Door Fabrics	www.frontdoorfabrics.com	704-844-6330
Furniture Connector	www.thefurnitureconnector.com	704-523-3163
High Cotton Home	704-335-1220

Inno	www.innofurniture.com	704-995-6120
Isabella	www.isabellastyle.com	704-377-4919
Lucy and Co	www.lucyandcompany.com	704-342-6655
Metro	www.metroformodern.com	704-375-4563
Red Sky Gallery	www.redskygallery.com	704-377-6400
Sofa Shack	www.sofa-shack.com	704-525-7792
Stark Carpet	www.starkcarpet.com	704-588-8842
Unique Lighting	www.uniqueshowplace.com	704-553-1341