

# How to Create a Luxury DIY Design Project

By Ann McDonald



*The Moraga dining room, featured on ivillage, includes a custom dining table, vintage re-purposed chairs, menswear upholstered seats, new lighting, smooth textured walls and custom colored paint, designed by Ann McDonald, Couture Chateau [www.couturechateau.com](http://www.couturechateau.com)*

*Photo Peter Medilek, Inc. [www.petermedilek.com](http://www.petermedilek.com)*

When setting out to complete a transitional suburban re-design for two stylish Moraga homeowners, my design team took some color risk so the space would feel fresh. We said goodbye to beige, hello to gray.

The project, which was featured on ivillage's "16 Beautiful Fall Décor Trends 2012," encompassed several rooms. For the dining room, a neutral envelope with saturated brown walls was pulled together with a punch of gray. The 5 Stage Custom Gray Lacquer on the vintage repurposed dining chairs with blue undertones and menswear stripe upholstery shared base hues with the rug border, custom wall color and table finish so the eye read them compatibly. Three ceiling spots were designed to center on the custom table and art lighting highlighted a collection on the walls.

In conjunction with the dining room, we also tackled a lack-luster entry hall by reworking the wall texture and molding and building a custom console table from historic columns. In the master bedroom, custom architectural details, additional paint treatments, custom furniture and bedding were added to maintain the chic aesthetic upstairs.

The luxurious space absolutely sings at night.

As a designer, I believe two things: First, luxury lives in all of us. Second, everyone is capable of designing their own home beautifully; sometimes we just need encouragement.

Every project has that moment when you want to throw in the towel and retire your staple gun, but the following steps will help you walk through your own Lamorinda Luxury Project, do-it-yourself (DIY) style.

### **The first step? Set clear goals.**

I believe luxury must answer these three questions: What do you care about? What do you value? What is your intent? For the Moraga project, the client wanted a beautiful space without too much distraction. What are your goals for the space at hand? At the beginning of any project, start with a blank slate. Remove the finish on a chair you want to repaint, clear the room, clean the space. Write down the specific things you need to do to create that blank slate. Much like applying makeup, you need to clean your face before applying more. Even if you intend to use your existing pieces, this process enables you to be precise about your intent. Without it, a design project will never be luxury. It simply won't.

### **Step two: Make good choices.**

We sourced a vintage dealer for solid wood chairs that could be modified and refinished. With well constructed product, you can change anything.

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