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At Home with Amanda

By Amanda Eck



Hello Lamorinda readers! I am so excited for this opportunity to meet with you on a monthly basis and share my thoughts and insights on all things for the home.

If we were meeting together face-to-face I would welcome you with a warm hug and offer you a cup of tea (or coffee if you prefer) and we would sit and get to know one another better. I love to entertain and as a designer I love helping clients create a space of beauty and warmth for the family and their guests.

And the first place I like to start with is the entry or foyer. It is your guest's first glimpse of your home. It is the space that greets you as you walk in the door after a long day. It is the space your kids come barreling through after a busy day of school. It is the space your dearest friends, closest relatives and even your UPS delivery person sees. I don't know about you, but the rest of my home can be a complete disaster but if my entry is clean and welcoming I feel at ease with whoever comes to my door.

I am going to share my six favorite tips for making your entrance feel welcoming. Or in the words of Oprah, "make your home rise up to meet you."

Tip No. 1: Declutter

If you have small children like I do, the entry becomes the catchall for backpacks, basketballs, discarded shoes and yesterday's mail. Clearing out the clutter sets the stage for a welcoming space.

Tip No. 2: Add a rug

Rugs in the entry are not just for keeping dirt at bay from pets and kiddos, it also help define space. A rug can introduce a splash of color or pattern to your entrance. I love using indoor/outdoor rugs for entries. My go-to rugs for high traffic areas are from Dash & Albert. They make great flat weave rugs that are both reversible and washable. Another tip is to make sure your rug is not so thick that it gets caught on the door every time you open it.

In this entry for one of our clients we took their dark, drab space and lightened it up with a Dash & Albert rug, a lighter wood furniture piece and a new mirror to help reflect the natural light. We displayed a few decorative coastal pieces to reflect the client's love for the ocean.

Tip No. 3: Small Table or Console

Adding a small table, chest or console can help create a "drop zone" for things like keys and mail. It also creates a space for decorative items to be displayed giving your guest a small taste of what's to come in the rest of your home. If space is tight I forgo the table and use a small bench, you can add a pillow or two for a pop of color.

In this client's home their entry immediately opened up to the living and dining room, so we opted to place a rug at the entrance and created a "drop zone" down the hall by the staircase. We used upholstered storage ottomans for their dog's leash and other small items that can be grabbed on the way out the door.

Tip No. 4: Lighting

I love using lamps in the entry for both practical and aesthetic reasons. There is something so inviting about coming home in the evening and being greeted by the warm glow of a lamp. It's also a great way to illuminate what can otherwise be a dark area. If you do not have an electrical outlet in your entry consider adding a ceiling light. I love using a nice chandelier or lantern style light. And make sure your light is installed high enough that guests don't bump their heads or the door bangs it when opening. I use flush mount or semi-flush mount lights for entries with low ceilings.

Tip No. 5: Tray, bowl or basket

Decorative trays or bowls are great for corralling the clutter. Car keys tossed into a bright ceramic bowl versus tossed onto the table make the space feel organized. And who wants to see that pile of junk mail piled up waiting to be read? Instead toss it into a pretty basket to be sorted through later.

Tip No. 6: Fresh Flowers

And finally, never underestimate the power of fresh flowers. Yes it can seem like a bit of an indulgence to have fresh flowers on a weekly basis. But how about an orchid or other flowering plant? You will be greeted with fresh blooms for weeks on end. I love buying the inexpensive orchids from Trader Joe's and popping them into a decorative pot or bowl and adding some Spanish moss around the top. I can get six to eight weeks of blooms before having to replace them.

And there you have it, my top ideas for creating a warm and welcoming entrance. I hope this inspired you to create a little space of beauty in your own home.

Until next time!





As the Owner and Principal Designer of Lamorinda-based Amanda Carol Interiors, Amanda Eck believes your home's interior should be both approachable and well-appointed. She often asserts, "Beauty is a necessity." With a distinct sense of style that mixes contemporary and classic design she fashions spaces that are both elegant and inviting. Her design aesthetic is inspired by anything visual but especially fashion, architecture and art. Visit <http://amandacarolinteriors.com> for more design ideas.

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