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## At Home with Amanda

By Amanda Eck



We accessorized this client's music room, which had floor to ceiling bookshelves that needed to be styled, using a mix of vintage shop pieces, trinkets collected from their travels, and a handful of items purchased from the local HomeGoods to put the right finishing touches. Photo Amanda Eck

look. As a result these items should veer toward a smaller proportion of the budget.

3. Rugs: If you are part of a young family with small children or pets, I suggest purchasing an inexpensive machine-made rug that can be easily replaced. Let's face it, little feet tend to leave trails of their presence behind.

When to splurge:

1. Furniture: Investing in high quality furniture is important. More than anything else in your design, you will hold onto these pieces for years to come. Even if the initial appearance doesn't pass the test of time, with classic lines it's quite easy to change things up. A new wood stain or upholstery renews the appearance.

2. Lighting: Never, ever skimp on lighting. Good lighting can make or break a space. It's easy to think of your lighting as just a functional element. In reality it can be so much more. Like a chronograph on your wrist or a handbag on your arm, it is an opportunity to marry form and function in a way that creates a level of distinction that's hard to match.

3. Window Treatments: Custom window treatments can be costly, but provide details that set your space apart. Even simple linen panels tailored to fit your windows make a huge difference. Off the shelf drapery that is too short or too long draws the wrong kind of attention, like an ill fitted pair of trousers. It's always beneficial to have a seamstress hem your drapes to the appropriate length.

Now, for that that special holiday-related tip, let me share some "coming attractions."

Throughout the summer I receive requests to engage our services. Start dates get pushed back however, due to vacations and the start of school. Before you know it, September is past, it's early October and clients just start getting around to kicking off their projects. Their biggest concern now is ... trying to get the

Can you believe we are already winding down summer, school is almost here, autumn is only a few weeks away, and the holidays are just around the corner?

Wait ... the holidays? I know, I know. It seems too early to start thinking about "tis the season." If you'll hear me out though, before this article ends, I'll share a special holiday planning tip that's only accessible for the next few weeks.

As someone who feels the need to be a good steward of the money my clients entrust in me, I share options for allocating funds that ensure the best design possible. When approaching any project, I start by determining which parts afford a choice, allowing for spending flexibility.

Here are my top three suggestions for where to both save, and splurge, which are applicable regardless of what time of year it is.

Where to save:

1. Accessories: Accessories are important for creating that "finished" look but do not necessarily have to break the bank. Shopping local antique markets, vintage shops or online stores like eBay for unique pieces, results in a more authentic look at a reasonable price.

2. Accent furniture pieces: Smaller furniture pieces like side tables, decorative benches, or storage bins are not used as often and generally act more like highlight pieces. They are easier to replace should the room need to be reconfigured or changes in taste encourage a fresh

install complete before the holidays. Unfortunately, by October, that ship has probably already sailed.

If clients submitted their orders earlier, they'd enjoy the benefits of avoiding the holiday rush. They'll sidestep back-ordered items, which can cause compromises in choices toward potentially more expensive pieces, they avoid "rush-order" requests, which mean higher fees from craftsman and delivery services, and dodge warehouses swelling due to holiday shipping, increasing the chance that a critical piece won't arrive in time. This is truly a case where the early bird gets the worm.

Hopefully both the general and time-sensitive tips I've shared will guide you when you are making upcoming decisions for decorating your home. Until next time dear friends!



This living room is a perfect example of both saving and splurging. The clients have two young children and a puppy. All the upholstered furniture pieces were custom made but the rug was purchased from a local retail store. And yes, a few days after the install, said puppy "piddled" on the rug. Photos Amanda Eck



We used a simple linen fabric custom designed with a contrasting banding.



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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