

At Home with Amanda

Tips on how to save those design dollars – and when to splurge!

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

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 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.

... continued on page D10

