

When does an interior decorator stop being a luxury?

Here are some more of the most frequently asked questions on decorating problems. Hope you find solutions to your decorating puzzles.

Q. — My standard dining table is too big for the space in the dining ell of my new apartment. What can I do about it — and still dine gracefully?

A. — A substantial solution would be a well-made extendable table. Another suggestion is a well-seated Parsons chair, slender enough to be placed against the walls of the dining ell when not in use. Designed to seat four at a table, the two can go together to seat six to eight. Between meals these serve as consoles and have a living room look. The good old folding card table can also come into play. Give it one of those circular folding tops and cover it with a lovely, down-to-the-floor cloth, perhaps to match another pattern in the room, and dinner for six can be quite elegant.

Q. — Is it alright to mix light and dark woods in the same room?

A. — Yes, variety is the spice of any room. You can fearlessly blend fruitwoods with mahogany, maple with walnut, oak with rosewood. Any and all go together, from darkest to palest, because mixed wood tones are easy on the eye.

Don't be afraid to accent the mix with furniture of glass and steel, lacquer finish, or leather covering. What is important is not the mix, but the compatibility of the pieces in scale and design quality, no matter what "period" tags are placed on them.

Q. — My husband insists upon keep-

ing his big, old-fashioned reclining chair in the living room. It's so bulky it takes the room. How can I re-upholster it to slim it down?

A. — Don't even try to re-upholster a chair like that with moveable parts. For a little more money than re-upholstering it, you can get him a new one. Recent-model recliners are even more relaxing than the old ones, and so good-looking and trim, you'll never guess that they were father's favorite chair.

Q. — I know I need a decorator, but I am afraid it would cost too much. How do decorators charge?

A. — If you know you need a decorator, consult one — if possible, one who might give you some consultation first without any charge. Tell the designer what you wish to accomplish in your home. From that, the decorator will indicate to you what it might cost in time of hourly consultation charges, or merely a consultation or finder's fee. As a complete supervisor of every detail, the decorator will find and select items from which you will choose. In many cases, you will see things that only the designer has access to and spend less money per item than if you shopped for it yourself.

You might pay retail price but you will have the expertise of a designer who will steer you in the right direc-

tion. Whatever your arrangement, a decorator's talent is well worth having on your side, and sure to save you from mistakes, time and money that you might incur if you are uncertain about doing it yourself.

Q. — Would it be practical to cover the walls with a chintz that matches the draperies, and if so, how is it done?

A. — It's perfectly practical — provided your paperhanger or you use the appropriate paste. It can be a messy job, however, the hands of an amateur. Chintz tends to stretch when draped, so you must expect some waste in fabric coverage to match. Otherwise, it's similar to wallpapering. Ideally, fabric should be first backed with paper, then applied.

Really fine fabrics are usually stretched on wood flats and attached to the wall.

Q. — Can you suggest some ways of finding storage space where there isn't any?

A. — Immediate advice — steel yourself to throw out or put into commercial storage whatever you don't absolutely need. The obvious storage solution is the wall system that gives you shelf, drawer, and cabinet space. But there's a limit to the number of these you can use, even though they can be utilized in every room.

Make all of your furniture provide as much storage space as possible. All tables, coffee, lamps, bedside, tables should be equipped with shelves, drawers, and cupboard space. Try the unconventional — a wicker hamper as an end table, a decorative leather trunk or campaign chest to hold a lamp. These can store books, linens, china, extra.

Sacrifice a coat closet, fill it with unpainted bookcases and it becomes a pantry for china, glass, hollowware, record player and records. Do away with clutter as much as possible. Use the back of the head of an easel, magazine, mail, cosmetics, kitchen items. Often part of the linen closet, or all can be used for other storage while the linens can be shelved in bathrooms or in trunks.

Q. — I used to have a marvelous view, but now building has gone up next door. What decorating trick can I use to camouflage my ugly new view of a brick wall?

A. — To blur the view and still decorate the window and yet get the daylight through, cover the window with a lovely open weave casement fabric drape, or semi-sheer fabric. Still another idea is to use a type of blind — vertical, horizontal or open weave shade. Shutters are another way to go, you can control the light and move the slats any

way you prefer. California shutters are a beautiful covering for a window, the view beyond becomes secondary.

Or, turn the window into a small garden. Use glass shelves or plexi-glass and decorate them with many, many

plants. If you have sources of daylight from other windows in the room, you might consider boarding the window, cover it and the whole wall it's on with a marvelous wallpaper.

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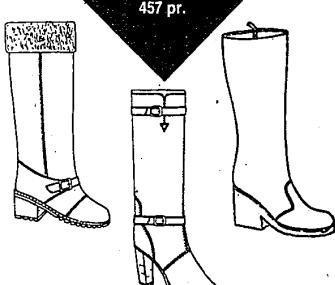
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