

(AP) — Decorating a home costs so much these days. If only a decorator would explain to the do-it-yourselfer where it is safe to cut corners and where it isn't.

"It's very important that the framework of a room be right," says Gilliatt, whose books include "Decorating on the Cheap." By framework, she means walls, floor, ceiling and windows.

"People tend to paint the room white when they don't have much to spend," Gilliatt says, "but terra cot-

One of the more expensive paint jobs these days involves applying a faux finish, such as glazing, trompe l'oeil or ragging. Gilliatt says to get the look without the expense, hang one of the newer faux finish wallcoverings and then apply a coat of semi-gloss polyurethane with roller or brush. This will make it look more like an expensive painted finish and will be easier to clean.

**ANOTHER IDEA** for walls is to use borders to finish off the room. Choose a narrow border for just above the baseboard. Use borders to imitate a dado or chair rail — which adds architectural character. A real dado or chair rail can be added with ready-made molding. Paint walls above the line and apply wallcover-

Saving money by cutting corners on quality is false economy, according to Gilliat, especially where comfort is concerned. She counts mattresses and chairs and carpeting used in high traffic areas among furnishings that will repay you for choosing good quality.

"Put the good carpet where it will get the hardest use — in hallways and foyers," she says, but in a bedroom, where there's much less wear, choose a lesser quality if necessary. Also, shop the sales.

You can also save by choosing a less expensive floor covering such as

When shopping for dining room furniture, you can save money on a table, which is usually covered with a cloth anyway, but reward yourself and your guests with comfortable chairs, says Gilliatt.

With window treatments, remember that draperies should be lined to look good -- an expensive proposition no matter the type of fabric. So if you want to save money, use a less expensive treatment such as matchstick blinds or miniblinds. To lend these basic window coverings some distinction, spray paint a design on

**THOSE WITH** woodworking skills, or who have access to someone with the skills, can frame windows with 2-by-4 lumber and build a window seat for a custom look that's inex-

Some Gilliatt quick tips to make any room look better:

- Place interesting house plants in the room.

- Buy several inexpensive uplights and place them behind the plants and furniture. "This will

- Disguise or minimize threadbare sofas and chairs with a piece of old fabric, such as a shawl, draped across the seat back.

- Paint a floor in a checkerboard pattern using two of your favorite colors already in the room.

- **Paint furniture** you find in second-hand stores bright colors. You can use a mix of colors on the same piece or paint side chairs each a different color.

- Choose a neutral (Gilliat prefers white) and make the entire room different shades of that color.

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