

HAVENS

Create a cozy environment for fall

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Copley News Service

When the weather cools and it's time to bring the outdoors in, it may also be time to take a closer look at our surroundings. We may no longer put up fruits and vegetables for the long winter as our grandparents did, but as inevitably as down comforters and wool blankets begin to come out of storage, we rethink the look of our sanctuaries — our family rooms, kitchens and bedrooms.

It may not be time for a total makeover, but a few well-targeted changes can create a haven that will make the dropping temperatures a perfect excuse for strolling indoors.

• **Bring in the light.** Warmth and comfort don't have to equal heavy wood and darkness. Just because the daylight hours are shorter and the light more diffused doesn't mean you have to live in perpetual twilight. Brighten up your world naturally.

The easiest solution is to add mirrors where they will reflect incoming light. Or paint paneled walls white. Another way is to pull up carpeting and add hardwood floors, which also reflect light.

If you're planning architectural changes, consider skylights, French doors or enlarged windows to flood rooms with natural light.

• **Put on weight.** Heft may not be good for humans, but it's the ultimate in luxury and comfort when it comes to furnishings like throw pillows, sofas and chairs.

This is the time of year to pick up

thick down inserts and create pillows that mix and match with fabrics that incorporate the dominate color of the room. Try mixing striped or checked fabrics with floral or botanical prints for a playful look.

If the springs have finally gone on your sofa, invest in a new one sporting thick rolled arms and overstuffed cushions. Good-quality couches have cushions lined with muslin, hardwood frames, coil-spring seat-cushion construction and legs that are a part of the frame, not screwed in. If this piece is for the family room, choose durable fabrics like cotton and linen blends or tightly woven wool. And avoid light solid colors — they can be lovely, but not for long.

• **Recycle.** If Grandma's drapes are fraying around the edges, but you just can't bear to part with them, pull them down and turn them into pillows, a duvet or a tablecloth. Vintage kitchen linens found at flea markets or yard sales can have a new life in slipcovers, pillows and curtains.

Need a new kitchen table? Hunt around flea markets or estate sales for old floorboards and them converted into a long, embracing place to gather for meals.

Remember the days of scraping and stripping — and virtually asphyxiating yourself — to refinish a tired chair or table found at a junk shop? Don't bother; just paint. A set of worn kitchen chairs can take on new life, for instance, not to mention whimsy, when each is painted a different, glossy color.

• **Learn geometry.** Sometimes the sim-

plest changes create the most eye-pleasing surroundings. All of those tchotchkes — or collectibles — spread aimlessly around the house can be regrouped into charming still lifes. The key? The lines and planes of the objects as well as their color and texture. Create studies in contrast with small groupings or, conversely, develop a scheme of similarly shaped or colored pieces.

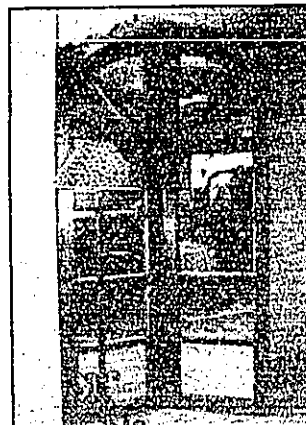
If you collect pitchers, for example, pull them out of the cupboard and create a rhythm of asymmetry, balancing tall graceful glass with short, chunky pottery. Or draw together colored glass pitchers of similar size or style.

Extend your sense of line by picking up patterns in window grids, tiles and cabinetry to create continuity. Or draw guests in with a flow of curves and circles as a motif. An oval mirror hung on a wall behind an oval table surrounded by softly curved chairs is an inviting setting.

• **Go natural.** The leaves may be falling but you can still enjoy the colors of a spring garden. Paint walls — even floors and cabinets — in vibrant hues and accent with dried floral arrangements in hand-thrown pottery or baskets.

If vibrant is too bold for you, temper it by rubbing the newly dry wall with a rag soaked in water. It creates a dappled surface that adds warmth.

Neutral colors remain popular because they allow flexibility. If your white walls are too stark, shift to a creamy white and unify the room with natural linens and other fab-



rics. Unbleached cotton or muslin is a cozy choice for slipcovers and table coverings — and leaves room for spot color in the form of accessories or rugs.

The new neutral is green. It's cool in the summer heat yet restful and embracing as the weather turns chilly. Pick pale, mossy shades for fabric and upholstery. Use deeper, time-worn shades for moldings and woodwork on walls.

• **Have a vision.** To create a sense of harmony and serenity, you need to have a sense of continuity through the rooms in the form of color, texture or pattern. Having a vision, however, doesn't mean producing exact, rigid matches; it means creating an environment in which fabrics, colors, textures and mementos interact.



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