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HOME DECORATING

Spring 2015: Damage, deductibles & design opportunities

By Sharon Bottner

Eleven p.m. Snuggled up and cozy on her sofa, wrapped up in a luxurious cashmere throw, and getting ready to settle in for a good night's sleep, my client heard a sudden, unfamiliar, and explosive crash. Heart throbbing. Pulse racing. Fear escalating.

What could that sound have been? This was not a scene from the latest horror movie. This was reality. Old Man Winter of 2015 doing his job here on the Seacoast of New Hampshire.

What my client heard was the crash of an enormous chunk of ice, melting just enough to break free from her roof, and leaving two skylights shattered and three open holes in her roof. No one was injured, except the home.

This is a true story. While perhaps the most dramatic of many stories my clients shared with me this past winter, it is certainly not the only tale of this unusual winter's destruction. In fact, I don't know of any home in our area that didn't suffer some sort of ice dam, leak, wall, or ceiling damage that will require a repair this spring. And as an interior designer, I know full well that repairs can cost a lot of money, and money to do necessary repairs can force us to dip into our spring design and décor budgets.

Yet, designing for spring is so much fun, so restoring to our souls, and so full of hope and promise. This year, maybe more than ever, spring interior design must balance being budget-conscious with renewing and refreshing our homes. There are several ways to make dramatic and real change without incurring tremendous costs. Here are a few of my favorites:

Paint, paint, paint!

A freshly painted room is an inexpensive and certain way to transform a space. Use wall color as an inspiration for a whole new room palette. When painting a room, select colors that soothe and inspire you. Pick what you love and ignore the trends. It's your space to live in and enjoy. And don't forget to look up. A freshly painted ceiling, whether in a traditional bright white, a soft hue that takes cues from the room, or a bolder hue used judiciously can work wonders for a space. While you're painting, think about painting a mirror

frame or a chest of drawers, or even your built-in cabinets. Seek advice from a high quality paint shop for tough finishes that endure everyday use.

Knobs/Pulls

A great way to update a piece of furniture or kitchen/bath cabinet is to change knobs and drawer pulls. Choices abound in many finishes and styles from traditional to contemporary, wood to metal to glass. Try something funky or colorful to achieve unexpected results at a fraction the cost of purchasing a whole new piece.

Valances

Window treatments can be very costly, but valances are a great design secret! These top of the window treatments allow you to dress up windows and complete the look of a room with little fabric (yardage=cost) but major impact. Fabric choices are truly endless, and styles can range from bold and tailored to soft and curvy. Valances set higher than your window frame create the illusion of larger windows, while allowing maximum light to enter a room, two bonuses of this simple design option.

Toss Pillows

What can be more fun than a bunch of new and colorful pillows on your chair, sofa, or bed? Pillows easily introduce not only colors, but textures and patterns into a room. Explore the many ready-made choices that are available, and allow yourself to experiment with varied combinations. Know that bringing pillows home and seeing them in your own environment on your pieces of furniture is priceless!

Backsplashes

A relatively easy and great way to change and refresh your home involves finishing your kitchen backsplash. An array of choices exists in marble, granite, ceramic and porcelain tiles. Color, texture, and pattern options are vast. Square footage is minimal, which keeps costs down, while the impact is impressive.

Enjoy your home this spring! We've all earned this one.

Sharon Bottner is founder and proprietor of Panache Interior Design in Rye. She can be reached via e-mail at sharonbottner@comcast.net. Visit online at panacheintdesign.com. You can also find out about her work on Houzz.com.