

Condo Life

TORONTO'S COMPLETE CONDO GUIDE • NOVEMBER 1999
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There's only
ONE POST ROAD

Grand Harbour
in *Barrie*

Phoebe
on **Queen**

May Tower II

NY Towers

Port Credit Village

THE BEACH

Residences *on the Lake*

Candy Factory

The Balmoral

Terrace Heights III

in Burlington

Thornwood

Consider hiring a decorating consultant

After all, you'd call for a plumber or a team of cleaners

When condominium homeowners need advice in maintaining their buildings and their suites, professionals are called in — such as consultants in plumbing, heating/cooling, landscaping and cleaning to name a few. Why then do so many still shy from using the services of a professional interior decorator when making important decorative decisions and purchases for the home?

“Once considered a luxury for the wealthy, decorating services are more of a necessity for today’s busy homeowner who can’t afford to make costly mistakes,” states Carol Donayre Bugg, ASID, author of *Smart & Simple Decorating* (1999, Time/Life).

With so many products available to consumers, most find the options overwhelming and do one of two things: rather than tackle a project making difficult decisions, they will put off an important project or move forward, many times making costly mistakes. “It’s gotten to the point that homeowners today can’t afford not to seek professional advice when tackling a decorating project,” Bugg states. “Complimentary decorating services such as Decorating Den Interiors with more than 700 decorators throughout North America offer homeowners professional, complimentary consultations in the con-



Most homeowners who have decorated their condo or any portion of it will tell you “I should have done it sooner!” This design by Jeanne Grier won First Place in the Canadian Dream Room competition earlier this year.

venience and lighting of their own homes and offices. This type of service relieves homeowners of the pressure of working with a decorator as the only cost is for the product they may choose to purchase.”

To ensure that home decorators get off to the right start, Bugg offers her seven Keys to Great Decorating to ensure they’ll get the results they are looking for.

1. Be a Keen Observer. Make note of what catches your attention most likely you’re attracted to that look! Consciously

note what catches your eye as you flip through decorating magazines, watch decorating shows on cable TV, or you may even check out interesting Internet sites on the home such as homearts.com, or take a virtual tour of room makeovers on decoratingden.com. Make note of the colors, patterns and designs that attract you. Clip pictures and start a file. You may notice a style of window treatment in one picture, a fabric or color combination in another, a comfortable looking chair in another, and so on. Clip and track these for a brief period of one to two months; you will then be better able to draw a conclusion on your taste and style.

2. Take an Honest Inventory. Determine which room or rooms you would like to improve and take an objective inventory of what you already own.

Assess your furnishings the way you seasonally review your wardrobe. Next, take out your camera and take snapshots of the rooms; photos never lie. Study the photos carefully, and keep the furniture and accessories you truly love. The easiest and least expensive way to make a notable change is to move some pieces to another room — for both function and design!

3. Make a Work-In-Progress. Is there a special family event or holiday coming up that you would like your project complet-

Assess your furnishings the way you seasonally review your wardrobe. Take snapshots of the rooms. This design by Decorating Den Interiors of Thornhill won First Place in the International Dream Room competition earlier this year.



Clip pictures and start a file. This design by Jeanne Grier of Richmond Hill won Third Place in the International Dream Room competition in New York earlier this year.



ed by? Determine your time projection for decorating — six weeks, six months, one year? — you need a work-in-progress plan that sets a series of reasonable goals. A simple, written plan in a loose-leaf binder will help you remain on track. While making the work-in-progress, consider the scope of the project: a simple coat of a new wall color to a complete room makeover with new window treatments, paint or wallpaper, a few furnishings, etc. No matter how small or large the project, ideally at this point you should schedule a complimentary at-home design consultation with a professional. At-home consultations alleviate any questions in regard to the size of room, lighting, privacy or sun problems for window treatments. A professional will ask questions and assist you in determining not only your design style but your functional needs as well. There are many professional decorating services that offer a complimentary consultation — if you don't know of a service, the yellow pages is a good place to start.

4. Balance Practicality with Panache. In decorating terms, panache is that personal touch you give the ordinary by turning it into something uniquely your own. Adding fringe shades to an average chandelier, displaying a special personal collection gathered over the years, painting a wall an unusual bold color — all are exam-

ples of how to personalize your surroundings with your own dash of panache. Best of all, panache does not have to be expensive, and practicality does not have to be mundane. —

5. Study the French. Fabulous fakery has always been a part of French design. Faux finishes are ever popular and can be implemented in many areas of the home. It is popular for walls, fabrics and accessories. For example; do you wish to wake up a bare wall with a window with a pretty view but don't think you can afford the renovation and landscaping? Have a local

artisan paint one! Most local artisans can create with paint almost anything decorative that you can imagine.

6. Give Change a Chance.

Redecorating can be as simple as simply removing a piece of furniture, or the most dramatic change usually comes from introducing a strong new color or a different pattern.

Just remember that all change — even for the better — requires a period of adjustment. However, most homeowners who have decorated their home or any portion of it will tell you "I should have done it sooner!"

7. The Joy is in the Doing.

Don't allow the constraints of the size of your house or your budget to stop you from living beautifully and well. There are decorating schemes, furnishings, and accessories for every situation and for every budget. Decorating is an ongoing and evolving state.

Start by doing one thing that will revive a tired room, even if you just paint the walls a new color. Remember, the first step is the hardest; each additional step will become easier.

Carol offers more insight in her recently released book, *Smart & Simple Decorating*, available at most bookstores. ☺

— ARA

Photographs courtesy Decorating Den Interiors Jeanne Grier (905) 737-1488