

Howe Calls



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Want to make some updates to your home without ripping out walls or gutting the kitchen? We asked some area design experts what they recommend for freshening up your spaces in very easy, yet attention-getting, ways.

Julie Sandberg, Tortoiseshell Interiors

FAVORITE COLOR

I'm brown. A rich chocolate brown with a hint of red is strong, earthy and grounded. I pair cognac and wheat colored sisal or alpaca area rugs with it, and lots of woven baskets for texture and interest. In my own home, I change my accent colors by the season... spicy ginger, honey gold and pumpkin in the fall, rich reds that pop from Christmas through Valentine's Day, and turquoise mixed with citron for a cooling effect from spring through summer.

FAVORITE ACCENT

Gorgeous window treatments. They quickly add softness, warmth, drama and magic to a room. As a rule, verticality is paramount to create a tall, slender, elegant feeling. I prefer straight panels of texture and color to pattern. Colors are softer now because we want a calmness and serenity to come home to after a hectic day. I love the feel of luxurious fabrics, such as silk damasks, velvets and linens. Sheer creamy white linen is wonderful in Florida for that airy feel. When you open your windows on a beautiful summer evening they sway in the breeze.

FAVORITE UNEXPECTED ELEMENT

The surprise of melding rusticness with refinement. Take a rough-hewn dining table with a rich past and pair it with a sculptural, but elegant, over-scaled chandelier. Add more "layers of soul" with antique crystal and monogrammed linens. There's a new hunger for vintage as well as that unpolished, unexpected look. I often scout flea markets and antique shops to find that item that just "winks" at me. It could be an old hand-carved wooden French chandelier or something as wonky as huge bean pods from Thailand.



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