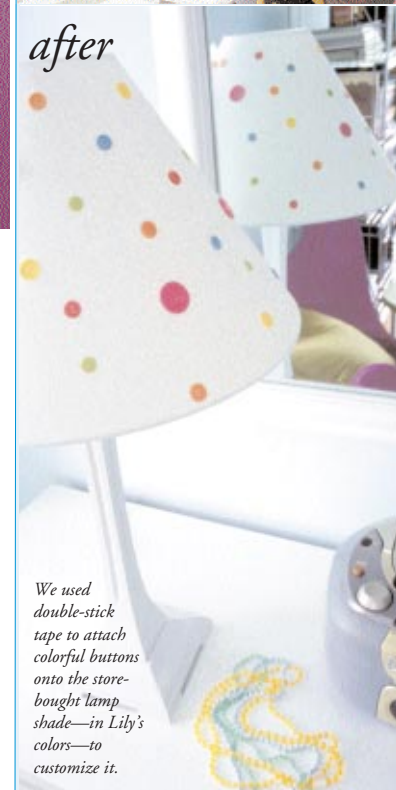




after before



before



after

After: Lily Patterson got her wish for a more modern, grown-up room. The bedding was the key to her whole color scheme. The net canopy, bed and end tables are from IKEA. Walls are painted in Sherwin Williams' "Swimming."

pre-teen heaven

a daughter asserts her own taste and gets her own space

by joetta moulden
photography by janet lenzen

What's really fun for me is helping old friends style their houses. Tessie Fruge Patterson and I have known each other since we worked together at *Houston Home & Garden* back in the late '70s. When Tessie and Guy's daughter, Lily, came along, we created an English Country-style nursery for Lily in what originally was a small, upstairs sleeping porch in their 1920s home. The room, which already had hunter green walls and white woodwork, "grew" with Lily, as the couple replaced the crib with a twin trundle bed. Other than

the usual addition of a few white bookcases and a homework desk, very few other changes had occurred. "When Lily was born, we bought the day bed with a trundle, thinking that it would save space and yet provide extra sleeping space when needed," Tessie says. "Turned out, nobody liked the bed—it was too hard to make, uncomfortable to sleep in, no headboard to prop up against to read in bed, and pulling out the trundle was a real hassle. We had to move furniture to find enough space to open it, and underneath the bed, the trundle just

We used double-stick tape to attach colorful buttons onto the store-bought lamp shade—in Lily's colors—to customize it.



Before: "I wanted to change from dark green walls and 'flowers galore' to something less babyish," says Lily, 11. A larger den was converted to Lily's new bedroom.

collected dust bunnies," she explains.

Fast forward, and Lily is now a pre-teen—and she wanted a completely new look. For a double Christmas / birthday gift when she turned 11, the couple gave Lily her own "room redecoration" as a gift. I happily came back to visit with their daughter about her need for a more modern, grown-up room.

"I wanted a plan from a professional, someone I knew and trusted, to steer us in the right

trade SECRETS

• **Empower your child.** Let her "select" her favorite paint color; but first, narrow the choices down to three or four colors you like and can live with.

• **Know your DIY limitations.** If assembling furniture-in-a-box is your idea of misery, hire the store's installers to put it together for you quickly, for a reasonable fee, Tessie advises.

• **Don't jump into a project.** Talk to your child; do your homework by planning what look the child wants, her colors, the style of furniture she wants. This "delay factor" is helpful in getting the entire family on the same page.

• **Think twice about buying a trundle bed**—unless you are willing to drag out the trundle, dust it off and make the bed each time a friend spends the night.

• Sometimes the most effective strategy is to **hire a professional** to develop a master plan with your child, so you avoid "wandering aimlessly" and making costly mistakes.

direction from the get-go," Tessie says. "We needed help determining what would actually fit in the room, and didn't want to wander aimlessly through stores, not knowing what we were looking for. And—a very crucial component of the whole process—you would serve as 'mediator', eliminating the inevitable 'mother-daughter clash' if we tried to do it ourselves," she says, smiling.

"I wanted to change from dark green walls and 'flowers galore' to something less babyish and more pre-teen—more contemporary," Lily says. "My mom likes antiques, but I don't." After sitting down and talking with Lily, two things became clear—she *really* wanted her very own double bed, and she wanted to pick her own paint color. Since there was no space in her small room for the double bed, I suggested we move the furniture and TV from the nearby upstairs den into Lily's old room, and turn the den/TV room into Lily's new, larger bedroom.

Since I have a daughter and remember this same rite of passage all too well, I explained to Tessie that it was imperative that Lily have the final say in what was purchased for her room and in the colors *she* likes.

Lily, obviously happy and excited with this idea, showed me two of her favorite catalogs, Pottery Barn Teens and IKEA. She had marked pages of things she loved: the mosquito netting canopy, white dressers and bedside tables, and bright color accents. She wanted bright, happy walls with a few splashes of modern color. After taking careful measurements, I drew a floor plan, which showed where each piece of furniture she wanted would be placed in her new room, along with lamp placement. Mother and daughter headed off that same afternoon to do some preliminary shopping at IKEA.

"At first I thought it would be impossible to clear out the TV room's furniture, bookcases and clutter," Tessie explains. "But we just tackled the job one piece at a time, and in the process found a new space for the sofa (relocated to the study), moved the bookcase to Lily's old room, gave away the armchair (to the painter) and got rid of a lot of clutter. Lily's old room is now a bona-fide guest bedroom," Tessie says.

Once the room was totally empty, I recommended they contact painter Manuel Lopez to repair, prime and paint the walls. Manuel used washable, Sherwin Williams ProMar400 Interior Latex Eg-Shel



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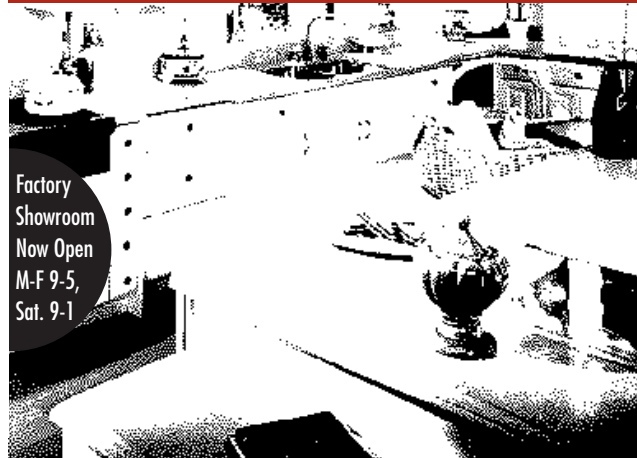
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After: The acid green carpet in Lily's cool new space is from Urban Outfitters, the mirror from T. J. Maxx. The pink butterfly chair was a gift from Lily's Aunt Yoonne.

in "Swimming" #6764, a pretty, bright blue. "He was great, a true professional who was punctual, stayed within his estimate and was in and out in just a few hours," Tessie adds.

"With the floor plan you gave us and the pictures clipped from the catalogues and magazines," Tessie says, "the next stage of the redo was a blast—shopping! IKEA had practically everything we needed: a double dresser, two bedside tables, three lamps and the bedding—which set the color scheme—blue, pink, acid green and lilac. And the prices were incredibly reasonable," she notes.

"IKEA was the magic ingredient in the process," Tessie says. "When Lily saw the polka dot comforter with all her favorite colors, everything came together. The canopy in the PB Teens catalog would have cost \$50, but at IKEA was less than \$30. The mother-daughter duo also found IKEA closet organizers, which really helped with additional storage.

Additionally, IKEA's team of installers assembled all the furniture they bought in less than an hour for under \$75.

And since there was an area rug drawn into the floor plan (Lily and her friends needed a soft spot

where they could lounge about on floor pillows and listen to their favorite CDs), Tessie shopped around and found the perfect rug at Urban Outfitters (every teen's favorite store), for just \$50. The acid green rug matches the green polka dots in Lily's duvet.

My talented intern, Melissa Melendez, spotted a handsome framed iris print and colorful pillows at Crate & Barrel, and was instrumental in designing and implementing the tie-dyed ribbon and button design for the lampshades. Her efforts made the final project picture perfect.

Tessie and Lily's final purchase was a mirror to go over the dresser, found at T.J. Maxx for \$30.

Were there any deviations from the master plan? "The only thing we changed was eliminating a two-shelf bookcase that we would have to find locally or order," Tessie notes. "Since we already had the tall Metro shelving (left over from my pre-marriage days in my one-room condo) we used that. It provided needed storage for Lily and was already paid for," Tessie says. "Lily is not that keen on it, but it definitely serves its purpose. And my sister, Yvonne, bought Lily the bright pink butterfly chair, which is a perfect addition to the room."



Before: The cluttered TV room had to be cleared out so it could become Lily's new bedroom.

What is Lily's favorite thing about her new room? "It's been a huge hit," Lily says. "Everyone—my friends, my family—is thrilled, and I hear comments like, 'so coooool', or 'terrific'. It makes me happy," she says.

And Mom and Dad's favorite?

"There is now plenty of storage, with room to spare. Best of all," Tessie adds, "you relieved all the anxiety and indecision from a process that can often be stressful and exhausting. Lily's room is a great place for her friends to congregate—they lounge around on the bed, and they love the butterfly chair."

Now, when Lily wants to have a friend sleep over, Tessie doesn't have to drag out the trundle and

make the bed. "In her old room, Lily was never inclined to stay in the room along other than to sleep," Tessie says. "For the first time, she is happy to be alone in her room, listening to CDs, reading or playing with friends." ■

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