



AFTER

AFTER: *New Roman shades, newly upholstered chairs, custom lamps and a custom storage/display cabinet complete the room.*

GOOD AS NEW

REPURPOSING EXISTING FURNITURE REJUVENATES A COUPLE'S DEN

BY JOETTA MOULDEN • PHOTOGRAPHY BY JANET LENZEN

Sue and Bill contacted me after seeing a makeover in *Houston House & Home* that reminded them of their own 1950 ranch house, which they had just remodeled. The couple already had raised the ceiling in their family room to the rafters and removed the old paneling and a wall of storage cabinets. They had painted the walls Pratt & Lambert's "Whale" (#14-25) and ceiling Pratt & Lambert's "Riviera" (#12-28), but could not decide whether to give their existing furniture away or reuse it. They also needed window coverings.

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BEFORE

BEFORE: *The couple wanted a cabinet to house their new flat-screen TV and to display their Peruvian pottery collection.*

They were stuck, faced with the challenge of how to display their Peruvian pottery collection and to come up with a cabinet to house the new flat-screen TV. "We love all of our old things we had accumulated for years," Sue explains, "and wanted to reuse them." One of the items she wanted to keep was a long, c. 1850 English pine table she'd had for 25 years. The problem was, it had no storage and did not fit her space any longer.

"When I read that you repurpose existing furniture, I knew you and I were a perfect fit because I had not seen anything new to buy that interested either of us," Sue adds.

Additionally, they had seating for only four, which was insufficient when they had guests, and the large, deep upholstered chairs they owned were extremely uncomfortable. Sue had a pillow propped under the leading edge of each seat cushion so that when seated, you did not feel like you would slide forward onto the floor.

Tip: A good upholsterer can "fix" most problems with upholstered furniture, including restyling the seat, arms and back and tightening loose springs.

FURNITURE REVISITED

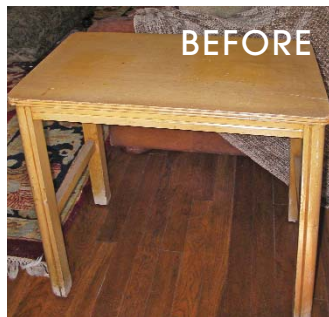
When we first met, the antique pine table sat under the wall-hung flat-screen TV. The green upholstered chairs were placed on opposite ends of the room, with the solid foreground chair visually blocking the room's walkway. The sofa was not centered on the TV but rather on the wall itself. A small, X-leg bar table fit into the recessed niche between the bare windows.

During the first meeting, I sketched a drawing for a new, custom built-in TV/storage cabinet, suggested that their beloved antique pine table could be safely cut down by Colin Gibbins Antiques to fit in the wall niche between the windows and gave Sue the name of my upholstery workroom to restyle the chairs.

I sketched out a new floor plan utilizing two open back armchairs that she had purchased from the Warwick Hotel at its liquidation sale. Because the corner windows prevented the use of curtain panels, I sketched flat Roman



AFTER: The table was renewed with a custom slipcover and, as a bonus, now can hide storage underneath.



BEFORE: This sentimental table lacked style and needed a makeover.

iron Victorian gas lamp. When I said yes, we decided to unify the three lamps with the same lampshade color as her existing table lamp, and the same chubby faux candle inserts.

TIP: Nearly any accessory can be made into a custom lamp if you know where to take it. If you commit to one lampshade color, the look is visually calmer and consistent.

END TABLES REVIVED


When I asked about end tables, Sue pointed out a yellow, painted end table in the room that she confiscated from her father's office and asked if I could repurpose it. I sketched a tailored slipcover for it and we decided to recycle some existing gold silk fabric to make the skirt.

To create new pillows for the sofa, I suggested we take the small tapestry throw pillows from the chairs and find a new fabric to miter around the center panel and on the back of the pillows.

For the second end table, she pulled out her mom's folding tripod "gypsy" table that had been in a closet. ("It had seen one too many gypsies," Sue says with a laugh.) I designed a little box-pleated table skirt for the top if it, to be made out of the same striped fabric as the pillow border and using the gold silk used inside the pleats. She pulled some cheetah-print fabric from a closet, which I suggested would be perfect on the Warwick Hotel armchairs.

TIP: Tying a room together successfully can be achieved by repeating the same fabrics around the room in a circular fashion, even if the fabrics are only repeated on a welt cord, the face of a new pillow or as a border.

CALL OF THE WILD

Sue says the cheetah-print hotel armchairs are the highlight of the room. "When I gave your upholsterer the chipped, sprung side chairs, I never expected they would look like new when I got them back," she says. "He touched up the stain and ebony paint and transformed them. We had a party after the changes were made, and everyone loved the transformation, especially the entertainment center." 

shades instead, measuring the windows and writing work orders for the drapery workroom. I also recommended that she move the too-small sofa painting to the fireplace wall and frame a pair of her husband's existing Peruvian archangels to hang above the sofa. (All the ready-made frames came from Warehouse Frames 'N Gallery.)

A week later when I returned to take Sue fabric shopping at Interior Fabrics and to snap my "before" photos, she already had hired Colin Gibbins to cut down the table (and it was in its new location) and the upholsterer already had picked up her chairs. No grass was growing under her feet on this project.

With the exception of the new cabinet, Sue had all the furniture and accessories she needed. Her furniture was simply re-upholstered or slipcovered, and the accessories were either displayed or made into custom lamps.

SHED THE LIGHT

Sue showed me two green-glazed stoneware balustrades and asked if something could be done with them. I suggested that Alcon Lightcraft Co. could make them into custom lamps, and she asked if they could also make a floor lamp out of the couple's

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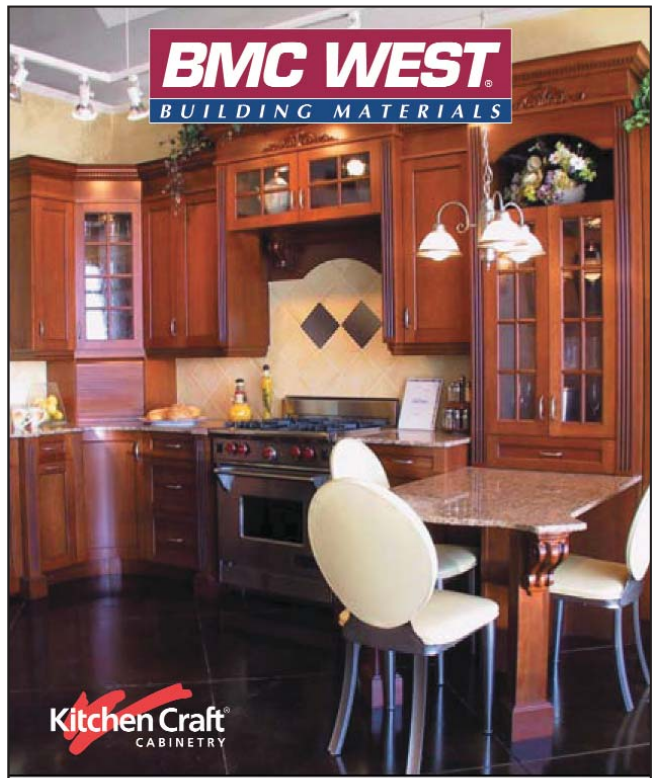
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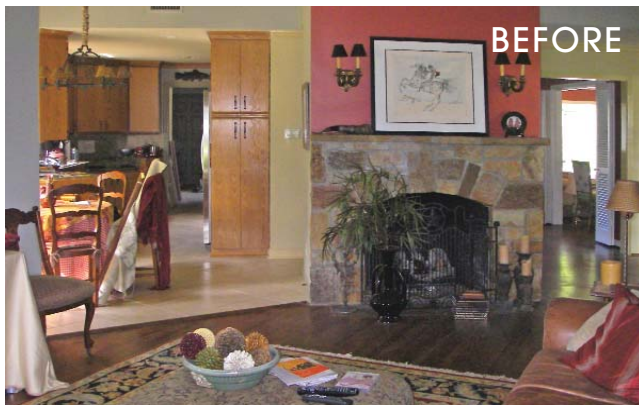
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AFTER

AFTER: A new cabinet houses the TV and rope lighting illuminates the couple's Peruvian pottery collection on the open shelves. New black chandelier shades unify the space.



BEFORE

BEFORE: The den was not a "defined" space and had plenty of room for extra seating, especially near the lovely fireplace.

Sue painted several sample boards for the new cabinet and went back to the original color I had selected ("Benjamin Moore's "New Chestnut" # AC-6). She was glad she painted the sample boards since it would have meant lost time and money using the wrong color.

"The colors are perfect," Sue says with a smile. "I am a believer in hiring professionals because you saved me from making the same costly mistakes I have made in the past. Actually, it is not only the money saved, but also my frustration with the room not turning out 'quite right.' It turned out perfectly, and we would not change a thing."

TRADE SECRETS

Consider making a custom lamp from a treasured accessory. A custom lamp company can put your unused accessories to a new use.

Rather than disposing of a sofa or uncomfortable chairs, have a good upholsterer restyle them or add new throw pillows for pennies on the dollar.

If a table is no longer serving its intended purpose, it can be cut down, painted or even slipcovered to make it more functional.

Sometimes the most effective strategy is to not buy more furniture and accessories, but to first rethink the pieces that already are paid for.

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