



AFTER

Breaking Up The Beige

FRESH WALL COLOR, NEW RUG AND SPLASHES OF BRIGHT COLOR
LIVEN UP A LIVING ROOM

AFTER (ABOVE): The china cabinet was centered on the wall, flanked with existing dining chairs and restyled with Jackie's white ironstone collection. It was then flanked with new \$39 candle sconces from Home Source Warehouse Store. New red-patterned pillows and a Tuesday Morning throw pull the red in the new rug around the freshly painted room. Existing artwork was re-hung from other rooms.



AFTER

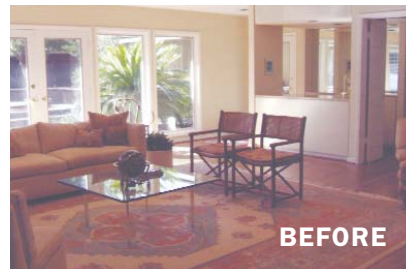
AFTER (LEFT): Incorporating a new sofa and deeper wall paint, relocating the chest to the left of the fireplace, re-arranging accessories, re-hanging existing art and reupholstering existing slipper chairs updated the living room.

BEFORE (ABOVE RIGHT): An awkward furniture arrangement with two chairs isolated by the fireplace and a sea-of-beige color palette greeted visitors.

BEFORE (RIGHT): The large sofa blocked the window light, the wet bar did not provide bar stools and an empty seating chasm existed in the foreground.



BEFORE



BEFORE

When I first saw the Staggs' living room, I instantly knew that

the furniture arrangement and color palette was not working — before Jackie even said a word. There were two leather chairs and an ottoman isolated by the fireplace and the rest of the furniture was very formally arranged, with the sofa blocking the light in front of the window wall. The room was a “beige-out.” The furniture, rug and art frames were quite nice, but also quite dated and stuck in the '80s and needed to be re-thought.

The television, housed in a custom, touch-latch entertainment cabinet, was positioned so high that the couple never sat in the room . . . and no wonder: Two small McGuire rattan chairs faced the television, instead of a more comfortable sofa. “The room did not work,” Jackie admits. “It was just the room we walked through on the way to the kitchen — unless we had company.”

She called me. “I liked your philosophy of using what we have and updating,” she says. And so we began working together on the room.

RUGS & REARRANGING

The couple was considering buying a new rug, but for the bedroom instead of the living room. After careful measuring, I suggested they move the living room rug to the bedroom and replace the living room rug with a new, more colorful one, instead of decorating the room around peach and blue.

They moved the living room rug to the master. “You saved us from making a major financial mistake, and we love the rug now in the bedroom,” Jackie says.

During the very first meeting, we rearranged the room, moving the isolated leather chairs and including them in the conversation area so everyone could “come to the party.” Jackie said her custom down sofa was on its last legs and was very uncomfortable for Bob, so I recommended they sit together on the Manhattan sofa from Interior Fabrics, which is incredibly comfortable. After test-driving it, they agreed.

“Our only reservation was that it was so inexpensive, how could it be any good? You pointed out that you can't test-drive a custom sofa,” Jackie recalls. They took a leap of faith, trusted me and ordered it.

tip Simply moving furniture around can transform a room and costs nothing, making sure everyone is included, instead of some people sitting outside the conversation circle. No one likes looking at the back of someone else's head.

“I was very surprised by the first meeting,” Jackie explains. “I expected you to recommend major remodeling of the bar area and the entertainment built-in. Instead, we simply rearranged the furniture and immediately the room worked better.”

After the furniture was positioned correctly, the next step was measuring to determine the correct rug size to buy. The existing rug was 12 by 15 feet. We determined the minimum size to buy was 10 by 14 feet and the max size to buy was 14 by 16 feet.

tip Knowing confidently exactly what size home furnishings to buy makes shopping much easier.

At The Great Indoors, the couple bought a 10-by-14-foot Karastan Agra Ivory rug and a companion rug, Karastan's Empress Kirman in a 2 1/2-by-4-foot size for the nearby side door.

FABRICS, PAINT & MORE

Once the rug was selected, Jackie and I went shopping for fabrics at Interior Fabrics. We found a deep neutral chevron-woven fabric for the sofa and two slipper chairs. At Calico Corners, we found the red paisley for the sofa cushions and a geometric print for throw pillows on the rattan chairs.

tip Before buying fabrics, bring home samples and throw them down directly on the rug to make sure they are “happy” together.

I recommended painting the walls a deeper neutral color once the rug



AFTER: Deeper wall color, painted art frames, a new rug, sofa, throw pillows and rearranged furniture and accessories (plus lowering the TV) updated the room, making it more usable.



BEFORE: The TV was placed uncomfortably in the top of the cabinet, and the most unwelcoming seating in the room faced it. Shiny brass art frames were distracting.

trade secrets

- **Paint consistently** gives you the most bang for your buck.
- **Think green.** Existing furniture and accessories can be painted or rearranged from other rooms instead of buying new.
- **Paint colors and fabrics** for the house **should be “happy” together** when laid out on a table.
- Sometimes the most effective strategy is not to buy more furniture and accessories for your home, but to **first rethink the pieces that are already paid for.**

JOETTA MOULDEN offers home makeovers using your own home furnishings to create the home you've always dreamed of. Joetta believes your pieces that have been collected through the years are a reflection of your personality and can be artfully arranged. Her ability to focus on your personal style and not let her own preferences influence the design of your home makes her unique. See more makeovers on her Web site at www.shelterstyle.com, e-mail her at joetta@shelterstyle.com or call 713.461.2063. Shelterstyle.com recently was given a "Pages of Happiness" rating and, for the second consecutive year, a "Super Service Award" presented to the rare 5 percent of companies that achieve and maintain a superior rating on www.angieslist.com, a word-of-mouth network for satisfied consumers.

and fabrics were selected, and Jackie liked four of the recommended colors enough to paint sample boards, choosing Sherwin-Williams' "Latte" (SW 6108) made 25 percent darker. The enamel entertainment center was painted "Latte" 50 percent darker because enamel paint tends to look lighter than wall paint does.

"We have had neutral colors through the house since 1985. After much agonizing and input from neighbors, we settled on 'Latte' and then intensified it 25 percent. We still weren't sure. You suggested we try it in our hall bathroom first and we loved it. The new color is the best change we made," Jackie says.

Rather than reframe the art, I suggested they paint the dated brass frames with Modern Masters Metallic Paint Collection in # ME-525 "English Brown" from Benjamin Moore stores.

tip You have to start somewhere. I recommend starting with the rug, then find fabrics to complement the rug and lastly pick the wall paint color to coordinate. Paint consistently gives the most bang for your buck.

FINAL TOUCHES

Instead of remodeling the bar, I suggested they repaint it, then buy two \$31 saddle barstools from Garden Ridge Pottery to make the space function and then it would look completely different.

An upholsterer I recommended to them added spring down cushions to the 30-year-old slipper chairs and restyled the skirts. "They look and sit like new and are very comfortable," says Jackie.

The couple did a lot of the sewing, painting and all the shopping themselves. Saving money was the big bonus, but not the main focus. "We wanted our home to look good now and for a long time to come using the things we own mixed with a few new items," Jackie says.

The couple learned that big change is possible without starting over completely. "Everyone really likes the changes and are surprised how different the room looks with so many of the same elements," Jackie says. "We are very happy with everything. The room not only looks great, but it works."

And they are now watching TV in there.

