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DÉCOR

WITH A MASCULINE TWIST

I must admit, it's quite refreshing to see more and more men take interest in creating great style in their homes. While many women may think that the average man's decorating taste doesn't go much beyond selecting "black" for the TV and remote, men are now taking great interest in creating comfortable, yet stylish living environments to relax and entertain friends.

Generally speaking, most "bachelor pads" begin with a nice clean slate, making it easy to achieve any particular look. Some of the smallest changes can make the largest differences. As I've stated numerous times before, changing your paint color will bring life to any space. After all, it really is the first thing you notice when you enter a room. Just remember to choose colors that you know you'll be able to live with for a long period of time. Grey or green-based taupes offer great masculinity to any room and look especially nice with pewter and black accent pieces. The darker the color, the warmer your rooms will appear. Even if you live in a small space, don't shy away from color, especially dark color. The darker the color, the more impact will be achieved. If you're not daring enough to paint dark color throughout your home, think about painting a few accent walls a darker tone to add a bit of depth to the space. Mid-tone colors are usually a safe bet as they

provide enough contrast when used with both lighter and darker pieces of furniture. Softer shades of earth tones are still incredibly popular, and colors such as cappuccino and mocha brown are still being used to bring additional warmth to homes.

Choosing the right accessories will add just the right "punch" to your room. You can never go wrong by investing in such items as a pair of great stylish lamps. Many retailers offer a wide selection of minimalist-looking lamps that can give your place maximum appeal. Surf the web for some great ideas in new lighting options, they'll make a great statement in your room.

If purchasing furniture isn't included in your budgeting plan at this point in time, there are many ways to "perk up" your existing furniture. Experiment a little and try rearranging a few of your things for a fresh new look. You may even discover that you've gained more space by playing around with your current room arrangement.

When making up your wish list for your new "pad", you may want to incorporate some of these great finds:

- A leather ottoman that will serve both as a coffee table and a foot stool. (Place a large tray on the ottoman when using it as a coffee table.)
- Simple end tables with clean lines that won't date and can easily be moved around as your furniture investment grows.
- A great lounge chair that is comfortable

and makes a statement, you can never go wrong with brown leather.

- Some great pieces of art. Take the time to purchase pieces that you love. Vintage prints or abstract art look great in masculine environments.

- A wall unit or classic armoire to store your TV and stereo system.

- Aquariums always look great in a bachelor's pad, especially when they're filled with exotic fish that add great color to any room.

- Instead of flowers, add some life to your room by filling tall, clear vases with fresh bamboo and stones. Lemons or green apples placed in stylish bowls are another way to add a nice splash of color.

- Add some great cushions to your seating area. Leather or faux leather cushions are quite the trend and available in an assortment of colors. The best thing about them is that they can be easily cleaned.

Using items such as oversized mirrors and clocks will also add style and character to your home. There are some great artificial trees and plants on the market today that will add the finishing touches to any room. The key is to not over do it. Having too many items (or clutter) is an easy way to destroy the clean look you want to achieve. **R**

E-mail your decorating questions and photos to studio180@shaw.ca or visit website www.studio180.biz.